

‘Neither one thing nor the other’: The  
Ulster Protestant community in Cavan,  
Monaghan and Fermanagh, 1916 - 1923

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## Summary

This thesis studies the Protestant community in Cavan, Monaghan and Fermanagh during the years 1916 to 1923. It examines the ‘dual crisis’ experienced by Protestants in Cavan and Monaghan in this period as they were ‘abandoned’ by the Ulster Unionists of the six counties of what would become Northern Ireland and then had to suffer through the Irish War of Independence and Civil War. Fermanagh is provided as a cross-border counterexample in which we can see how themes identified in the experience of Cavan and Monaghan Protestants manifested themselves in a county with a much larger Protestant population and which was a part of Northern Ireland.

This thesis examines how Protestants in Cavan and Monaghan articulated their identity as marginal Ulster Unionists, their relations with their Catholic neighbours and how sectarian they felt the republican movement was. It also examines whether Protestants were specifically or disproportionately targeted by revolutionary violence and describes the main forms this violence took. Finally, the thesis examines the process of cross-border migration into Fermanagh. To examine this the thesis uses a wide-array of sources such as republican witness statements, loyalist compensation claims, newspaper reports, local government records, censuses and literary memoirs.

Chapter 1 deals with the Cavan and Monaghan Protestant community’s engagement with certain key ideas. It examines the depth of their commitment to Ulster Unionism while also demonstrating their tenuous connection to the cultural idea of Ulster and how the community reinforced this connection. It proposes a number of tests to measure the strength of Ulster Unionist feeling in the counties. It then examines how the community engaged with and opposed the threat and later realisation of six-county partition. It goes on to examine Protestant-Catholic relations in the counties and particularly in local government before finishing with an examination of local public dialogues about the nature of revolutionary violence and particularly how its assumed sectarianism informed so much of later discussions on the nature of specific revolutionary attacks.

Chapters 2 and 3 deal with the main types of revolutionary activity in Cavan and Monaghan. Chapter 2 focuses on boycotting with a particular focus on the Belfast

Boycott of 1921 to 1922. It demonstrates how boycotting although less covered and less dramatic than other forms of revolutionary activity affected the most people and could easily spread itself along social and communal lines. Chapter 3 deals with violent revolutionary actions, primarily house raiding but also encompassing arson, the execution of spies and informers, and the mailing of threatening letters. It takes a number of common reasons why someone might become a victim of these actions while demonstrating that these fell more heavily on the Protestant community due to a combination of local suspicion and their own passive actions. I argue these actions were not, to them, provocative but fundamental parts of their Protestant identity. We then go on to examine Protestant armed resistance to the I.R.A., a topic which has been ignored in most historiography and which demonstrates clearly the desperation of the community. Chapter 3 also focuses on two case studies. Firstly, the revolutionary experience of Hibernians in Cavan and Monaghan is detailed to demonstrate that the experience of Protestants (the other large, organised opponent of the I.R.A. in the counties) was unique. Then, the brutal and inexplicable murder of Dean John Finlay provides an example of an incident in which rational explanations and motivations are less relevant.

Chapters 4 and 5 provide direct Fermanagh comparisons with Chapter 1 and Chapters 2 and 3 respectively. Chapter 4 focuses primarily on how Fermanagh Protestants viewed the ‘abandonment’ of Cavan and Monaghan by the U.U.C. and how they themselves justified their own inclusion in Northern Ireland in spite of their minority in the county. It also looks at how the contested political arena of Fermanagh served to polarise both communities both in local councils and on the election trail. Chapter 5 meanwhile examines Fermanagh’s experience of revolutionary activities both before and after partition. Its main focus is on how Fermanagh’s larger Protestant population and post-partition position on the new border changed the pattern of revolutionary activity. Notably it discusses the phenomenon of Protestant on Catholic violence which was not present in Cavan or Monaghan. It focuses on three key case studies: the burning of the village of Roslea, the I.R.A. occupation of the Pettigo-Belleek salient, and the shooting of B Specials at Clones.

Chapter 6 focuses on the phenomenon of cross-border migration into Fermanagh and pays particular attention to Cavan and Monaghan migration into the county. It uses

the private 1925 James Cooper census of Protestant migrants as well as national census reports to perform this examination.

This thesis argues that Protestants in Cavan and Monaghan were not specifically targeted by republicans in the Revolution. However they were disproportionately harmed because of their own passive actions and their position in broad opposition to the I.R.A.. It also argues that the combination of the community's own sense of abandonment by the six-county Unionists and their fear of republican violence as sectarian, led them to view the period as one of profound crisis from which they never truly recovered. Like an unhappy Goldilocks Protestants in Cavan and Monaghan were numerous enough and organised enough to pose a threat to the I.R.A. but not so numerous or organised that they could effectively defend themselves, as becomes clear when we see the organised Protestant defences of houses in Fermanagh. However, this same vulnerability led to a management of intercommunal relations and easing of tensions by Cavan and Monaghan that was also not present in Fermanagh and meant that the violence never reached the levels it did north of the border.

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## Guide to Abbreviations

A.O.H.	Ancient Order of Hibernians
B.M.H.	Bureau of Military History
C.Ó.F.L.A.	Cardinal O’Fiaich Library Armagh
D.E.D.	District Electoral Division
I.G.C.	Irish Grants Committee
I.P.P.	Irish Parliamentary Party
I.R.A.	Irish Republican Army
J.P.	Justice of the Peace
K.C.	King’s Counsel
M.P.	Member of Parliament
N.A.I.	National Archives of Ireland
N.E.B.B.	Northern Eastern Boundary Bureau
N.L.I.	National Library of Ireland
O/C	Officer Commanding
P.R.O.N.I.	Public Record Office of Northern Ireland
R.D.C.	Rural District Council
R.I.C.	Royal Irish Constabulary
R.U.C.	Royal Ulster Constabulary
S.I.L.R.A.	Southern Irish Loyalist Relief Association
T.D.	Teachta Dála
T.N.A.	The National Archives (Kew)
U.C.D.A.	University College Dublin Archives
U.D.C.	Urban District Council
U.U.C.	Ulster Unionist Council
U.V.F.	Ulster Volunteer Force
W.S.	Witness Statement (Bureau of Military History)

## Note on Terminology

This thesis uses and examines a number of terms with multiple layers of meaning and as such a note on their use within the thesis is required.

‘Ulster’ is used in most cases to refer to the nine-county province of Ireland and not the six-county northern state. For this state ‘Northern Ireland’ is preferred when referring to the entity post-partition. Pre-partition a specification such as ‘the counties that were to become Northern Ireland’ is used or else they are referred to as ‘the six counties’. Similarly, ‘the three counties’ refers to Cavan, Monaghan and Donegal unless specified otherwise.

The ‘Free State’ is used to refer to the twenty-six county state post-partition. This includes Southern Ireland governed by the provisional government from January 1921. For the period before partition a specification such as ‘the counties that were to become the Free State’ or ‘the southern twenty-six counties’.

Additionally, ‘the South’ and ‘southern’; and ‘the North’ and ‘northern’ are used to refer to the same division. Donegal’s status as the most northerly county in Ireland and the irony of it being a part of the ‘South’ is acknowledged here but for the sake of convenience is not specified each time the term ‘southern’ is used.

Generally, religious and cultural labels such as ‘Catholic’ and ‘Protestant’ are preferred to ‘nationalist’ and ‘unionist’ and refer to the two broad and opposing cultural groups in Ireland. When ‘nationalist’ and ‘unionist’ are used it is specifically to convey the inclusion of Protestant nationalists and Catholic unionists in certain descriptions.

‘Protestant’ is used to refer to all members of non-Catholic religions in Ireland. This generally refers to Anglicans, Presbyterians, Methodists and unaligned Christians. ‘Anglican’ refers to members of the Church of Ireland, Church of England and unidentified Episcopalian churches.

‘Nationalist’ with a capitalisation is used to refer to members of the Irish Parliamentary Party while ‘nationalist’ without a capitalisation is used to refer to members of the community as specified above. Similarly, ‘Unionist’ with a capitalisation should convey membership of the Ulster Unionist Party. ‘Sinn Féin’ is used as a noun

and adjective to describe members of the Sinn Féin party while ‘republican’ is used to refer to members of the I.R.A. and I.R.B.

For the Civil War the terms ‘pro-Treaty’ and ‘anti-Treaty’ are used to refer to those in favour and opposed to the Anglo-Irish Treaty.

Associational terms such as ‘Hibernian’ and ‘Orangeman’ refer both to members of those organisations (the Ancient Order of Hibernians and Orange Order respectively) but also those identified as members of said organisations. That is to say in most cases the thesis is more interested in the identification of an individual as a member of said organisation and not whether they were actually a member.

‘Revolutionary Period’ is taken to mean the period from the Easter Rising in 1916 to the end of the Irish Civil War in 1923, it is taken as a specific term of historical analysis and is thus capitalised. ‘Revolution’ is also used to describe the period of the War of Independence and Civil War. Revolutionary violence refers to all violent acts committed either in the name of the goal of an independent Ireland or enabled because of the breakdown of law and order caused by the Revolution.

## **Introduction**

The Irish revolutionary period took place between 1916 and 1923 and encompassed the Easter Rising, the War of Independence and the Civil War. This period saw radical changes in Irish society and politics and culminated in the partition of Ireland into Northern Ireland and the Irish Free State. The period was defined by social unrest and the widespread use of violence against the forces of the British government and those who were associated with them. Warfare was asymmetrical and characterised by the burning of barracks, ambushing police patrols and the raiding of isolated homes.

For one group this period represented a moment of particular crisis. Irish Protestants were, in the vast majority, supporters of the Union with Britain. They were fearful of their fate should they be left in a state with their Catholic neighbours and then later had to accommodate themselves to this worst-case scenario. This was a dual crisis. It was a crisis of security as many in the community were subjected to, or feared they would be subjected to, targeting and attacks from the Catholic-nationalist community. It was simultaneously a crisis of identity as Protestants found that their old conceptions of their national identity and their place in the world had become out-dated as the political situation changed in spite of them.

Nowhere was this crisis more acute than in Cavan and Monaghan. These were counties with strong Protestant populations and Ulster traditions of their own. They had signed the Ulster Covenant in 1912 and organised on common lines with their co-religionists who had subsequently abandoned them on the wrong side of the border. By their own assumption they had as strong a claim to belong to a future Ulster state as those Protestants in the six counties; however they were not included in the partition settlement and were forced to forge a new path in a Catholic majority state. This thesis will describe this crisis as it took place in Cavan and Monaghan. Fermanagh will provide a contrasting example of a larger and more assertive Protestant group and how that changed their revolutionary experience. To properly examine this crisis this thesis will consider a number of primary research questions:



1. How deep was the commitment in Cavan and Monaghan to ‘Ulster Unionism’ and to what degree was it professed as a potential means of escape from an independent Ireland?

This question engages directly with the first ‘crisis’ experienced by the Protestant communities of Cavan and Monaghan. To investigate whether the new political settlement and partition itself represented a true ‘abandonment’ of three-county Unionists then we must determine whether the basis for a common Ulster front was genuine. We shall investigate the strength of the alleged ties of kinship and identity that bound Cavan to Antrim as tightly as Down. Suspicion was expressed in Fermanagh as to the true ‘Ulster’ nature of Cavan in particular and its peripheral position and strong Catholic population do not show strong similarities with the six Ulster counties. An obvious counterpoint to any claims of betrayal and abandonment on the part of Cavan, Monaghan and Donegal is that the Ulster identity espoused by three-county Unionists was motivated not by a sincere sense of nationhood but by a desire to escape a Catholic dominated southern Irish state by the most feasible political route. In this argument as ‘Ulster’ became the banner under which northern Unionists organised, three-county Unionists were able to take advantage of the fact that they existed within historical Ulster to make common cause. This was in spite of their significant differences in size, identity and social relations from Unionists in Ulster heartlands such as Antrim or Down. Therefore, for our investigation of this dual crisis to be legitimate, we must first demonstrate that the Ulster feeling shown in Cavan and Monaghan was sincerely held and therefore that the establishment of Northern Ireland was a genuinely painful experience for the community. Asking this question will also allow us to distinguish between ‘Ulster’ the province and ‘Ulster’ the Protestant and Unionist cultural symbol as well as ask ourselves how we can identify and measure ‘genuine’ conviction.

2. How did the Protestant community in these counties react and adapt to the establishment of the Northern state?

This second question supports the first in describing the first ‘crisis’ faced by the community. It augments and adds nuance to our initial evaluation of ‘Ulsterism’ in Cavan and Monaghan. Northern Ireland represented a conundrum for Cavan and Monaghan Protestants. It was simultaneously a state with which they should have had significant

cultural sympathy and a symbol of their own exclusion. How Cavan and Monaghan Protestants adapted to this test will tell us much, both about the sincerity of their ‘Ulsterism’, but also about the fluidity of their Protestant identity, even when it was ostensibly predicated on ‘the British connection’.

3. What form did revolutionary actions against members of the community take?

This moves us to the second ‘crisis’ – the crisis of violence. If we are to identify a unique revolutionary experience for the Protestant community in Cavan and Monaghan we must describe the form it took. What types of revolutionary acts were most common and was the community predisposed to be more heavily targeted by these acts than other groups? This question also allows us to describe the rhythms and patterns of revolutionary actions. We shall focus not solely on a boycott, but on how it was announced and what its consequences were. We shall focus not exclusively on the immediate justification for a raid but how the actions of those carrying it out could change its level of violence. These investigations are important as they allow us to demonstrate the ‘holistic’ impact of revolutionary violence, in which the focus is not just on the act itself but on its consequences and performance as well.

4. Can we describe a ‘typical’ experience of the Revolution?

This question is related to the previous one but aims to moderate it. It will move our investigation beyond those aspects of revolutionary violence which command our attention because of their brutality or spectacle to allow consideration of a subtler revolutionary experience. For the majority who were not specifically targeted by the I.R.A., how was the Revolution experienced? Did actions like boycott and arms raiding transmit to the community at large beyond their victims? This diversifies our understanding of what revolutionary experience means but also shows how revolutionary violence spread along communal lines.

5. What motivated these revolutionary actions, and can they be characterised as sectarian?

This is perhaps the most important question in regard to the crisis of violence and certainly the one which has dominated the historiography. Determining whether violence against Protestants can be deemed sectarian not only informs how we view the place of the Protestant in their community but also our understanding of the nature of republicanism in Ireland. If attacks on Protestants were proven to be sectarian, then this would legitimise the fears of the community of the treatment they would face in an independent Catholic state. Additionally, by placing the focus of investigation on what it means to characterise something as sectarian it also allows us to expand the focus beyond the simple yes/no proposition which has been so prevalent. It places the emphasis on issues of perception and bias instead of exclusively on the reality of the situation.

6. Did the greater Protestant population in Fermanagh and their larger public profile change how they experienced the Revolution?

One of the key distinctions between the Protestant community in Cavan and Monaghan and Protestant communities elsewhere was their size. We already have multiple studies of the experiences of yet smaller Protestant communities such as in Longford but to properly understand the effect of a larger population on relations with Catholic neighbours, revolutionary experience and political organisation, we must also look at areas which had a larger Protestant minority again. It stands to reason that greater numbers of Protestants would be more self-assertive and better able to defend themselves from attack. In Cavan and Monaghan, the public profile of the Protestant community was seen to be consciously meek and uncontroversial avoiding bringing attention on themselves. While they did organise politically it was not on the scale seen in Fermanagh. These differences in their political and social experience fundamentally shaped how they interacted with Catholics and consequently how they experienced the Revolution.

7. Did the imposition of the border following partition cause greater revolutionary violence?

Shifting our examination to Fermanagh allows us to see the impact of partition on a lived level (as opposed to the more symbolic betrayal which we have been viewing it as thus far). The creation of a border delineating two often hostile jurisdictions and the

efforts of Northern Ireland to entrench this border led to a unique revolutionary arena. In this situation we would therefore expect to find a distinct strain of revolutionary activity. Asking this question allows us to see the degree to which the border was perceived as a ‘natural’ entity, but also how it led to the targeting and injuring of individuals who might otherwise have remained unscathed.

8. Did the imposition of the border lead to significant migration of Cavan and Monaghan Protestants over the border?

Finally, to fully answer the issue of whether Protestants were specifically targeted during the Revolution or perceived themselves to be, we can look at whether they experienced significant depopulation through emigration. The position of Cavan and Monaghan on the border means that the examination of emigration in these counties is somewhat unique compared to the rest of the country as a ‘refuge’ was often only a few miles down the road in an area in which they had strong roots. This question then will allow us to see not only whether Protestants were being specifically driven out of the two counties but also whether the border itself augmented or influenced whatever movement of people did exist.

While all chapters will contribute elements to addressing these questions, Chapter 1 will be primarily focused on Questions 1 and 2; Chapter 2 and 3 will focus on answering Questions 3, 4 and 5; Chapter 4 and 5 will engage with Questions 6 and 7; and Chapter 6 will answer Question 8. The exact content of these chapters will be dealt with later in the introduction in the section titled ‘Thesis Outline’.

This is not an examination of the Unionist or loyalist community specifically. A consideration of Catholic loyalists is not present in this thesis as the group is so small. On the other side, Protestant nationalists are considered but are such a marginal group in the region that they rarely feature in the examination.<sup>1</sup> While the examination of those other groups is primarily a history of individuals, the examination of Protestant Unionists is the history of a community. This focus was chosen for this reason as well as to allow

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<sup>1</sup> For an examination of this group see Conor Morrissey, *Protestant nationalists in Ireland, 1900-1923* (Cambridge, 2018); Conor Morrissey, ‘Rotten Protestants’: Protestant Home Rulers and the Ulster Liberal Association, 1906 – 1918’, *Historical Journal*, Vol. 61, No. 3 (2018); Valerie Jones, *Rebel Prods: The Forgotten Story of Protestant Radical Nationalists and the 1916 Rising* (Dublin, 2016).

for the various identities of Protestant, Unionist, loyalist, Orangeman etc. to be drawn out and to show how they overlapped and informed each other. Protestant was taken as the designation of the group instead of Unionist to ensure that the common theme uniting them was cultural identification and not political activity. This thesis includes all levels of political engagement from those who joined the U.V.F. to those who occasionally voted for Unionist candidates.

‘Protestant’ in contemporary colloquial usage meant non-Catholic and this thesis follows this division in that it is not overly preoccupied with the internal distinctions within the Protestant community. ‘Protestant’ defined in this way includes a number of religious denominations present in Cavan, Monaghan and Fermanagh at the time: Anglicans, Presbyterians and Methodists were by far the three most common groups with the remainder made up primarily of Quakers, Brethren and non-aligned Protestants/Christians. In all counties, Anglicanism was the most numerous denomination although Presbyterianism was strong in Monaghan. The distribution of these groups in Cavan, Monaghan and Fermanagh can be seen in the table below:

Table 0.1 – Distribution of religions in Cavan, Monaghan and Fermanagh in 1911 census.

	<b>R Catholic</b>	<b>Anglican</b>	<b>Presbyterian</b>	<b>Methodist</b>	<b>Other</b>
<b>Cavan</b>	81.5	14.2	8.1	0.8	0.4
<b>Monaghan</b>	74.7	12.6	11.6	0.5	0.6
<b>Fermanagh</b>	56.2	34.2	2.1	6.5	1.1

These denominational differences will not be a significant factor for a number of reasons. Firstly, the examination focuses on the Protestant community as a broad cultural group implicitly defined as in opposition to Catholic and nationalist interests. Internal Protestant divisions were also absent from Catholic sources such as republican witness statements. This ties into the second reason for minimising such denominational differences in the thesis. A crucial area of focus for this thesis is the question of whether Protestants were specifically targeted for revolutionary activities during the period. That republican sources did not see any real difference between the different Protestant groupings tells us this was not a key factor in determining who was targeted and who was not. This is backed up by an analysis of compensation claims made to the Irish Grants Committee in which the religious make-up of Protestant applicants was roughly in line with their composition in reality.

Most fundamentally this thesis is not a general history of Protestantism and Protestant society in Cavan, Monaghan and Fermanagh between the years 1916 to 1923. Nor is it a comprehensive narrative history of Protestants in the Revolution in these counties. No attempt will be made here to provide a full list of every revolutionary incident suffered by Protestants in the time frame. Issues are presented in a thematic fashion and relevant examples provided. This is designed to answer the research questions set out earlier. Consequently, not every incident from these counties will be provided, the general Revolution in these counties will not be recounted except where it is relevant background and Protestant society in these counties is only examined insofar as it addresses our research questions.

## Historiographical Debate

The revolutionary history of Protestantism has been limited in a number of ways. Historians of the twentieth century interested in the community have focused most heavily on the community's engagement with and assimilation into the Free State (and later the Republic).<sup>2</sup> Those studies which do exist on Irish Protestants and Unionists in the revolutionary period focus primarily on the treatment of the community and in particular on whether they were specifically targeted by the I.R.A. and for what reasons.

The question of sectarian targeting is relevant as part of a broader discussion on the reasons for the large decline in the Protestant population in Ireland between the 1911 and 1926 censuses.<sup>3</sup> It has been contended that Protestant population decline was either the result of a deliberate campaign of victimisation to drive them out of the country or a by-product of a revolution which fell overly heavily on the community's shoulders.<sup>4</sup> Recent work by Andy Bielenberg and David Fitzpatrick has convincingly refuted this assertion by highlighting longer term factors which influenced Protestant depopulation (e.g. low fertility, aging population, removal of British administrative and military personnel following independence).<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> See for example Kurt Bowen, *Protestants in a Catholic State: Ireland's Privileged Minority* (Kingston and Montreal, 1983); Ian d'Alton, 'Constructing citizenships: the Protestant search for place and loyalty in post-independence Ireland', in S. Ellis (ed.), *Enfranchising Ireland? Identity, Citizenship and State* (Dublin, 2018); Ian d'Alton, and Ida Milne (eds), *'Protestant and Irish': the minority's search for place in independent Ireland* (Cork, 2018); Heather Crawford, *Outside the glow: Protestants and Irishness in independent Ireland* (Dublin, 2010); Heather Crawford, 'Southern Irish Protestants and Irishness', *Oral History*, Vol. 39, No. 1, (Spring 2011).

<sup>3</sup> The non-Catholic population of the twenty-six 'southern' counties fell from 327,179 in 1911 to 220,723 in 1926.

<sup>4</sup> Peter Hart's *The IRA at War 1916 – 1923* (Oxford, 2003), p. 237; This interpretation has been backed up in Gerard Murphy, *The Year of Disappearances: Political Killings in Cork, 1921 – 1922* (Dublin, 2010). The loaded nature of such a discussion has meant that it has ventured outside of the academy into the 'real' world of print and social media. A useful summary of both the content and tone of the debate can be found in David Fitzpatrick, 'Ethnic Cleansing, Ethical Smearing and Irish Historians' in *History Ireland*, Vol. 93, No. 329 (Jan. 2013), pp 135 – 44.

<sup>5</sup> Andy Bielenberg, 'Exodus, the Emigration of Southern Irish Protestants during the Irish War of Independence and the Civil War' in *Past and Present*, No. 218 (Feb. 2013); David Fitzpatrick, 'Protestant Depopulation and the Irish Revolution', in *Irish Historical Studies*, vol. 38, No. 152 (Nov. 2013), pp 644 – 70.

Research on Protestantism in the Revolution has stalled, due to the relative scarcity of Protestant-specific studies and the debate's tendency to eat its own tail. Discussions cover the same narrow topics: the definition of sectarianism, demographic population analysis and case studies of the same few 'sectarian' incidents (such as the Dunmanway massacre, the Altnaveigh killings and the burning of big houses).<sup>6</sup> This thesis aims to progress the historiography in the field by moving the site of investigation away from these areas and by providing a fuller examination of this community. It places greater emphasis on underexamined issues such as Cavan and Monaghan Protestants' sense of place within the wider community, their subjective interpretations of sectarian targeting and the lived, often non-violent reality of the Revolution. It also uses the local study to allow these issues to be examined in depth and in their appropriate social context. The specific benefits of a study of Cavan, Monaghan and Fermanagh have already been established and will be discussed in detail in the section titled 'Cavan, Monaghan and Fermanagh' below.

While histories of Irish Unionists as a political force and a social group had long been a feature of Irish historiography it was not until the late 1990s that the revolutionary experience of the Protestant community began to be given serious attention.<sup>7</sup> The first of these works was R.B. McDowell's 1997 study *Crisis and Decline: The Fate of the Southern Unionists*. This is not an explicit revolutionary history. It begins with the community in their pomp, opposing Home Rule in 1884 and continues through the declaration of the Irish Republic. However, its primary focus is the Revolution and its immediate aftermath.

The book uses a loose definition of 'Southern Unionism' employing it as a social and political marker, catching anyone opposed, passively or actively, to the goal of Irish independence. McDowell's primary interest lay in describing a cultural Unionism which functionally meant Protestants. This is worth highlighting as such an approach is common throughout the historiography – to take loyalist or Unionist as the term of investigation

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<sup>6</sup> For a recent example see the letters to the editor section of *History Ireland*, Vol. 26, No. 5 (September/October 2018).

<sup>7</sup> For the definitive earlier history of southern Unionism see Patrick Buckland, *Irish Unionism I: the Anglo-Irish and the New Ireland 1885 – 1922* (Dublin, 1973).



only to primarily focus on Protestantism as the social unit of investigation.<sup>8</sup> This issue of terminology will be discussed in Chapter 1.

*Crisis and Decline* heavily informs this thesis as many of McDowell's contentions about the complex, unspoken and social nature of violence against Protestants were insightful and have not been fully explored in subsequent historiographical debates. For McDowell, the Protestant community was not targeted on the basis of their religion or culture, except insofar as their culture obliged them to deliberately draw the ire of the I.R.A. In a revolutionary context, Irish Protestant cultural ties to Britain and their alienation from the republican movement often left only one course of action available to them – to help the British administration in whatever way they could. This was one of the key motivators behind attacks during the War of Independence. They informed on suspected I.R.A. ambushes and were killed for it. They continued to act as justices of the peace and were targeted for it. Or simply they continued to show a welcome to the members of the R.I.C. and Auxiliaries.<sup>9</sup>

McDowell also situated the Protestant experience of Revolution in its broader context – a group in decline for whom republican violence represented a final blow for their community in its current form. Revolutionary actions were understood not just as an immediate threat but as part of a broader campaign whose goal was the destruction of Protestant aspirations in Ireland. The 'crisis' of the book's title is not just the Revolution but a much broader process and this thesis further describes this general crisis of Protestantism outside of its normal narrowly violent definition. This includes examining along lines McDowell suggested, where the perception of violence and of crisis was as important as its reality.

*Crisis and Decline* does have some issues and leaves a number of interesting lines of inquiry unfollowed. Its broad-church definition of southern Unionism marginalises the uniqueness of the three Ulster counties where community lines were more explicitly

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<sup>8</sup> See also: Terence Dooley, *The Decline of Unionist Politics in Monaghan, 1911 – 1923* (Maynooth, 1988); Tim Wilson, 'The Strange Death of Loyalist Monaghan' in Senia Pasetta (ed.), *Uncertain Futures: Essays about the Irish Past for Roy Foster* (Oxford, 2016).

<sup>9</sup> R.B. McDowell, *Crisis and Decline: The Fate of the Southern Unionists* (Dublin, 1997), pp 50 -101.

sectarian and where there existed more ‘southern unionists’ than anywhere else in the country.<sup>10</sup>

Its national focus is also problematic as it fails to provide sufficient local background for many of the incidents it describes and instead draws out commonalities across counties and contexts. This implies an overly uniform picture of the revolutionary experience of Protestants and, in doing so, overstates the universality of sectarian and cultural factors driving it, at the expense of petty, local concerns such as land squabbles, personal animosities and commercial rivalries. This thesis will therefore modify McDowell’s approach, combining it with a local analysis. The passive identity-based targeting of McDowell’s model cannot be fully explained outside of the local concerns and relationships which shaped how this was understood.

More controversial than *Crisis and Decline* was Peter Hart’s *the I.R.A. and its Enemies*, published the following year in 1998 and succeeded by *The I.R.A. at War* in 2003.<sup>11</sup> These books expanded on points Hart had already made in a chapter entitled: ‘The Protestant Experience of Revolution in Southern Ireland’ in Richard English and Graham Walker’s 1996 edited volume *Unionism in Modern Ireland*.<sup>12</sup> Both of these books aim to describe the social context that shaped the dynamics of the Revolution, instead of providing a straight military history. Hart was concerned with the social composition of the I.R.A.; what it meant to volunteer and how violent actions played themselves out. This book is therefore not a specific study of the Cork Protestant community. However, Hart’s work engages heavily with the Cork Protestant community as one of the I.R.A.’s ‘enemies’ and his conclusions about the nature of revolutionary violence sparked the controversy that has motivated so much of this field.

Hart’s argument ran that in the county and in many other parts of Ireland, there was a common, religious divide between Catholic nationalists and Protestant loyalists. ‘The sectarian division in Irish politics and society and the Revolution’s central organising principle of Catholic/nationalist ethnicity (along with the role of Protestantism in

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<sup>10</sup> A point well made by Alvin Jackson in his review of the book in *Irish Studies Review* Vol. 6, No. 3 (Dec. 1998).

<sup>11</sup> Hart, *The IRA at War*; Hart, *The IRA and its Enemies*.

<sup>12</sup> Peter Hart, ‘The Protestant Experience of Revolution in Southern Ireland’ in Richard English and Graham Walker (eds), *Unionism in Modern Ireland: New Perspectives on Politics and Culture* (London, 1996).

unionism), inevitably structured the Revolution north and south'.<sup>13</sup> A growing cycle of attack and reprisal in the War of Independence created a polarised political community of in-groups and out-groups and placed emphasis on easily definable communal and ethnic lines. This process accentuated the passive opposition of the majority of Protestants and Unionists.<sup>14</sup>

Hart queried the reliability of the I.R.A.'s strategic justifications for attacks, particularly those on civilians. He noted that in lists of attacks on supposedly traitorous locals (the 'spies and informers') the Protestant community was heavily over-represented. For Hart the I.R.A. designation of 'spy' could be easily appropriated as a pre-justified synonym for 'enemy'. Along with the Dunmanway murders of thirteen Protestants in April 1922 and the exodus of hundreds of local Protestants from Cork, Hart characterised a driving motive of attacks on Protestants as unspoken sectarian tension.

The Hart debate has revolved around his provocative argument that that these attacks on Protestants in the Revolution represented an attempt to remove marginal groups from the community as part of the process of creating a new Ireland, what he termed 'ethnic cleansing': 'Protestants had become fair game because they were seen as outsiders and enemies, not just by the I.R.A. but by a large segment of the Catholic population as well.'<sup>15</sup> In Hart's formulation, Protestants were specifically targeted on the basis of their identity as Protestants and loyalists and that most justifications provided for this targeting by the I.R.A. were insincere.

Hart's claims have engendered significant amounts of academic criticism and support and have set the agenda for historical debate on this subject.<sup>16</sup> This is true both in relation to the sectarian element of the I.R.A. campaign (and particularly the claims made of ethnic cleansing) and other areas where Hart was critical of the I.R.A.'s conduct. The Hart debate has become emblematic of the broader 'revisionist controversy' in Irish historiography in which revisionist historians are seen by national historians as unfairly trying to unfairly malign the Irish republican movement, either as an attempt at post-nationalist objectivity or as a reaction to the republican violence of the Troubles.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Hart, *The I.R.A. at War*, p. 20.

<sup>14</sup> Hart, *The I.R.A. at War*, p. 80.

<sup>15</sup> Peter Hart, *The IRA and its Enemies* (Oxford, 1998), p. 290.

<sup>16</sup> For a recent example see the letters to the editor section of *History Ireland*, Vol. 26, No. 5 (September/October 2018).

<sup>17</sup> Kevin Whelan. "The Revisionist Debate in Ireland." *Boundary*, Vol. 2, No. 31/1 (2004).

Notably, Niall Meehan and Brian Murphy in conjunction with the Aubane Historical Society have aimed to undermine his use of the Dunmanway murders as proof of sectarianism by demonstrating the strong evidence the I.R.A. had for thinking the victims were informers.<sup>18</sup> Debate has also centred on the reliability of the ‘spies and informers’ label. Most notably, John Borgonovo has demonstrated that I.R.A. intelligence gathering in Cork was better than Hart had realised.<sup>19</sup>

The Hart debate over the targeting of Protestants has a number of key questions which are seen as key: How much of Protestant population decline can be directly attributed to sectarian targeting and how much was based on longer-term demographic decline? How genuine were accusations of ‘spy and informer’ and was it reasonable for the I.R.A. to be more suspicious of the Protestant community in this regard? Did the Protestant community muster any real opposition to the I.R.A. such that they could be considered a threat? Were certain specific incidents such as the Dunmanway massacre or the Altnaveigh killings sectarian in nature? This final question in particular has largely degenerated into accusations over sources and the weighting given to them.<sup>20</sup>

These questions in themselves have failed to progress the debate and have often failed to identify deeper issues in how we understand the Revolution. Discussions of the use of spies and informers as a motivation for a raid are based on the assumption that single factors motivated individual raids instead of a mass of interrelated suspicions, resentments and tactical concerns. Discussions of sectarianism fail to distinguish between the rare active, self-expressed, narrowly based on religious identity sectarianism and the more common passive sectarianism in which religion served as one of many identity markers which could identify the victim as ‘unacceptable’ and which motivated the victim to act in a manner unacceptable to their attackers.

This thesis does not seek to prove or disprove Hart’s contentions. Enough has already been written to demonstrate that Protestants were not indiscriminately or

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<sup>18</sup> Brian Murphy, ‘Peter Hart, the issue of Sources’ in Brian Murphy, Niall Meehan (eds), *Troubled History, a 10th anniversary critique of Peter Hart’s ‘The IRA and its Enemies’*, (Aubane, 2008); Hart’s thesis has been challenged on similar lines by Meda Ryan in *Tom Barry, Freedom Fighter* (Cork, 2005). For pro-Hart arguments see Murphy, *The Year of Disappearances*; Robin Bury, *Buried Lives: The Protestants of Southern Ireland* (Dublin, 2017).

<sup>19</sup> John Borgonovo, *Spies, Informers, and the ‘Anti-Sinn Féin’ Society: The Intelligence War in Cork City, 1920-1921* (Dublin, 2007).

<sup>20</sup> For a recent example see the letters to the editor section of *History Ireland*, Vol. 26, No. 5 (September/October 2018).

randomly attacked during the War of Independence or Civil War. Hart's importance is in having opened up the area for discussion and in having established violence against Protestants as an important lens through which future histories of the Revolution would have to look.

While his local focus allows for more context to be provided to revolutionary events, Hart wrote about the Protestant community to draw a more accurate picture of revolutionary violence – the community itself was not his focus. He did not engage as fully in questions of boycotting or silent intimidation or public displays of force, all of which affected Protestants more intensely than Catholics. All of these were, as my thesis will show, crucial elements of the 'Protestant Revolution'. Similarly, the community's make-up, their relations with their neighbours and their dialogues about contemporary political events were rarely touched upon – an area that remains a significant lacuna in the field. The focus on Cork, a county at the heart of both periods of significant violence in the revolutionary period, only provides a description of the Protestant community in an extreme revolutionary setting. The trends and dynamics Hart identified cannot be said to be a representative picture of the country as a whole and nor did he mean them to be. The particular violence of Cork suggests the county possessed its own unique revolutionary dynamics. A greater level of violence against Protestants may suggest that Protestants in Cork were more likely to inform on and oppose the I.R.A. than elsewhere, in spite of the greater potential for reprisal, or that community relations in the county were significantly worse. However, given the small size of the Protestant community and increased risk for informing in the county it is more likely that this deviation comes from a change in the norms of revolutionary violence in the county. In either case Cork's experience was unusual and, as Gemma Clark's research has shown, and it is now more valuable for us to examine how these revolutionary dynamics played out in a quieter county that was less defined by its high rate of violence.

The controversy over the targeting of southern Protestants is one of the few historical debates to have played out as much in the public arena as it did in academic research. In terms of relative work done on the revolutionary experience of Protestants there is nowhere near as much as its public profile would suggest and many of those that do exist are the demographic studies mentioned earlier.<sup>21</sup> Much of the recent and

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<sup>21</sup> Most important here are the works cited by Bielenberg, Fitzpatrick and Bowen. Additionally, see Enda Delaney, 'The Churches and Irish Emigration to Britain, 1921-60' in *Archivum Hibernicum* vol. 52 (1998),

interesting research done on this topic has come in other works in which the question of the revolutionary experience of southern Protestantism is relevant but not the goal of the investigation – as was the case with Hart himself.

Gemma Clark examined the nature of violence and intimidation as a means of community regulation and looked at the Protestant community in particular as an example of a group outside the normal community. Her work is based on a case study of Tipperary, Limerick and Waterford. Clark notes that in many cases ‘loyalist’ was a term applied retrospectively in order to justify an attack. Animals and property bore the brunt of the attacks and Clark interprets this as being evidence of the agrarian nature of the disputes. It was an effort to force land redistribution and ostensibly tied in much more to the minority's economic identity than its cultural one.<sup>22</sup>

Brian Hughes, in his work on civilian interactions with the I.R.A. has demonstrated that factors such as class, religion and status were not inextricable and has called into question the use of religion as a blanket label that exists in isolation. Whichever is held to be the primary cause of violence can depend on the biases of the source. Crucially Hughes notes that interactions between the community and the I.R.A. were performed with an awareness of the additional meaning they had taken on due to the Revolution going on in the background: ‘manifestations of loyalty to the Crown, be they religious, political, family or otherwise were known, recognised and articulated during the independence struggle’.<sup>23</sup>

Specific studies of the Protestant community have generally taken the form of single issue or single county studies. See for example, Martin Maguire’s study of the Dublin working class, Niamh Brennan’s examination of the Irish Grants Committee files and Miriam Moffitt’s study of Protestantism in Leitrim.<sup>24</sup> These studies are valuable

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pp. 98-114; Enda Delaney *Demography, State and Society: Irish Migration to Britain, 1921-1971* (Liverpool, 2000); Robert Kennedy, *The Irish: Emigration, Marriage, and Fertility* (California, 1975) and Brian Hughes’ ‘Southern Loyalism in Context’ project.

<sup>22</sup> Gemma Clark, *Everyday Violence in the Irish Civil War* (Cambridge, 2014), pp 109 – 30; Gemma Clark, ‘Fire, boycott, threat and harm: Social and political violence within the local community. A study of three Munster counties during the Irish Civil War, 1922 – 23’ (D.Phil., University of Oxford, 2011), pp 70 – 4.

<sup>23</sup> Brian Hughes, *Defying the IRA: Intimidation, Coercion and Communities during the Irish Revolution* (Liverpool 2017), p. 207.

<sup>24</sup> Martin Maguire, ‘A Socio-Economic Analysis of the Dublin Protestant Working Class, 1870–1926’, *Irish Economic and Social History*, Vol. 20 (1993); Martin Maguire, ‘The Church of Ireland and the Problem of the Protestant Working Class of Dublin, 1870s–1930s’, in Alan Ford, James McGuire and Kenneth Milne (eds.), *As by Law Established: The Church of Ireland since the Reformation* (Dublin, 1995); Niamh

additions to the field as they bypass many of the fruitless debates which can limit such studies and instead identify key lacunae in the field. Maguire's study remains one of the only studies to even attempt to enumerate a Protestant working class, while Brennan was one of the first historians to engage fully with the Irish Grant Committee files as they related to the history of the Protestant community.

Moffitt's Leitrim study follows a model that could be replicated elsewhere for different counties and which has informed the approach of this thesis to measuring Unionist activity in Cavan and Monaghan. Based heavily on local newspapers and starting before the Revolution it initially focuses on the question of Protestant population decline in Leitrim before going on to explore Unionist organisation through Unionist clubs and the Orange lodges and how this organised Unionism opposed Home Rule. It combines a statistical consideration of population decline through the census with a detailed thematic look at the violence suffered by the community. This thesis is particularly influenced by Moffitt's thematic instead of chronological approach to describing revolutionary violence.

Monaghan has drawn the attention of no less than three historians and its studies of Protestantism have generally been the most academic and provided the most new insights into the field.<sup>25</sup> The question of why Monaghan was selected as part of this thesis if it has already been so well covered will be answered later in the introduction but fundamentally this thesis asks questions of the Monaghan case study that those previous studies did not. Monaghan is a popular subject because of its large Protestant population, the multiple republican testimonies held in the Monaghan County Museum (discussed below) and its position on the fringes of Ulster.

Terence Dooley was the first to give the county sustained treatment in a series of articles in the *Clogher Record*, later condensed into the 2000 monograph *The Plight of the Monaghan Protestants, 1912 – 1926*.<sup>26</sup> Dooley adopted a narrowly-focused, strongly

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Brennan 'A political minefield: southern loyalists, the Irish Grants Committee and the British government, 1922–31', *Irish Historical Studies*, Vol. 30, No. 119 (1997), pp. 406–19; Miriam Moffitt, 'The Protestant experience of Revolution in County Leitrim, 1911 – 1928', *Breifne Historical Journal*, Vol. 11 No. 46 (2011), pp 303 – 23.

<sup>25</sup> Terence Dooley and Tim Wilson will be discussed in more detail in the historiography. The remaining historian is Edward Micheau, 'Sectarian conflict in Monaghan' in David Fitzpatrick (ed.), *Revolution? Ireland, 1917–1923* (Dublin, 1990).

<sup>26</sup> Dooley, *The Decline of Unionist Politics in Monaghan*; Terence Dooley, 'Monaghan Protestants in a time of crisis, 1919–22', in R. V. Comerford, et al. (eds.), *Religion, Conflict and Coexistence in Ireland: Essays presented to Monsignor Patrick Corish* (Dublin, 1990); Terence Dooley, 'Why Monaghan

narrative approach in his research, identifying key themes in the Protestant experience in the county and then describing how they played out in the county. These themes include the Belfast Boycott, Great War recruitment, the Ulster Volunteers, the Boundary Commission and partition.

Dooley's work is strongest when dealing with the motivations and weaknesses of Monaghan Unionism. The first half of *Plight* and 'Organisation of Unionist Opposition' both emphasise the same key elements of political Unionism in the county – namely that its appeal was muted compared to elsewhere in the North. Its tradition of Ulster Unionism meant that there was a pre-existing structure for communal organisation but the motivation to utilise it was lacking. This was seen in Monaghan's apparently underwhelming support for war recruitment.<sup>27</sup> The real motivators for the community were the fear of being abandoned by partition and the later need to defend oneself from perceived roaming bands of ravenous republicans. Some attacks were sectarian but the community had far greater trouble with the general military tensions along the border between the I.R.A. and the Northern state.<sup>28</sup>

Dooley's work also demonstrates clearly the key elements of active Unionism in the county: the importance of public marches and rallies, the clustering of power in the hands of a few strong Unionists such as Michael Knight of Clones, the abiding sense of abandonment and tragedy following partition.

However, Dooley's work has two primary issues which this thesis hopes to engage with. Firstly, Dooley's account of the revolutionary violence suffered by Protestants is less useful, perhaps as this is not his primary focus. It leans on a few prominent events such as the murder of the Fleming family and the Belfast Boycott and does not describe in detail the lived everyday realities of Protestants during the Revolution. There is nothing on campaigns of threat or non-Belfast boycotting. Agrarian campaigns outside of those suffered by large landowners are not dealt with, nor did he explore the dynamics of how

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Protestants Opposed Home Rule', *Clogher Record*, Vol. 14, No. 3 (1993); Terence Dooley, 'From the Belfast Boycott to the Boundary Commission: Fears and Hopes in County Monaghan', *Clogher Record*, Vol. 15, No. 1 (1994); Terence Dooley, 'The Organisation of Unionist Opposition to Home Rule in Counties Monaghan, Cavan and Donegal, 1885 – 1914', *Clogher Record*, Vol 16. No. 1 (1997); Terence Dooley, 'County Monaghan, 1914 – 1918: Recruitment, the Rise of Sinn Féin and the Partition Crisis', *Clogher Record*, Vol 16. No. 2 (1998); Terence Dooley, *The Plight of Monaghan Protestants, 1912 – 1926* (Dublin, 2000).

<sup>27</sup> Dooley, *Plight of the Monaghan Protestants*, pp 28 – 30.

<sup>28</sup> Dooley, *Plight of the Monaghan Protestants*, pp 42 – 5.



Monaghan Protestant identity and anti-Republican action intersected. Accusations of spying and informing are referenced only in regard to the murder of Kitty Carroll (who is labelled as a Protestant when she appears in the 1911 census as a Catholic). These are all perhaps the result of when Dooley was writing – in the early 1990s before the release of currently available compensation files greatly expanded our understanding as revolutionary dynamics as demonstrated in the work of Clark, Hughes and Fitzpatrick.<sup>29</sup>

Secondly, Dooley's work is primarily political, focusing on a few key movements and leaders. His aim was not to describe the patterns of Unionist ideology in Monaghan at the time nor was it to provide a completely representative picture of Unionism in the county.<sup>30</sup> The question of Monaghan's own tenuous relationship to Ulster, of whether the boundary line formalised by partition had always partially existed, is not investigated and Monaghan's relationship to its neighbours Cavan and Fermanagh is rarely delved into.

This lacuna in the research has been recognised by other historians, notably Tim Wilson who described a vibrant and active Unionist opposition to the I.R.A. in Monaghan during the Revolution.<sup>31</sup> Wilson drew together strands of Dooley's own work detailing the social background to organised Unionism and his own on Unionist subjectivities on the border and violence. Wilson's work is a progression of Dooley's but remains a snapshot in time of a single issue – in Wilson's case organised loyalist opposition. There is little effort to present a general view of the 'crisis' facing Protestants at the time, merely one aspect of it.

Cavan's Protestants have had less research specifically dedicated towards studying their Revolution. Brian Hughes has not produced a general history of the county but has used the county as a detailed example in his book *Defying the I.R.A.* Hughes adopts an 'accordion' approach combining general developments and themes across the whole island with very local case studies such as in Cavan and Belfast. While Hughes' concern here is not specifically on the Protestant community his examination of casual defiance of the republican movement leads him to discuss multiple cases involving the community.

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<sup>29</sup> Brian Hughes, *Defying the IRA? Intimidation, Coercion, and Communities during the Irish Revolution* (Liverpool, 2016); Gemma Clark, *Everyday Violence in the Irish Civil War* (Cambridge, 2014); David Fitzpatrick (ed.) *Terror in Ireland: 1916 – 1923* (Dublin, 2012); David Fitzpatrick, *Descendancy: Irish Protestant Histories since 1795* (Cambridge, 2014).

<sup>30</sup> This is truer of some works than others and in particular 'From the Belfast Boycott to the Boundary Commission: Fears and Hopes in County Monaghan' (1994) engages with the subjective concerns of the community. However, this does not seem to inform his later research.

<sup>31</sup> Wilson, 'Strange Death of Loyalist Monaghan', pp. 180 – 4.

He correctly emphasises that Cavan's quiet Revolution did not lead to a proportional lessening of tension within the community and that fear of targeting was very much alive in the county. Hughes also attributes the same fundamental sectarian division that drove the Revolution in six-county Ulster to Cavan, Monaghan and Donegal, albeit in a moderated form.<sup>32</sup>

Hughes looked at boycotting in the county and specifically in the town of Arva in an article in the *Historical Journal* in 2016 (a case we will look at in Chapter 2).<sup>33</sup> This article does not describe a Cavan-specific experience but rather uses a particularly weighty dataset in the Irish Grants Committee files to examine how loyalism and the loyalist revolutionary experience were articulated by the community to the British government. This article was an important attempt to expand the debate about Protestant revolutionary experience into the subjective experience of Revolution. For Hughes, Protestants are active agents in their own right, capable of adapting and engaging with the Revolution and its consequences rather than mere victims who passively endured it. The relationship between opinions about the sectarian nature of the Revolution and the culture of fear, suspicion and the desire to secure financial compensation is also underlined.

This is the situation facing the study of revolutionary Protestantism as it currently stands. There is a rift between the general studies of Protestants in particular (or of phenomena which Protestants fit in to such as revolutionary violence, political mobilisation, partition) and single-issue local studies (with a few notable exceptions such as Hughes). These general studies are useful for providing broad developments and themes and for opening up new interrogative frameworks with which we can view the topic, however they are less useful for describing the deep variety of revolutionary experiences and their immediate contexts. Local studies meanwhile provide great depth and complexity to individual events but are unwilling to use this depth to draw bigger conclusions. Additionally, the model of local studies involving single issues examined in a chronological narrative manner has predominated instead of the more thematic, question-focused model used by David Fitzpatrick in *Politics and Irish Life*.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Hughes, *Defying the IRA* pp 133 – 4.

<sup>33</sup> Brian Hughes, 'Loyalists and loyalism in a southern Irish community' in *Historical Journal* Vol. 58, No. 4. pp 1075 – 1105.

<sup>34</sup> David Fitzpatrick, *Politics and Irish Life, 1913–1921: Provincial Experience of War and*

This is partially a consequence of the limited booklet and article forms that local studies of Protestants are most frequently published in and this thesis therefore will take advantage of the myriad possibilities that a long-form local, comparative investigation will bring forth.

### Cavan, Monaghan and Fermanagh

We have spoken about the advantages of a local study when done correctly, however we have not engaged with why Cavan, Monaghan and Fermanagh were selected beyond their obviously unusual position around the time of partition. This section of the introduction will discuss the background to the counties we have selected as well as demonstrate why they are a valid selection for comparison. This will show the strong social and economic similarities between the counties and their uniqueness from the rest of Ireland. More attention will be paid to the main focus of our study: Cavan and Monaghan, than will be paid to Fermanagh.

The county study has been a standard academic methodological approach to revolutionary history since the publication in 1977 of David Fitzpatrick's *Politics and Irish Life: Provincial Experience of War and Revolution, 1913 – 1921*. A growing body of work has focused on the Revolution in counties as diverse as Meath, Limerick, and Longford with a great deal on Cork.<sup>35</sup> In addition to this there are the numerous older

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*Revolution* (Dublin, 1977).

<sup>35</sup> Oliver Coogan, *Politics and War in Meath, 1913 – 1923* (Dublin, 1983); John O'Callaghan, *Revolutionary Limerick: The Republican Campaign for Independence in Limerick, 1913–1921* (Dublin, 2010); Marie Coleman, *County Longford and the Irish Revolution, 1910–1923* (Dublin, 2003); Peter Hart, *The IRA and its Enemies* (Oxford, 1998); Peter Hart, *The I.R.A. at War 1916–1923* (Oxford, 2005); John Borgonovo, *Spies, Informers and the 'Anti-Sinn Féin Society': The Intelligence War in Cork City, 1920–21* (Dublin, 2006); For other studies see Sinéad Joy, *The IRA in Kerry 1916–1921* (Cork, 2005); T. Ryle Dwyer, *Tans, Terror and Troubles: Kerry's Real Fighting Story* (Cork, 2001); Pádraig Óg Ó Ruairc, *Blood on the Banner: the Republican Struggle in Clare 1913–1923* (Cork, 2009); Thomas Toomey, *The War of Independence in Limerick: also covering action in the border areas of Tipperary, Cork, Kerry and Clare* (Limerick, 2010); William Henry, *Blood for Blood: the Black and Tan War in Galway* (Cork, 2012); Dominic Price, *The Flame and the Candle: the War in Mayo, 1919–1924* (Cork, 2012); James Durney, *The War of Independence in Kildare* (Cork, 2013); Michael Farry, *Sligo: the Irish Revolution, 1912–1923* (Dublin, 2013); Fergal McCluskey, *Tyrone: the Irish Revolution, 1912–23* (Dublin, 2014); Pat McCarthy, *Waterford: the Irish Revolution, 1912–1923* (Dublin, 2015).

local studies done by local historians such as the work of Peadar Livingstone on the Clogher region of Ulster.<sup>36</sup>

The local study allows for the Revolution to be examined at a great level of detail and this body of work has uncovered a huge amount of information about the day to day dynamics of the Revolution. The smaller scope allows for a deeper reading of local sources such as newspapers, police reports and local recollections. A local study also allows for greater background to be provided to specific revolutionary actions and the extension of the chronological scope backwards or forwards in time as needed.

This thesis takes Fitzpatrick's work as a partial model. This does not mean this thesis is an attempt to describe a Revolution through a few key groups as Fitzpatrick did. Rather his use of the local study as a means to limit the range of events being examined and his use of a thematic instead of chronological structure will be taken as a model. This model has also been used by other historians such as Peter Hart and Gemma Clark in their own examinations of revolutionary dynamics.<sup>37</sup>

This thesis also moves away from a single county approach and instead focuses on a thematically consistent range of areas: in this case Cavan, Monaghan and Fermanagh. Other historians such as Joost Augusteijn and Gemma Clarke have undertaken studies with multiple counties as the focus. However, in those cases this was primarily to widen the sourcebase to allow for a focused investigation of a specific theme: the experience of ordinary Volunteers in Augusteijn's case and of various revolutionary activities in Clarke's case.<sup>38</sup> In these cases the investigation is national in intent with the local study merely being a comparative structure through which ideas and themes can be shown to be true across multiple counties and therefore not simply the product of particular local factors. In effect, the county examination is designed to disprove the local element. This concern can be seen in Augusteijn's selected counties: Derry, Wexford, Tipperary and Waterford.

This thesis, by contrast, is an attempt to move beyond the single county study to discuss and demonstrate themes common to a larger area. In this case, Cavan and

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<sup>36</sup> Peadar Livingstone, *The Fermanagh Story* (Enniskillen, 1969); Peadar Livingstone, *The Monaghan Story* (Enniskillen, 1979).

<sup>37</sup> Hart, *IRA at War*; Gemma Clark, *Everyday Violence in the Irish Civil War* (Cambridge, 2014).

<sup>38</sup> Joost Augusteijn, *From public defiance to guerrilla warfare: the experience of ordinary volunteers in the Irish War of Independence* (Dublin, 1996); Clark, *Everyday Violence*.

Monaghan are obviously united by their common experience on the border, similar Protestant populations and presence in Ulster. By drawing out these similarities we can also search for consistencies in their differences: for example, Cavan's much quieter and less assertive Protestant community (as described in Chapter 1) is contrasted with Monaghan's more organised community. This is later suggested as a reason for greater Protestant resistance to republican raids in Monaghan than Cavan. We are also provided with a greater range of experiences to examine and contrast: the urban Presbyterians of Drum and Clones can be contrasted to the rural Anglicans of Arva. Taking such an approach provides us with a more fluid sense of area and sense of place and allows the thesis to draw out identities larger than those of the county. A study of Monaghan's Fermanagh border is dominated by the towns of Roslea and Clones, while the addition of Cavan allows us to see the experience of smaller towns like Belturbet and Ballyconnell as well. By taking the counties together we are able to identify areas that run between both counties such as the area of strong Protestant settlement clustered around Drum in Monaghan and Cootehill in Cavan. In doing so, this allows us to see more clearly internal county differences: the experience of North-East Cavan is more similar to that of South-West Monaghan than it is to that of West Cavan.

The value of a dedicated study of Protestantism in Cavan, Monaghan and Fermanagh is obvious. The three Ulster counties excluded from Northern Ireland by partition represent a unique case-study for those interested in the revolutionary period and revolutionary Protestantism in particular. Protestants of the three 'southern' Ulster counties of Cavan, Monaghan and Donegal had organised on the same lines as their six-county co-religionists. They had signed the Ulster Covenant and in doing so attempted to sunder their political fate from that of loyalists in the other three provinces. They saw no strong distinction between their own claim to belong in a separate Protestant Ulster state and the claims of those in the six counties (at least in public). However, with the foundation of a six-county Northern Ireland they were in turn sundered by their fellow Covenanters and forced to adapt as newly 'southern' Unionists. In doing so, the border they occupied shifted. They went from being the southern-facing border of Ulster to the northern-facing border of the Free State. This left them in an uncomfortable, ambiguous position as both northern Southern Unionists and southern Ulster Unionists with limited cultural ties to any other group within the Free State which added to their sense of abandonment and crisis.

Choosing these counties allows us to examine a community caught in the middle, as the title of this thesis suggests. By looking at a group who had organised around an 'Ulster' identity even when that identity was being challenged elsewhere, we can examine the degree to which the identity formation and polarisation which took place in Irish Protestantism in the early twentieth century was a representation of a genuine feeling of cultural difference and how much was cold political negotiation. Additionally, the greater numerousness of Protestants in these counties allowed for a more assertive and public community, in contrast to its shyer and more retiring cousin farther into the south. Studying Protestantism in these counties allows us to examine the influence this greater publicness had on determining the prevalence and shape of revolutionary violence against the community. This is an investigation which could only take place in the three Ulster counties of Cavan, Monaghan and Donegal, as we shall see when we examine Fermanagh, very quickly when you progressed into Northern Ireland Protestant population became too great for any sustained, county-wide campaign of revolutionary violence to take place.

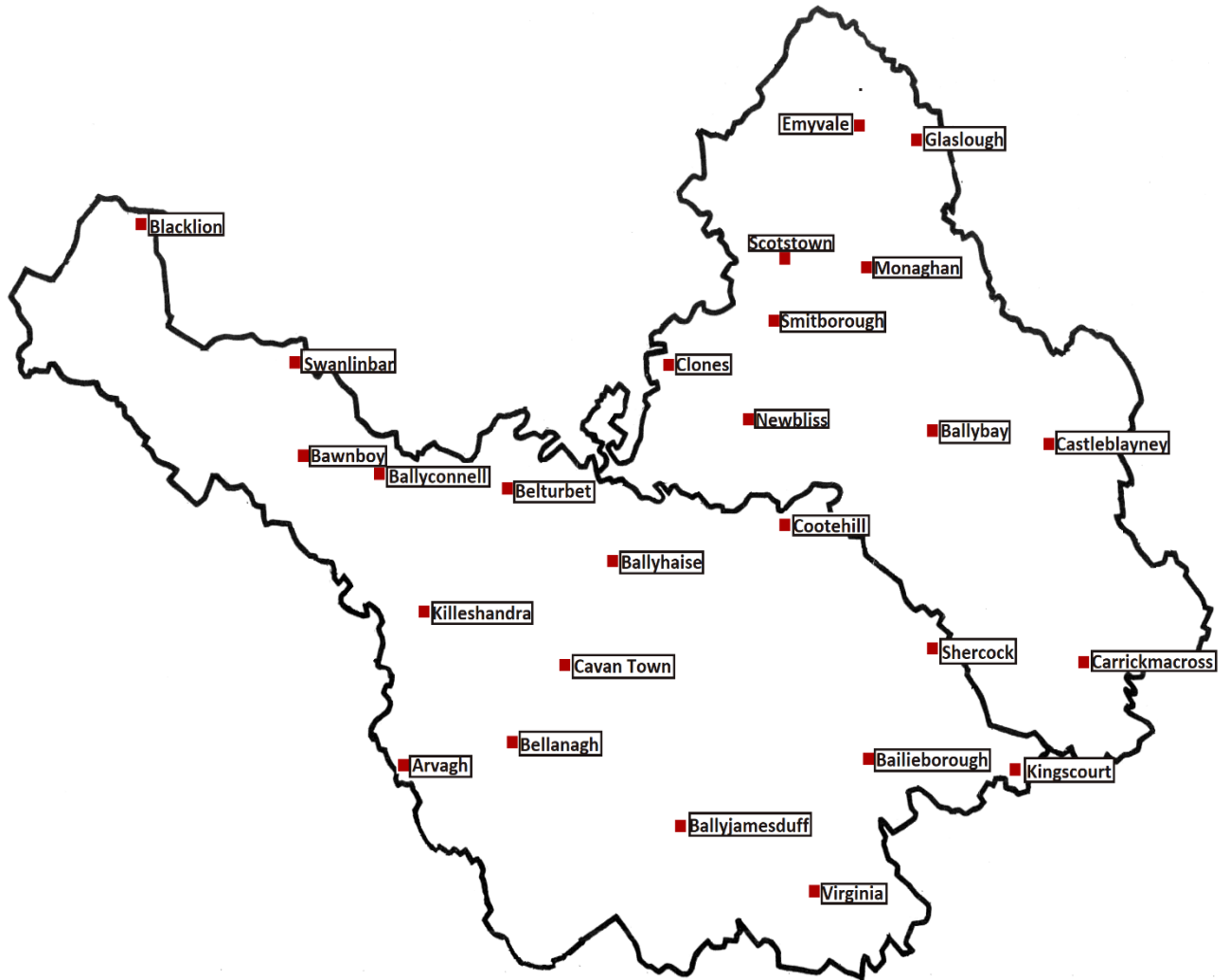
Three county Protestantism was unique in a number of other ways. It was proportionally more numerous than in any other 'southern' county outside of Dublin, Kildare or Wicklow whose numbers were bolstered by British military and administrative personnel. Additionally, their strong Ulster heritage led to the presence of Ulster clubs, Orange lodges and Ulster Volunteers in the county which further bolstered Protestant identity and organisation in the county.

Table 0.2 – Counties and County Boroughs of the future Free State with the highest non-Catholic population in 1911 census

<b>County</b>	<b>% Non-Catholic</b>
Dublin	29.0%
Monaghan	25.3%
Donegal	21.1%
Wicklow	20.9%
Cavan	18.5%
Kildare	17.9%
Dublin Borough	16.9%
Cork Borough	11.6%
Queen's	11.3%
Carlow	10.9%

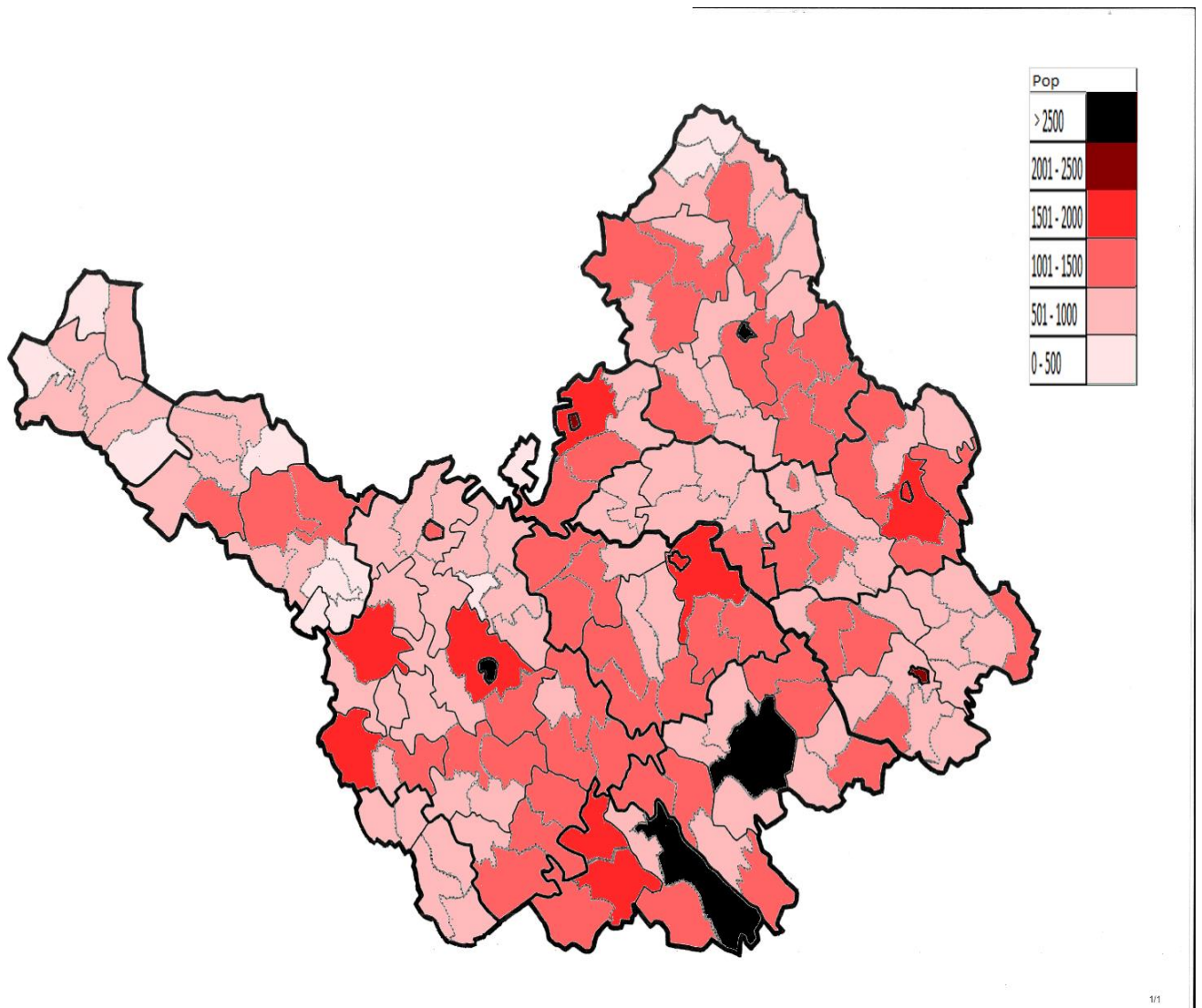
Monaghan and Cavan are suitable joint sites for this investigation because of the strong similarities in their demographic and social structures. Population in Cavan was focused in the east of the county away from its border with Fermanagh and close to its border with Leinster. The primary towns were Cavan in the centre of the county, Ballyjamesduff and Virginia in the south-east, Bailieborough in the east and Cootehill in the north. Belturbet and Ballyconnell were the most significant settlements on the Fermanagh border. The Protestant population in the county clustered in those towns and along the Monaghan border. Monaghan was less urban than Cavan with Monaghan, Clones, Carrickmacross and Castleblayney dominant. Population clustered in a band from Monaghan town to Castleblayney and around Clones on the Fermanagh border. The Protestant population was more strongly localised in the north of the county and particularly around Clones. For visualisations of this see Maps 1.3 to 1.5 below:

Map 0.1 – Towns of Cavan and Monaghan

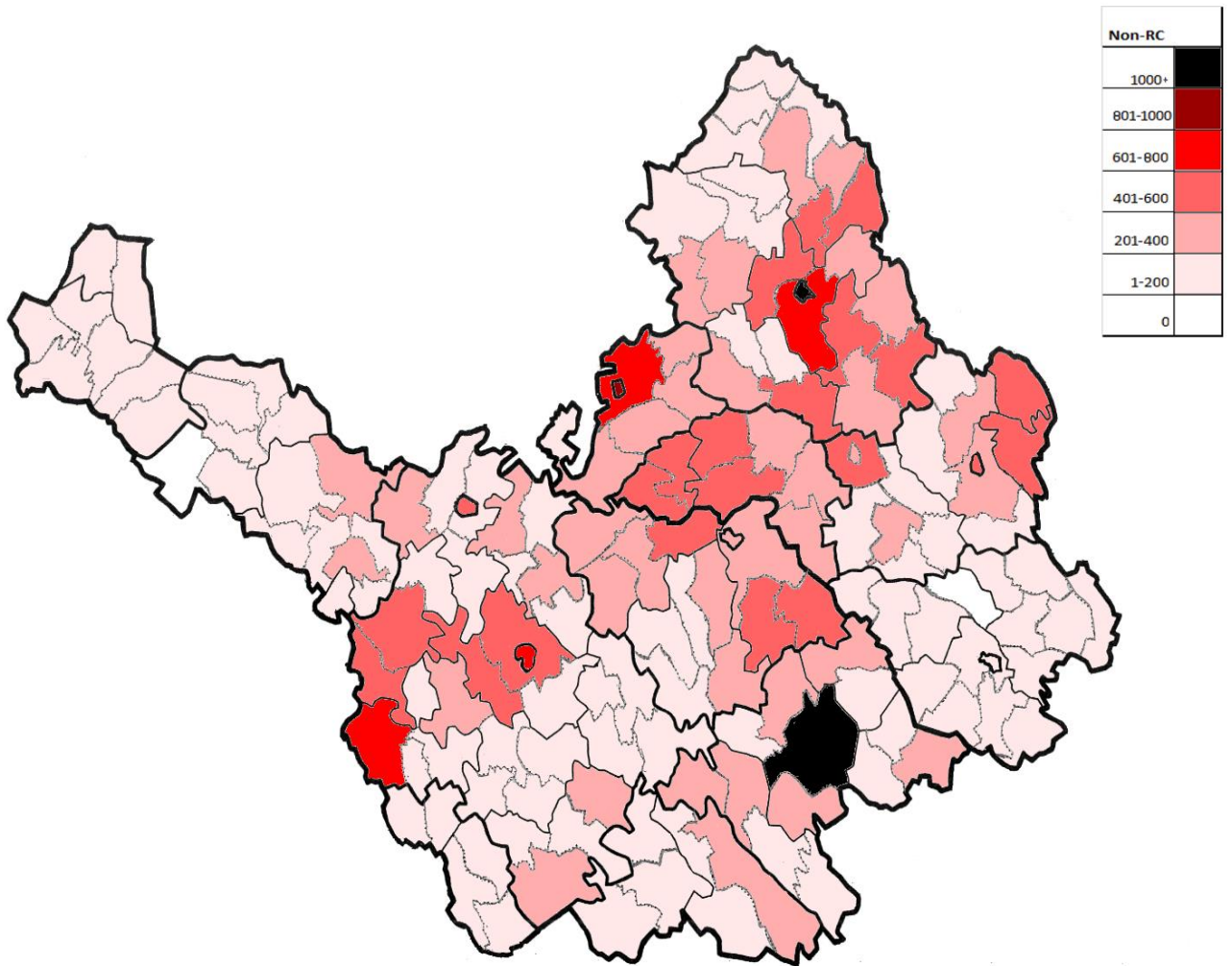




Map 0.2 – 1911 Population of Cavan and Monaghan by District Electoral Division



Map 0.3 – 1911 Non-Catholic Population of Cavan and Monaghan by District Electoral Division



In terms of their economic and occupational profile Cavan and Monaghan were far more similar to each other than to the national picture. Tables 0.3 and 0.4 below demonstrates the similarity in the occupational profiles of the two counties. They were predominately agricultural with mild industrial representation as well. The proportion of farmers and agricultural labourers in both counties was roughly even, although Monaghan has strikingly more in door farm servants.

More specifically for the Protestant community, Table 0.5 demonstrates the proportion of each occupational class made up of non-Catholics (the easiest model for capturing Protestant population and one that will recur throughout the thesis). Non-Catholics in Cavan and Monaghan followed the national model by being overrepresented in the professional and commercial sectors and being underrepresented in the domestic and agricultural sectors. Although Monaghan non-Catholics are much more strongly underrepresented in agriculture and overrepresented in commerce than in Cavan, reflecting their tendency to cluster in urban areas.

Table 0.3 – Distribution of Occupational Classes in Cavan, Monaghan and nationally in 1911 census

	<b>National</b>	<b>Monaghan</b>	<b>Cavan</b>
<b>Professional</b>	3%	2%	2%
<b>Domestic</b>	4%	3%	3%
<b>Commercial</b>	2%	1%	1%
<b>Agricultural</b>	18%	37%	30%
<b>Industrial</b>	13%	6%	6%
<b>Not-Producing</b>	60%	51%	59%

Table 0.4 – Distribution of common occupations in Cavan, Monaghan and nationally in 1911 census

<b>Occupations 1911</b>	<b>National</b>	<b>Cavan</b>	<b>Monaghan</b>
Farmer, Grazier	8.9%	16.9%	14.7%
Farmers, Graziers (incl. family members)	4.0%	7.2%	4.9%
Agricultural Labourer, Cottager	3.0%	3.9%	2.1%
Domestic Indoor Servant	3.0%	2.3%	2.4%
Farm Servant (in-door)	1.5%	2.0%	15.2%
General Labourer	3.5%	1.7%	1.4%

Table 0.5 – Distribution of occupational classes for non-Catholics in Cavan, Monaghan and at National Level, and their variance from average county non-Catholic population in 1911 census

<b>Non-RC</b>	<b>National</b>	<b>Diff</b>	<b>Cavan</b>	<b>Diff</b>	<b>Monaghan</b>	<b>Diff</b>
Professional	43%	17%	26%	7%	35%	10%
Domestic	16%	-10%	13%	-6%	20%	-5%
Commercial	41%	15%	28%	9%	36%	11%
Agricultural	16%	-10%	15%	-4%	14%	-11%
Industrial	31%	5%	15%	-4%	23%	-2%
Not producing	26%	0%	21%	2%	27%	2%
Average	26%		19%		25%	

*Note: In this table a positive value in a 'Diff' column indicates overrepresentation and a negative value indicates underrepresentation.*

The agricultural compositions of Monaghan and Cavan were similar and distinct from Connacht, Leinster and Munster. In 1915 both counties had an average farm size of nine hectares (Cavan) and eight hectares (Monaghan). This was in contrast to the national average of fourteen. Cavan had 17,900 farms while Monaghan had 14,000. These farms covered 82% of Cavan's land area and 87% of that of Monaghan. Only 28% (Cavan) and

22% (Monaghan) of farms were tenanted in 1916 compared with a national average of 35%.<sup>39</sup>

The two counties had similar agricultural profiles with oats and potatoes being the primary crops grown although Monaghan also had a flax growing industry. The table below details the primary uses of land under crop in 1911. Additionally, both counties had similar levels of pastoral farming with 1.4 cows and 0.2 sheep per person in Cavan and 1.3 cows and 0.2 sheep in Monaghan.

Table 0.6 – Primary use of Land under Crops in Cavan and Monaghan in 1911

	Wheat	Oats	Grain	Potatoes	Turnips	Others	Flax	Hay	Meadow
Cavan	1%	20%	0%	15%	2%	2%	0%	12%	41%
Monaghan	1%	34%	1%	16%	5%	1%	3%	25%	15%

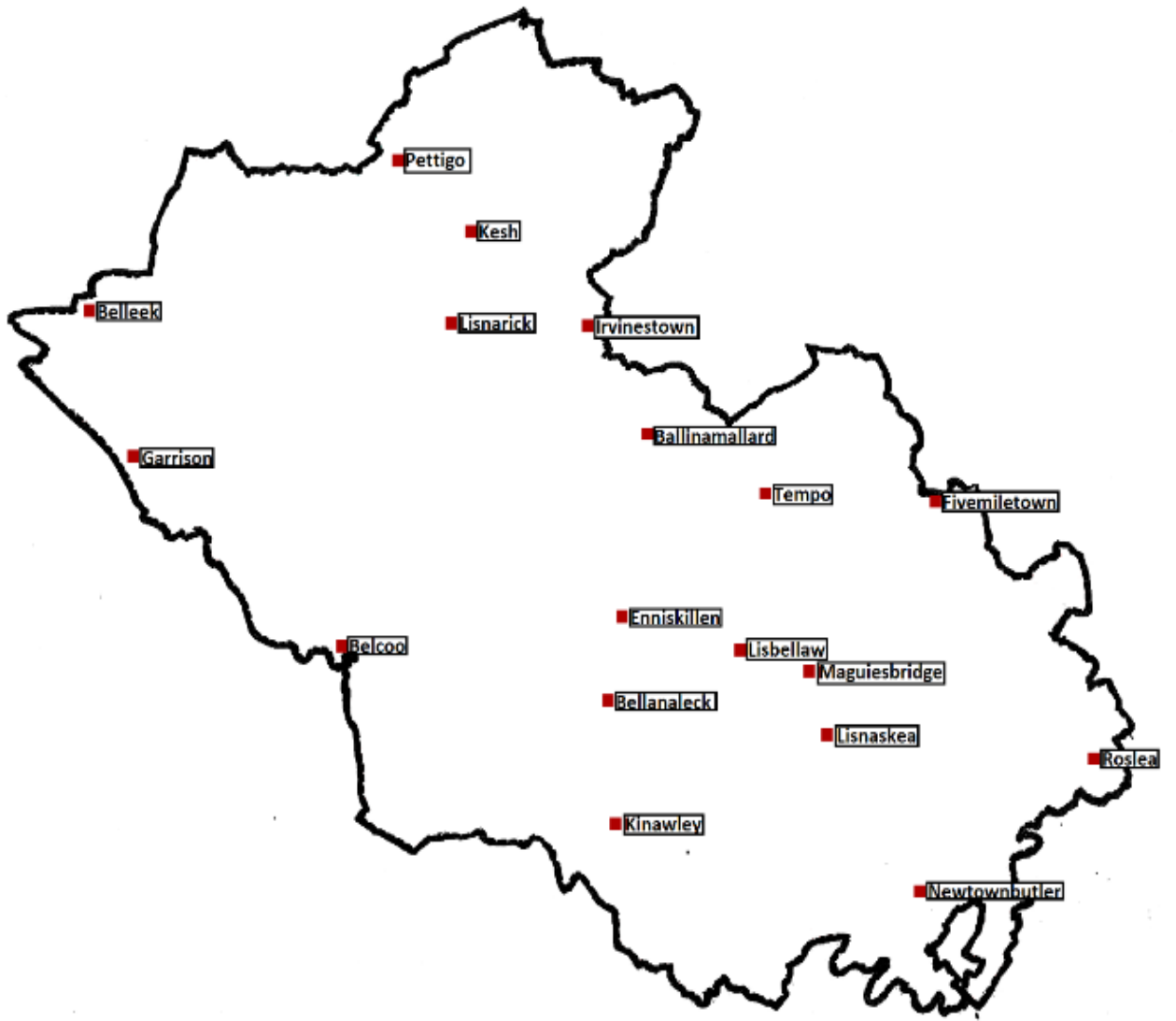
Source: Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction for Ireland, *Agricultural Statistics Ireland for 1911* (Dublin, 1911)

As Fermanagh exists as a comparison to Cavan and Monaghan it is not necessary to demonstrate their similarities. However, an overview of its geographical and social composition will be provided to make the later examination clearer. Fermanagh was a much more sparsely populated county than Cavan or Monaghan despite its size. The Lough Erne basin (comprising Upper and Lower Lough Erne and countless smaller lakes) essentially cut the county into north-eastern and south-western halves with the narrow point of connection being through Enniskillen. In 1911, Enniskillen dominated the county and its various DEDs held nearly 10% of the total population.<sup>40</sup> Lisnaskea and Irvinestown were the other two significant urban areas while population also clustered around the towns of Roslea and, near the Donegal border, at Inishmacsaint. In terms of religion, Protestants clustered much more strongly in the north near the Tyrone border while the area along the Cavan and Monaghan border was almost entirely Catholic. This information is visualised in Maps 1.10 to 1.12 below:

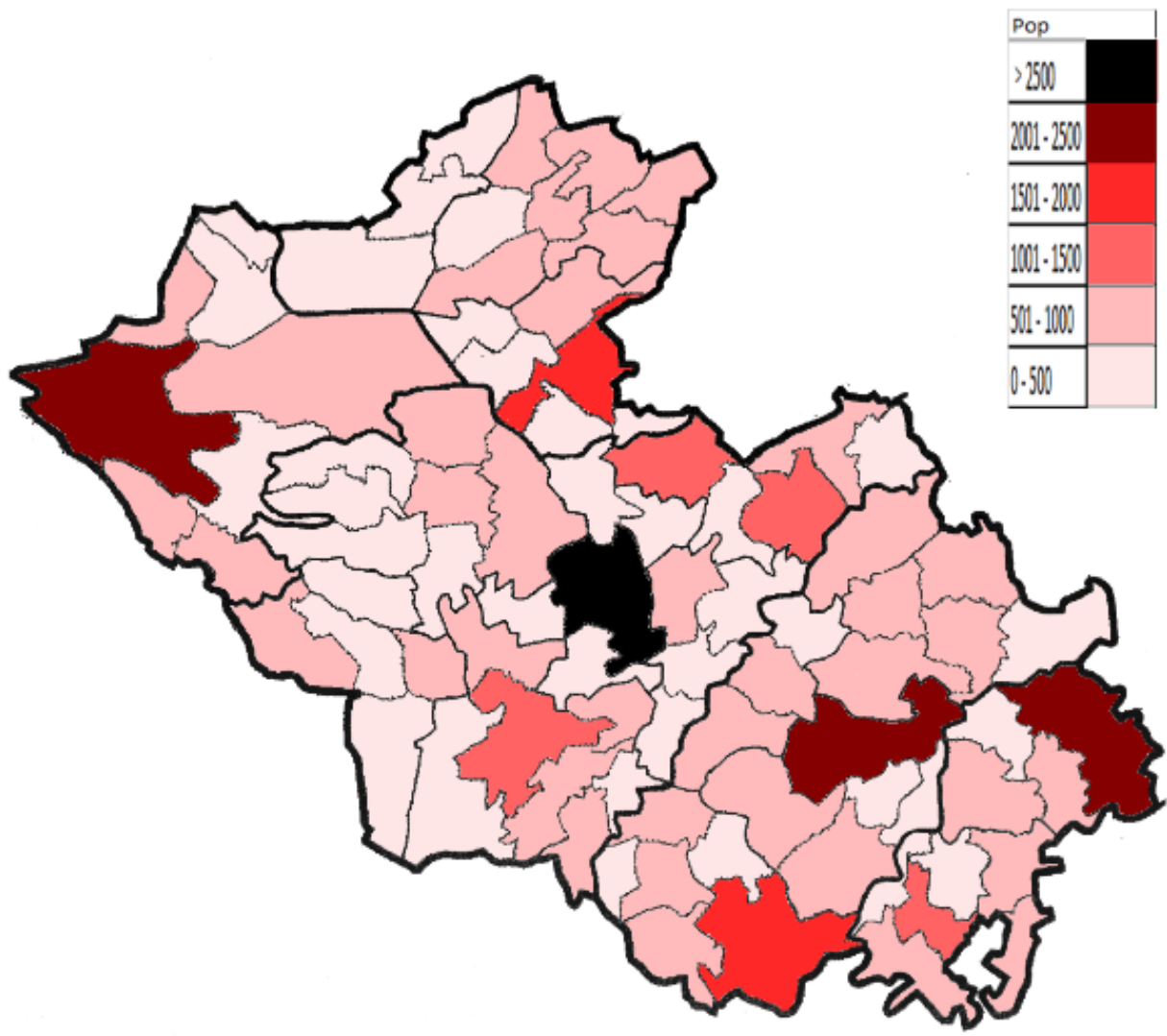
<sup>39</sup> All data taken from 'Farming since the Famine CSO, Census of Agriculture CSO' accessed at <https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-1916/1916irl/economy/ag/> on 02/07/2018

<sup>40</sup> These DEDs are Enniskillen North, South, East and Rural.

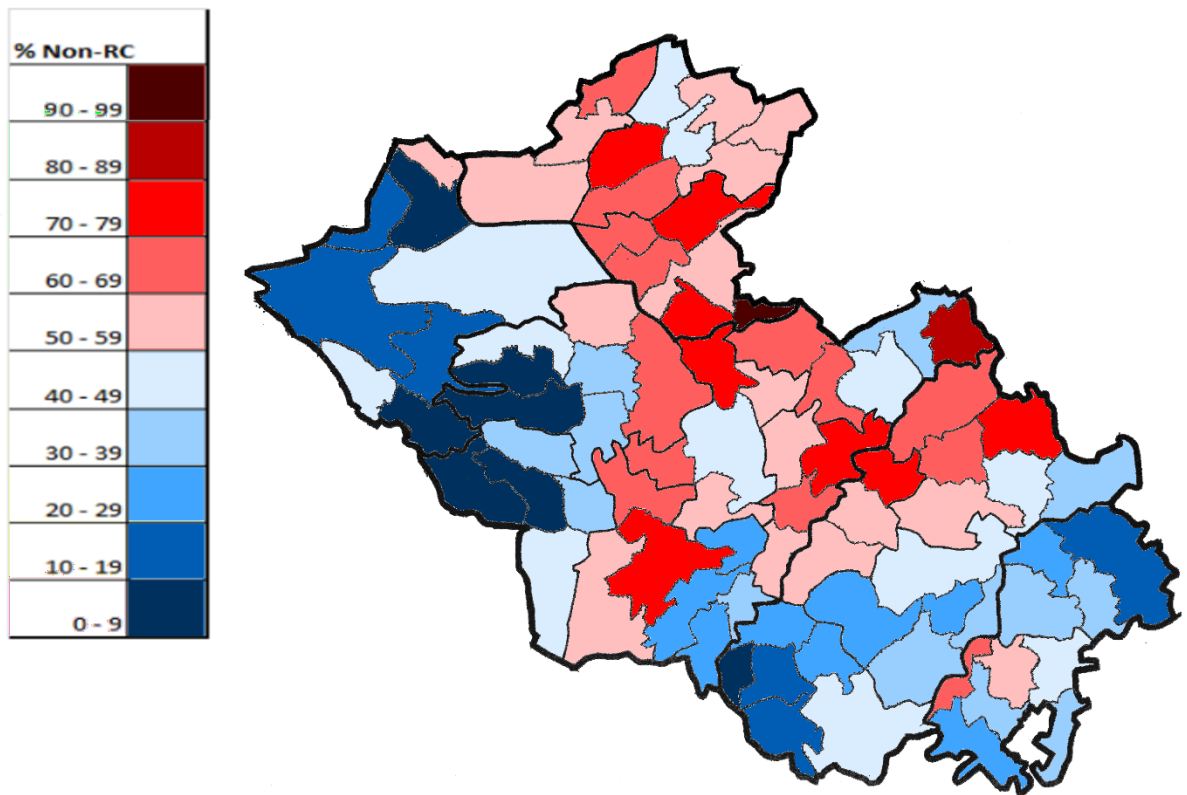
Map 0.4 – Towns of Fermanagh



Map 0.5 – 1911 Population of Fermanagh by District Electoral Division



Map 0.6 – 1911 Religious Make-Up of Fermanagh District Electoral Division



*This method is preferred to the non-Catholic population distribution in total numbers used for Cavan and Monaghan as the population is large enough that a proportional view such as this will not obscure them due to the volume of Catholics*

In terms of agriculture, like Cavan and Monaghan, the county's main crops were oats and potatoes and they had a similar ratio of livestock with 1.6 cows per person and 0.2 sheep. The occupational profile also roughly matched that of Cavan and Monaghan as seen in Table 0.7. Table 0.8 demonstrates that Fermanagh Protestants were overrepresented in the same areas as in Cavan and Monaghan but also heavily overrepresented in the Domestic class of worker – a consequence of a larger Protestant working class allowing for the exclusive hiring of Protestant workers in certain areas.



Table 0.7 – Distribution of occupational classes in Fermanagh in 1911 census

<b>Fermanagh</b>	
Professional	2%
Domestic	2%
Commercial	1%
Agricultural	29%
Industrial	8%
Not-Producing	58%

Table 0.8 - Distribution of occupational classes for non-Catholics in Fermanagh, and their variance from average non-Catholic population nationally in 1911 census

<b>Non-RC</b>	<b>Fermanagh</b>	<b>Diff</b>
Professional	57%	13%
Domestic	55%	11%
Commercial	54%	10%
Agricultural	39%	-5%
Industrial	38%	-6%
Not-Producing	46%	2%
Average	44%	

Donegal was not investigated in this thesis because of time limitations and as a decision on the focus of the thesis. Donegal was far more distinct from Cavan and Monaghan than Cavan and Monaghan were from each other. It shared no border with them, and its Protestant population was clustered in a few key areas. Donegal was also uniquely impacted by partition with its minimal border with the rest of the Free State. While Cavan and Monaghan represented a transition zone from northern to southern Protestantism, Donegal was an anomaly. Donegal could have been included and the research focus shifted to a general history of three-county Protestantism which drew out the differences between the three counties. However, it was decided that the inclusion of Fermanagh would allow an investigation of the border and partition more clearly. This made thematic sense as these were the defining issues in the crisis present in Cavan and Monaghan Protestantism in this time.

## Thesis outline

The first chapter situates Cavan and Monaghan Protestants in their broader communal context. To do this it engages with a number of issues surrounding the degree to which Cavan and Monaghan Unionism was an ‘Ulster’ Unionism. We have already established why it is relevant to ask whether Protestants in these counties simply bought into the concept of a pan-Ulster identity as the best means to secure their own safety from Home Rule or whether it was a genuine identification. However, our challenge exists in identifying how something so subjective and internal can be reliably measured. I propose a number of tests to measure this; such as membership of Unionist organisations and response to war recruitment. This is then combined with a direct study of our second research question: how Protestants and Unionists in these counties reacted to the establishment of Northern Ireland. A variety of sources are used to capture the political and popular resistance in Cavan, Monaghan and Donegal to partition, and their subsequent adaptation.

If the first section of the chapter can be seen as an examination of Protestant relations with their coreligionists in the six counties that would become Northern Ireland, the second deals with their relationship with their Catholic neighbours. In many ways this was the key relationship in defining how their views of the Revolution and any potential southern state came from. Personal memoirs and testimonies are used to recreate the subjective world of personal relationships. Additionally, the chapter examines how the presence or absence of a ‘public’ Unionism which contested elections, marched openly and worked as a party in public bodies shaped inter-community relations. Finally, the chapter explores how the Revolution and the ‘war on Protestants’ were understood in public Protestant dialogues in the counties and how themes such as sectarianism were emphasised regardless of their historicity.

This chapter deals in detail with one of our primary research objectives – describing the unique shape of Ulster Unionism on the periphery of the province. It complicates our understanding of six-county partition as a cut along the most obvious available line and raises salient points about the nature of what it meant to be ‘of Ulster’. This will be relevant when we look at Fermanagh. It also provides us with the important ideological context which will inform our understanding of later questions of sectarianism. I argue

that the broader sense of abandonment and public portrayals of the Revolution as a uniquely brutal and sectarian phenomenon (both in political speeches and in the media) heavily influenced how the Protestant community in Cavan and Monaghan understood a house raid or a trade boycott. In some cases, this portrayal and the anxiety it caused those who feared they would be the victim of a raid can be better characterised as their revolutionary experience than any action of the I.R.A. itself.

The second chapter deals with the one of two dominant aspects of revolutionary activity in Cavan and Monaghan: boycotting. This term is defined broadly so that we can focus on those themes which recur throughout. Boycotting is taken to include all cases of the social and economic isolation of a victim. The chapter is split into two sections dealing in detail firstly with the Belfast Boycott and secondly with the more general non-Belfast boycotting, which has been neglected in the historiography. I argue that boycotting is underappreciated as a feature of the lived Revolution and that for most people engagement with the boycott, either as victim or participant, formed the bulk of their revolutionary experience.

I argue that boycotting was an effective mechanism through which the targeting of a single individual could come to affect an entire community. It was one of the few revolutionary activities which involved the majority of the community. While raids or threatening letters could be explained away as the work of a few disaffected individuals and not the consequence of anything deeper seated, the boycott provided the clearest example of a widespread community engagement with the campaign. Protestants, through normal 'loyal' actions such as engaging socially with British forces were far more likely to be so targeted. I also argue that Cavan and Monaghan Protestants were uniquely unfortunate as some of the few Ulstermen with enough connections to Belfast to be hurt by the Belfast Boycott but with no Northern state to protect them.

The third chapter deals with raiding, defined to include all aspects of purposeful revolutionary violence: house robbery, arson, assault, intimidation and murder. It is subdivided into seven sections. The first describes the complications of revolutionary raiding, common forms house raids and arson took, their long-term impact and the unintended consequences they had. This section draws out some neglected elements of revolutionary violence: that recklessness or apathy are underused lenses through which to examine the violence of a raid, that the relationship between a threat and its realisation

was opaque, and that raids had very real consequences even years after they were completed. This section is designed to provide a structure and context for the later sections while also demonstrating some of the failings with our current understanding of revolutionary violence. Primarily it serves to complicate the model of the raid and broader revolutionary violence as an act (or acts) with clearly defined motivations and goals. It shows that the violence of a raid was not predetermined by the severity of the infraction, indeed often what called it down was unclear. Its consequences were just as frequently unintended and had an aftermath far beyond the control of either victim or perpetrator.

The second, third and fourth sections of this chapter explore a number of common explanations for revolutionary violence. Were raids and acts of violence designed to punish ‘spies and informants’ as has been so often contended? How legitimate was suspicion of the Protestant community as British sympathisers and therefore potential fifth columnists? How sectarian a motivation was the searching of houses for arms? What role did agrarian agitation and animosities play in motivating attacks on a household? In all of these cases I argue that although the initial motivation was non-sectarian, such instances still fell disproportionately hard on the Protestant community. This was because the Protestant community in Cavan and Monaghan was, like elsewhere, placed passively in opposition to the I.R.A. but, unlike elsewhere, it was too large a group to be safely ignored. I also argue that those actions which drew violence upon the Protestant community were not unusual or egregious but were important parts of Monaghan and Cavan Protestantism (i.e. being in the Orange Order or holding a U.V.F. rifle). Distinguishing between violence motivated by someone’s Protestantism or an attack motivated by an action that was a consequence of their Protestantism is pointless pedantry that attempts an impossibly clean division of revolutionary motivations.

The fifth section engages with Protestant resistance to the I.R.A. Given that the community in both counties was so heavily outnumbered and was cautious in their interactions with their Catholic neighbours, this resistance was surprising. This chapter argues that this grew from the sense of abandonment and desperation felt by the community post-partition and tied into the Unionist and U.V.F. heritage of the community. It demonstrates this resistance was as strong in Cavan, where it has been ignored, as Monaghan but also underlines the fundamental peripherality of this response.

Having thus established the general shape of revolutionary violence in Cavan and Monaghan; its common themes, motivations and consequence, the sixth section provides a detailed examination of the most egregious case of violence against a Protestant: the murder of Dean John Finlay. Dean Finlay was an elderly and popular Anglican cleric with no real connections to the British administration. His murder challenges our understanding of revolutionary violence in the period. This chapter argues that the case was only unusual in its outcomes; its underlying motivations were consistent with other cases and that the fact that it led to the death of Dean Finlay does not suggest something about the case was fundamentally different but rather that most raids had the capacity to lead to similar outcomes, however unlikely.

Finally, the seventh section proves that the targeting of the Protestant community had a unique character by providing an alternate case study of the other large group in Cavan and Monaghan which were opposed to republicanism and which were targeted as a result: The Ancient Order of Hibernians. In doing this I propose that violence against Hibernians was fundamentally different in how it manifested and that Protestants were therefore not simply one group of victims among many.

The fourth and fifth chapters provide a counterpoint to Cavan and Monaghan by examining the Protestant Unionist community north of the border in Fermanagh. The fourth chapter deals with Fermanagh's engagement with those issues raised in the first chapter: the concept of an Ulster identity, Protestant-Catholic relations and the impact of partition. It argues that although Fermanagh Protestants were still a minority their increased numbers fundamentally altered their relationship with their Catholic neighbours as they aggressively contested the public space. In doing so it provides an insight into the choices of Cavan and Monaghan Protestants to only occasionally contest the public space and more frequently to concede it. It also provides a possible example of how Cavan and Monaghan Unionism would have developed had they been included in Northern Ireland by discussing how Fermanagh's precariousness in the North fundamentally shaped their brand of Ulster Unionism. Fermanagh was the county in which the least opposition was seen to the exclusion of Cavan, Monaghan and Donegal. The chapter examines how Fermanagh Protestants articulated a theory of identity that allowed them to claim the county as Protestant despite demographic realities. Fermanagh Protestants sought to demonstrate a contrast between themselves and their southern neighbours and in doing so contributed to the creation of a border identity.

The fifth chapter deals with the pattern of revolutionary violence in Fermanagh, providing a contrast with chapters two and three. We see that Fermanagh's greater Unionist population again changed the dynamics of Protestant engagement with the I.R.A. as intimidation and boycott were less effective and resistance more prevalent. More importantly, the establishment of a Protestant state allowed for a phenomenon we do not see to any strong degree in Cavan or Monaghan: Protestant on Catholic violence. Attention is given in particular to three key events: the burning of Roslea, the occupation of Pettigo-Belleek and the Clones Affray. In looking at these we see that the border defined the conflict in Fermanagh, generating violence and tension on its own. The chapter notes that all three of these events, especially Pettigo and Clones, were 'bordered' as they were the result of a North-South opposition and understood as such.

The final chapter deals with migration into Fermanagh. We have already seen that Protestant migration has become one of the key issues around which the debate on sectarianism in the Revolution revolves. Were Protestants driven out of the country during the Revolution? Did they flee the prospect of a Catholic-dominated Free State? This chapter eschews a discussion on population and fertility numbers to instead focus on the process of migration at a local level and on the border where the act of crossing states could be much simpler. For those about to leave Cavan was it more tempting to cut local ties completely and move to London or Belfast, or was it better to move a few miles down the road into Fermanagh? The chapter is split into two sections. The first uses James Cooper's 1926 census of Protestant migrants into Fermanagh between 1921 and 1926. This is a unique and underutilised source that provides a comprehensive breakdown of the religious backgrounds of the migrants, as well as their occupations and birthplaces. It demonstrates that the influx of Protestants into Fermanagh following partition had been exaggerated as well as describing the type of individual who would make the journey. Proximity to the border was a key feature determining what made someone likely to move. The second section uses the 1911 and 1926 census reports for Ireland, Northern Ireland and the Free State to establish a more general pattern of migration into Fermanagh. It demonstrates that no real religious pattern for migration either into or out of Fermanagh can be established. It shows that the populations of Cavan, Monaghan and Fermanagh were deeply enmeshed and partition caused a great disturbance for Catholic and Protestant alike.

## Major Sources

We shall now move our attention to the major sources which inform this thesis and how their inclusion has shaped and complicated our analysis. We will examine these sources roughly in order of their prominence in the thesis. Newspapers are a major source in this thesis, in particular local Unionist newspapers. They are used for two primary purposes. Firstly, they provide a general narrative of events in the counties. This includes accounts of revolutionary activities, but it extends to accounts of speeches at local Twelfth and on election campaigns, and the proceedings of local bodies such as Urban Councils and Boards of Guardians.

Secondly, they are used to discern local Protestant attitudes on a range of topics from political developments to their own identity. Editorials provide the newspapers' own 'house' view on these topics which is useful when traced consistently through the years so that the papers' focuses and biases emerge more clearly. Letters to the editor can fulfil the same purpose but can also challenge the editorial line depending on how tolerant the paper was of dissent (such letters are more common in the *Fermanagh Times* than the *Impartial Reporter* for example). Additionally, the views of other Protestants emerge through reports of the speeches mentioned earlier or debates in local bodies. It is a risk to rely solely on one paper for this and a wide range of newspapers have therefore been employed. The background, context and popularity of these newspapers has also been provided. These newspapers exist in a dialogue with one another and through their interaction we can find a more representative truth.

These are the main papers being employed. The *Northern Standard* was a strongly Unionist paper published in Monaghan and with an office in Cavan town as well. It was distributed throughout the surrounding counties. The paper had a strong record of pro-Ulster, pro-war rhetoric and its editor in 1915, Thomas J. Kennedy, had been killed in the battle of the Somme on 9 September 1916.<sup>41</sup> His successor, Alfred Shannon was editor of the *Portadown Express* before his appointment and he continued in the role until May 1920 when he died of a heart attack.<sup>42</sup> Both men were Presbyterians, and neither were from the county, Shannon coming from Londonderry and Kennedy from Tyrone. It was

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<sup>41</sup> *Belfast Newsletter*, 16 September 1916.

<sup>42</sup> *Donegal News*, 15 May 1920.

owned by William Swann until 1920 and Philip McMinn afterwards – both men were native Monaghan Presbyterians.<sup>43</sup> The *Standard* was the unchallenged paper of record for Monaghan and Cavan Unionists. Significant editions such as that following a raid on Monaghan town in August 1922 reached second and third print runs.<sup>44</sup> By 1922, the paper could be bought through fifty agents in Monaghan and another twenty in Cavan.<sup>45</sup>

To provide balance to the *Standard* much use has been made of its Nationalist counterpart the *Anglo-Celt* to verify reports and to provide alternate interpretations. Although the *Celt* was based in Cavan it was the primary Nationalist newspaper in Monaghan too, along with the *Dundalk Democrat* which was also consulted. The other Unionist paper in the county at the time was the Cavan-based *Irish Post and Weekly Telegraph for Cavan and the Midlands*. The paper had been established in 1910 to provide a native Cavan Protestant voice in public affairs. Unfortunately, it never fully established its own market and was killed off by the Belfast Boycott in 1920.

For Fermanagh the primary newspapers are the *Impartial Reporter* and the *Fermanagh Times*. The *Reporter* was the largest paper in Fermanagh at the time and was edited by prominent local Unionist, William Copeland Trimble. Trimble was an important figure in the development of Fermanagh Unionism. He had founded the Enniskillen Horse in 1912, an act which earned him great prestige in the Unionist community.<sup>46</sup> He had inherited the *Impartial Reporter* from his father William Trimble Sr in 1883. It was the third oldest newspaper in Ireland and had been founded by the Trimble family. Between 1919 and 1922, Trimble published a well-received multi-volume history of Enniskillen.<sup>47</sup> He served as chairman of the Irish Newspaper Owners Association and its later incarnation Associated Irish Newspapers.<sup>48</sup>

Trimble and the *Reporter* are useful and prolific sources for Fermanagh Unionism in this period. No arch-conservative, Trimble spent his younger years agitating against

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<sup>43</sup> Alan O'Day, *Longman Handbook of Modern Irish History Since 1800* (Oxford, 2005) p 386; Both men are found in Diamond, Monaghan Urban, in the 1911 census.

<sup>44</sup> *Northern Standard*, 25 August 1922.

<sup>45</sup> *Northern Standard*, 27 January 1922.

<sup>46</sup> Papers relating to the Enniskillen Horse, TNA CO 904/27/1; Timothy Bowman, 'The North Began: But When? The Formation of the Ulster Volunteer Force' in *History Ireland*, Vol. 21, No. 2 (March/April 2013), p 29.

<sup>47</sup> Richard Froggett, 'William Copeland Trimble (1851 - 1941)' in Kate Newmann (ed), *Dictionary of Ulster Biography* (Belfast, 1993).

<sup>48</sup> *Irish Examiner*, 8 January 1919.



Fermanagh and Cavan landlords for tenants' rights.<sup>49</sup> The *Reporter* in this period was the largest Fermanagh-based newspaper. As a historical source it is imperfect, it focused very heavily on Enniskillen where it was based and had been founded to be the voice of a middle-class audience so voices from lower down the social scale were rare. However, it still provided the most significant and popular Protestant voice from the county and was the driving force behind a number of popular campaigns such as the Roslea relief fund, which were testament to its influence.<sup>50</sup>

Its biggest competitor was the *Fermanagh Times*, which had been set up by landlords to counter Trimble and which came to be viewed as the mouthpiece of the Orange Order.<sup>51</sup> In this period it was owned and run by William Ritchie. While Trimble was a Presbyterian, Ritchie was an Anglican.<sup>52</sup> There was some animosity between the papers, although the *Times* was more invested in this rivalry than the *Reporter*. Columns were given over to disparaging reports on the *Reporter*'s insistence on areas as eclectic as referring to Enniskillen as Inniskilling and the moral dangers of alcohol and dance.<sup>53</sup> Trimble himself was called 'the most tactless man in town' and his own travails on the Enniskillen Urban Council were reported on with relish.<sup>54</sup> However despite this enmity, there was a significant overlap in the Fermanagh identity both papers espoused.

While these are the five primary newspapers used in the thesis other papers are employed as well to provide alternate perspectives. The *Fermanagh Herald* was the main Catholic newspaper used for Fermanagh. The *Irish Times*, *Freeman's Journal* and *Irish Independent* provide a Dublin perspective while the *Belfast Telegraph* and the *Ulster Herald* provide a Belfast equivalent. The *Church of Ireland Gazette* is employed for a general Anglican voice on affairs while the *Hibernian Journal* does the same for the Ancient Order of Hibernians and constitutional nationalism.

Our second significant source are the compensation claims made to the Personal Injuries Committee in Ireland and the Irish Grants Committee in Britain. These claims

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<sup>49</sup> Desmond McCabe, 'William Copeland Trimble (1851 – 1941)' in James McGuire & James Quinn (eds), *Dictionary of Irish Biography* (Cambridge, 2009).

<sup>50</sup> McCabe, 'Trimble'; Froggett 'Trimble'.

<sup>51</sup> *Fermanagh Times*, 26 August 1920.

<sup>52</sup> Both present on East Bridge Street and Townhall Street in Enniskillen East in National Archives of Ireland, *Census of Ireland 1901/1911* (<http://www.census.nationalarchives.ie> : accessed 24 November 2016).

<sup>53</sup> *Fermanagh Times*, 18 January 1923; *Fermanagh Times*, 28 February 1918.

<sup>54</sup> *Fermanagh Times*, 3 February 1921.

are used for two key purpose. Firstly, they provide us with detailed, personal narratives of revolutionary violence. In this they are the most useful source providing a victim's voice we are provided with. Secondly, they are used to examine how concepts such as 'loyalty' and the Protestant view of their place within the community were understood and articulated by the community. In treating them like this we are following the model used by Gemma Clarke and Brian Hughes.

The Irish Grants Committee was set up in London to provide compensation to those who could demonstrate that they had suffered hardship or loss due to their loyalty to the British Crown in Southern Ireland between 11 July 1921 and 12 May 1923.<sup>55</sup> It was one of a number of such committees set up in in the aftermath of the War of Independence. A Dáil Éireann resolution of 1 November 1922 committed the government to drafting compensation legislation for incidents that occurred after 11 July 1921.<sup>56</sup> This eventually became the 1923 Compensation Act which was later supplemented by the Personal Injuries Committee.<sup>57</sup>

The British Government established the Shaw Compensation (Ireland) Commission which examined thousands of claims from 1 January 1919 to 11 July 1921. Jurisdictional issues created by the establishment of the Free State were resolved by the British and Irish authorities agreeing to compensate those loyal to them for injuries to property, person and emotional hardship.<sup>58</sup> The British Government founded the Irish Grants Committee in 1922 to provide loans and grants to Irish migrants arriving in Britain who claimed to have fled Ireland due to their loyalty to Britain.<sup>59</sup>

The files comprise the applications made to this committee by those seeking compensation. These claims were vetted by the I.G.C.'s own investigators to see if the cases could be viewed as genuine. The applicants had to provide a summary of the incident or incidents that had incurred the loss as well as evidence of this loss. They then had to prove that this loss was occasioned by their loyalty to the British state both by their own testimony and then by backing it up with two references of acceptable character.

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<sup>55</sup> Clark, *Everyday Violence* p. 24.

<sup>56</sup> 'Irish Free State. Compensation for injury to persons and property. Memorandum', p. 7, 1923, Cmd 1844, XVIII. 115 (House of Commons Parliamentary Papers database)

<sup>57</sup> Compensation (Personal Injuries) Committee. (N.A.I., FIN 1/3103).

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>59</sup> Brennan, 'A Political Minefield', pp 406-10.

Figures of local importance like bank managers, ex-R.I.C. sergeants and clergymen were the most commonly put forward as referees and were expected to stake their reputation on each case. In addition, the civil servants examining the case used their own trusted sources to independently investigate the case. This system of trusted references allows us to be reasonably sure of the basic details of an applicant's situation and construct a rough image of who was applying to these funds.

There are issues with the compensation claims as a sourcebase that we must keep in mind as we use them. Most obviously compensation claims were written with a specific goal in mind: to secure monetary compensation for the applicant. The Personal Injuries Committee in Ireland only needed proof that an injury had taken place and so we need only view with suspicion the scale of the loss. The Irish Grants Committee meanwhile also needed proof that such an injury had been brought on by the victim's loyalty to Britain. Consequently, the claims to loyalty made in the applications should be met with a healthy scepticism. It is arguable that the existence of the Committee had already pre-biased the sources as its very establishment accepted on a national scale the principle that being a loyalist in revolutionary Ireland could inspire violence, particularly when many such claims go no further than stating simply that the applicant 'was a loyalist'. However, examining the ways in which people articulated their loyalty is still useful as even inauthentic professions of loyalty still demonstrated ideas about how loyalty should be professed and justified, and the reasons through which loyalists might be targeted.

The reference system for the I.G.C. was also flawed. A small pool of largely Protestant referees recurred again and again (for example the Rev. William MacDougall appeared in half of all Cavan references). Additionally, the low level of applications (only a hundred or so I.G.C. applications exist for Cavan and Monaghan) demonstrates that applying to the Committee was not a widespread occurrence and some local areas, like Arva, can recur very heavily in the sourcebase due to local factors such as a man in the town offering to write applications to the Committee on people's behalf.

Therefore, when using compensation claims we must be very careful about what information we take from them. We can rely on them to provide detailed accounts of specific types of events, such as fake executions or the receiving of threatening letters, but the narratives they provide should be supplemented and challenged with other sources. We can still use their discussions of loyalty as a motivator for revolutionary

violence, but we do so with a focus on what they tell us about subjective understandings of loyalism and violence. Geographical conclusions which can be drawn from them are limited and we must look for common themes across a wide number of applications.

Applications to the Free State government for compensation are less problematic in this regard. They are a relatively straightforward question of the veracity of a claim and the Irish government was more sceptical and unwilling to pay than the I.G.C. An issue is that there was no religious or political affiliation more likely to apply for compensation and neither religion nor an expression of loyalty is provided in the application. Therefore, we are required to cross-reference applicants with the census to identify Protestant applicants and to see how they are distinct from the Catholic applicants. However, they provide detailed accounts of events which are also recounted in other sources such as the burning of the house of Henry Leslie in Dawsongrove, Monaghan. Although there are far more application claims here, there is less material for us to work with as regards revolutionary violence specifically against Protestants.

To provide an alternate account of revolutionary violence we shall also employ the witness statements of former Republicans in sources as wide-ranging as the Bureau of Military History, the Marron Collection, the Brennan papers, the Fitzpatrick papers, the O’Kane Collection and the O’Malley notebooks. These are employed in two ways. Firstly, to provide both a basic narrative of revolutionary actions and how they were justified. Secondly, to examine how the Protestant community was represented in non-Protestant sources. In both these uses, the contrast between Protestant and republican narratives of the Revolution will be crucial.

Of these republican sources, the Bureau of Military History statements are the most well-known as they cover the entire island. They comprise of testimony from participants in the Irish Revolution collected in the 1940s and 1950s. The testimony given ranges from two pages of a bullet-pointed itinerary to multiple files of detailed narrative. The B.M.H. is an extensive and valuable source as it captures the activities of the I.R.A. and their attitudes to their work and community. The language they used to describe their targets tells us much about how they viewed their role in the Revolution as well as their relationship with these targets.

The Marron Collection and the O’Kane Collection comprise interviews and witness statements much like the B.M.H. but with a specific focus on Ulster. Like the B.M.H.

they were collected decades after the Revolution but these collections were made on the initiative of individuals: Fr. Laurence Marron in Monaghan and Fr. Louis O’Kane in Armagh. The Marron Collection is composed of written statements focusing on Monaghan with some material on Cavan, Fermanagh and Tyrone. The O’Kane collection is primarily audio interviews with a focus on Armagh, Down and Monaghan particularly. They are less numerous than the B.M.H. statements but go into far greater detail and, in the case of the O’Kane collection, the relationship between the collector and his subject is far more obvious as you also hear the interviewer. In both cases the testimony provided is directed by the interviewer and, as both initiatives were inspired by local history, is primarily concerned with comprehensive lists of brigade members and activities.

The Brennan and Fitzpatrick papers are also held in Monaghan Museum and comprise official records from the I.R.A. in Monaghan with some coverage of surrounding counties. They are less useful than the Marron and O’Kane collections in providing a clear narrative of republican activity in the county, but they do contain important I.R.A. memos and are particularly rich in material relating to the Belfast Boycott. They also function as a test on the reliability of the information of the Marron collection, often providing direct documentary evidence for claims within the Marron testimony.

The O’Malley notebooks are a series of interviews conducted by Ernie O’Malley primarily with his former anti-treaty colleagues also during the 1940s and 1950s. They exist as handwritten notebooks in the U.C.D. archives which can be hard to parse although efforts to commercially transcribe have been made.<sup>60</sup> For this thesis, the transcribed editions were initially used and any information identified was then checked against the original. They contained similar types of testimony as the B.M.H. and Marron collections: first-person narratives that describe particular instances in great detail but often default to lists of brigade members and activities. They provide a more informal and anti-treaty perspective on events, which is welcome given the failure of the B.M.H. to capture many anti-Treaty voices.

These witness statement sources have a number of issues. The B.M.H. focuses heavily on Munster leaving us with less sources for the North. The O’Kane and O’Malley

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<sup>60</sup> For the example of this most relevant to this thesis see: Siobhra Aiken, Fearghal Mac Bhloscaidh, Liam Ó Duibhir, Diarmuid Ó Tuama & Cormac K.H. O’Malley (eds), *The Men Will Talk to Me: Ernie O’Malley’s Interviews with the Northern Divisions* (Dublin, 2018).

testimonies also focus heavily elsewhere. The time-lapse between the events and their recounting also puts doubt on the reliability of any one testimony, requiring us to employ many statements in a comparative way to be as reliable as we can. Additionally, testimony was not rigorously fact-checked, and many accounts of events can be exaggerated. Many witnesses also pass over more controversial topics – such as the killing of Dean John Finlay. Certain types of event – such as the raiding of a single house multiple times, the commandeering of motorcars or the driving of cattle – come up far less often in these statements than they do in other sources.

As there is a lack of comprehensive Protestant sources relating to the revolution I was required to expand my reading to other republican sources to supplement my narrative. This included the Military Service Pension Collection in the Military Archives and online; the Collins papers, the Civil War Operations and Intelligence Reports in the Military Archives; and the Mulcahy Papers in UCD. These sources were used primarily used to establish a chronology of Revolution in the counties and identify crucial events within it. However, they were also scanned in detail for smaller references to ‘Protestant resistance’ or ‘spies and informers’. These references were then placed in the larger context of similar references made in other sources to look for what was common across all sources and what was different.

These were complemented by the weekly activity reports of the R.I.C. County Inspectors for Cavan, Monaghan and Fermanagh; as well their weekly summaries of outrages in the county. These sources are useful for establishing a narrative of events and for providing an official, third-party view of events in the county. Particularly for Fermanagh they are a useful source for the state of tension that existed between the Catholic and Protestant communities. For specific in-depth cases (such as the deaths of Dean John Finlay and Kitty Carroll) the records of the military courts of inquiry for the War Office were also consulted.

The primary Unionist sources consulted included records of the Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland in the Orange Order Archives and the Diocesan Synod Reports in the Representative Church Body Library. Both of these sources are useful for investigating how these particular crises were articulated by the Protestant community in public assemblies. These reports allow us an occasion to see how the trends and themes we have observed in Cavan and Monaghan were represented to Protestants and Unionists of

different communities. The reports of the Orange Order, as a representation of a particularly active and Ulster focused Unionism, capture the confusion and anger of the three county Unionists at their invidious position. These sources should be approached with caution, particularly the synod reports, as the discussions within were made with one eye on the national scene. They are primarily useful as a means to view common ways in which the Revolution and attacks on Protestant were articulated.

The Public Record Office of Northern Ireland holds a number of collections which provide an insight into official Unionist policy in Fermanagh such as the Basil Brooke papers, the Home Office secret series and the papers of the Prime Minister. These cover official responses to issues as diverse as the B Specials, the border, Unionist militias, the Clones Affray, Pettigo occupation and Roslea burnings. Records of the Ulster Unionist Council also cover the period leading up to partition and the resistance led by three-county Unionists to partition on those terms. In this capacity they are primarily used to establish a clear narrative but also contain the voices of many Protestants outside of government discussing the impact partition had on them. These include letters written to the Ulster Unionist Council in protest, requests for compensation and aid from southern Unionists who had fled over the border and official petitions and publications on behalf of three county Unionists.

Additionally, the correspondence of prominent Tyrone Unionist Hugh de Fellenberg Montgomery provides an informal insight into how significant local Unionists such as Michael Knight and Lord Farnham spoke about the 'dual crisis' with their friends. The candour of these letters is their key strength as is the fact that Montgomery corresponded with Unionists in the three counties and the six counties. His collection therefore contains one of the best resources for measuring the divergence of opinion between the two camps as the period of the thesis draws on.

The papers of the Southern Irish Loyalist Relief Association contain a great deal of material relating to the compensation claims in the National Archives in Kew (from where many of them originate). As the main goal of S.I.L.R.A. was to support those loyalists applying to the compensation schemes, looking at their papers provides a great insight into how different approaches to applying developed. On a basic level they are a useful warning against taking the compensation claims at face value and inform very strongly how we should read those compensation claims. They also provide a bulk of

much rawer material from those who would apply. Additional applicants who don't appear in the compensation files do appear here – those who decided not to apply, who could no longer afford to or who died before they could. These papers include correspondence with the Association, official case-studies of incidents of targeting and publications designed to promote the cause of southern loyalists.

To provide a subjective Protestant voice a number of literary publications from Cavan, Monaghan and Ulster more generally were consulted in the National Library of Ireland. This included the novels of Shan Bullock, Erminda Rentoul Esler and Frank Frankfort Moore; the memoirs of Thomas Briody and Norma McMaster, and collections of folklore abstracted from the National Folklore Commission. The material selected was primarily determined by what was available to view. I was directed towards certain writers (such as Moore) through conversations with other academics and the *Oxford Handbook of Irish Literature* was used to identify all novels set in the counties under examination or written by individuals from those counties. Themes relating to religious difference were prioritised but due to the relative paucity of sources, nearly all works set in a relevant time-period and relating to the broad area along the border were accepted.

For the border and the impact of partition, the records of the Northern Eastern Boundary Bureau and the Boundary Commission in the National Archives of Ireland and the UK respectively, were also consulted. The material contained within these sources is extremely varied and ranges from personal testimony about life on the border to private censuses of border D.E.D.s. The personal testimony provided to the Boundary Commission is particularly extensive for Fermanagh and comprises thousands of pages of material. The material here that discusses national identity is more 'geographical' in nature than other sources – rather than individuals just claiming a national identity for themselves they attempt to convey one upon an entire area. The testimony discusses shared histories and heritage in great detail, as well as the (often unspoken) relationship between religion and political preference. In this regard it is a uniquely useful source to our investigation which is inherently about the relationship between national identity (the Ulsterman) and geography (Ulster).

The 1911 census and its reports were also used frequently to establish the background of individuals found in other sources. Sources which captured large numbers of people, such as the Ulster Covenant, were cross-referenced with the 1911 census to



establish a clearer picture of the background of those in the source-base. Census reports were also used to establish the general demographic make-up and geography of Cavan, Monaghan and Fermanagh. As many newspaper reports and other accounts will list individuals exclusively as 'Protestant', the census was also valuable in distinguishing Presbyterians from Anglicans and Methodists from Brethren.

Many sources in this thesis are used not only to capture a true narrative of events but also to provide the subjective response to this narrative. Newspaper articles and compensation claims are presented often without comment. This should not be interpreted as uncritical acceptance of those claims. They are presented in the context of the thesis having already highlighted their failings and the use that can still be made of them. In other cases, they are a deliberate attempt to demonstrate contemporary reaction to events.

## **Chapter 1: Narratives of nationality, community and Ulster**

This chapter shall untangle some of the complications of identity in the Protestant community in Cavan and Monaghan. Four key questions have been identified to enable us to answer the first two research goals in the introduction:

1. To what degree are the terms ‘Protestant’, ‘Unionist’ and ‘loyalist’ interrelated and interchangeable?
2. To what degree can we characterise Cavan and Monaghan Protestantism and loyalism as having a unique ‘Ulster’ character.
3. How did the Protestant and loyalist community in Cavan and Monaghan view and integrate with their Catholic neighbours?
4. How did the Protestant and loyalist community understand and represent the violence and chaos of the Revolutionary period, specifically in relation to the targeting of their community?

Cavan and Monaghan have not produced a great body of literature relating to the Revolutionary period in the way that other places, such as Cork and Clare, have. Consequently, other contemporary sources that either engage with Ulster Unionism, or with Irish Protestantism outside of our two counties will also be used. This chapter acknowledges the three broad layers of locality present in the counties: Ireland, Ulster and Cavan/Monaghan. It therefore examines Cavan and Monaghan Unionism as distinct from southern and Ulster Unionism and its awkward position between the two.

### **To what degree are the terms Protestant and loyalist interrelated and interchangeable?**

A key issue we face is to investigate the degree to which the cultural and religious marker of ‘Protestant’ overlaps with more political terms like ‘loyalist’ and ‘Unionist’. In the introduction we have set out why Protestant is the unit of analysis in this thesis, and not Unionist or loyalist, but we must still investigate the degree to which the terms functioned as rough synonyms for each other.

That the two areas are related is uncontentious. The Unionist movement had always been defined by its Protestantism, partially in opposition to the Catholicism of nationalism. For most Protestants, the British connection guaranteed their wealth and prosperity. Ernest Blythe, himself a northern Protestant who had converted to republicanism, noted in his memoirs: ‘The entire Protestant population had long been of one mind about Home Rule itself. The few, to whom Home Rule appealed, or those who didn’t mind it, were an insignificant minority, that were of no importance in terms of statistics or politics.’<sup>61</sup> The political actions of the Unionist and the cultural group of the Protestant were so strongly overlapping that such identities, perceived both from within and without, were entirely interlinked. As McDowell laid out in *Crisis and Decline*, a Protestant acting ‘loyally’ by befriending an R.I.C. officer was as much expressing his cultural identity as he would by going to church on Sunday.<sup>62</sup>

A common mistake when approaching the Protestant community is to focus on its most committed elements – those individuals who joined the Ulster Volunteers or claimed compensation for their house being burned down. These groups were the ones most easily characterised as ‘Unionist’ instead of ‘Protestant’, often as these were the explicit terms in which those compensation claims were solicited, or groups such the Volunteers were founded. This approach overemphasises the cleanness of ‘loyalist’ and ‘Unionist’ as terms by using them to represent those individuals who took political action instead of the community at large. This is especially problematic in counties like Monaghan where there existed organised resistance to the I.R.A. from the Protestant associations and low participation in traditional ‘active’ aspects of Unionism such as war recruitment or membership of Unionist Clubs.<sup>63</sup>

The confusion of these terms occurred both within the Protestant community and in their perception by their Catholic neighbours. Republican sources for Cavan and Monaghan are uniquely placed to demonstrate this ambiguity. The large Protestant population in Cavan and Monaghan led to a wealth of Republican sources containing descriptions of raids, boycotts and burnings directed against the community not as present elsewhere. These statements were also remarkably candid about the treatment of Protestants and Unionists. There was little attempt to sanitise history to portray the

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<sup>61</sup> Ernest Blythe, *Trasna na Bóinne* (Dublin, 1957) trans. Colm MacGearailt.

<sup>62</sup> McDowell, *Crisis and Decline*, p. 50.

<sup>63</sup> Dooley, *Plight of Monaghan Protestants*, pp. 42 – 44. Tim Wilson, ‘Strange Death’ pp 181 – 2.

subject in a better light. This is in marked contrast to other controversial topics like the execution of internal informers.<sup>64</sup>

These statements, taken as a whole, show significant overlap in the use of loaded terms such as ‘Protestant’ and ‘Unionist’. The general raid for arms ordered by Eoin O’Duffy across the entire county in autumn 1920 yielded multiple different descriptions of its intended targets. Matthew Smith identified that the raids were focused ‘on Protestant houses who from time to time had expressed themselves either by word or by action as very strongly pro-British’.<sup>65</sup> There was no mention of either of the two marginal groupings of loyalist Catholics or Protestant nationalists. Smith did leave open the possibility of the nationalist Protestant (or at least the passive non-political Protestant) but they were such a small group as to not be worth commenting on.<sup>66</sup>

In other statements Patrick Woods of Annyalla denoted the houses raided as simply ‘Unionist’ while for Paddy Mohan of Tydavnet the residences targeted belonged to the ‘Orange Men’ and for Peter Woods to ‘B Men’.<sup>67</sup> James Mulligan opted simply for ‘Protestant’.<sup>68</sup> For Pat McDonnell the raids were on the houses of ‘Unionists and Hibernians’ which drew together two distinct groups under the common banner of opposition to the I.R.A.<sup>69</sup> We see further mixing of the various identities when both Matthew Smith and Pat McDonnell attributed the defiance found at some houses to members of the Orange Order and the B Specials.<sup>70</sup>

Terminology was used very loosely across these witness statements, sometimes overlapping in the same sentence. Patrick Doherty’s explanation for the awareness of the R.I.C. of a planned ambush was the presence of ‘a number of Protestant and loyalist individuals in the neighbourhood.’<sup>71</sup> Francis O’Duffy noted ‘The Protestants of Co. Monaghan, especially in the rural districts, were actively opposed to Sinn Féin and the

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<sup>64</sup> See for example John McKenna and James McKenna Interview (C.O.F.L.A., O’Kane Collection).

<sup>65</sup> Statement of Matthew Smith (Monaghan County Museum, Marron Papers).

<sup>66</sup> Fitzpatrick has described the assorted collection of Protestant nationalists as: ‘a few intellectuals claiming the inheritance of Presbyterian radicalism; a medley of high-spirited rebels against conventions of their family, class or community; and some well-meaning Protestant patricians who felt that *noblesse oblige*.’ in David Fitzpatrick, *The Two Irelands 1912 – 1939* (Oxford, 1998), p.34.

<sup>67</sup> Statement of Patrick Woods (Monaghan County Museum, Marron Papers); Statement of Paddy Mohan, Paddy McCluskey and Hugh Lavery (Monaghan County Museum, Marron Papers); Statement of Peter Woods (Monaghan County Museum Marron Papers).

<sup>68</sup> Copybook of James Mulligan Marron Papers

<sup>69</sup> Statement of Pat McDonnell (Monaghan County Museum, Marron Papers).

<sup>70</sup> Ibid; Statement of Matthew Smith (Monaghan County Museum, Marron Papers).

<sup>71</sup> B.M.H. Ws.1195 (Patrick Doherty).

Volunteers. Most of them considered it their duty as “loyalists” to assist the R.I.C.’.<sup>72</sup> The most extreme conflation of these identities came in a monthly report from John McGowry, O/C of the Cootehill battalion, to Richard Mulcahy in which he described the oppositional element in the town as ‘the British Orange population.’<sup>73</sup>

Raids and other outrages reported from the loyalist side also conflated their terms. Applicants to the Irish Grants Committee were required to establish their loyalty to the British Government. This led to an unusual situation where applicants sought to portray their case in the most obvious and traditional loyalist manner, whether it was genuine or exaggerated. Applicants demonstrated what they understood to be the traditional and commonly understood markers of loyalism.

From these applications there emerged an unspoken mixed identity which, because of its assumed opposition to the Sinn Féin movement, drew attention upon itself. Mary Fletcher of Killeshandra attributed the theft of much of the timber from her woods to the fact that ‘I belonged to the class which always supported the British rule in Ireland and who consequently suffered from the troubles.’<sup>74</sup> William Reid, a solicitor from Cavan, declared in his reference for George W. Cartwright that ‘his family belonged to a class that had always been loyal to the British Government.’<sup>75</sup> In these cases it was not the individuals’ actions, but their identification with a specific community that demonstrated their loyalism. This emphasised a passive cultural identity of which ‘Protestant’ is a more apt marker.

In other applications explicitly cultural language was used. After suffering his second raid in January 1922, Robert Graham claimed to have been called an ‘Orangeman’ and that he would ‘suffer for your supporting that rotten English Government’.<sup>76</sup> Graham in his application never claimed to be an Orangeman, simply stating that he was a well-known loyalist. Frederick Howell, of Marahill Kingscourt, recounted in his application that he had received a summons to a Dáil court. Instead of attending, Howell informed

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<sup>72</sup> B.M.H. Ws. 654 (Francis O’Duffy).

<sup>73</sup> Report of Cootehill Battalion to Richard Mulcahy, 27 February 1921 (U.C.D.A., Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/16).

<sup>74</sup> Mary Fletcher claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/89/3).

<sup>75</sup> George Cartwright claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/60/5).

<sup>76</sup> Robert Graham claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/164/11).

the police and had the court broken up, an act he said was in accordance with his position as a Protestant and a loyalist.<sup>77</sup>

This conflation of the two is rarely challenged in contemporary sources except in denials of the targeting of Protestants specifically. This is the case with the Belfast Boycott, a general trade boycott declared against those merchants who continued business with Belfast businesses in 1921. Due to the cultural connections between Monaghan and Cavan Protestants and Ulster Unionism they were more heavily targeted by this campaign. This process will be described in detail in Chapter 2 but we can note that it was a flashpoint for accusations of sectarian targeting. In November 1920, the Protestant shopkeepers of Monaghan declared the boycott to be entirely based on religion. This was rebuked by the Monaghan Boycott Committee who asserted that the Boycott had no religious element and was only targeted against those who continued to buy from Belfast.<sup>78</sup> This ignores testimony from the time from participants like James Mulligan who refer to the Boycott as being primarily against ‘Protestant merchants’.<sup>79</sup>

This stereotyping was not exclusive to those outside of the Protestant community. Internally the terms when used in the process of self-definition were interchangeable. Census figures detailing the religious demography of Ulster were used by all sides as shorthand for the political make-up of the province. The Cavan, Donegal and Monaghan Loyalist Association was established in 1923 to fight for the rights of a declared ‘70,000 loyalists in the three counties’ which was roughly the number of non-Catholics provided in the last census in 1911.<sup>80</sup> Some of this conflation on an official level was because religious statistics provided political parties with the largest possible estimate of their strength but it was still based on a mutual understanding and was not contested by any official organ or political opponent.

Both the Boundary Commission and the North Eastern Boundary Bureau were confident on using those 1911 religious returns to base claims to inclusion in Northern Ireland or the Free State.<sup>81</sup> Interested parties such as the Nationalists of Glaslough

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<sup>77</sup> Frederick Howell claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/66/7).

<sup>78</sup> *Northern Standard*, 20 November 1920; *Northern Standard*, 13 November 1920.

<sup>79</sup> James Mulligan Copybook (Monaghan County Museum, Marron Papers).

<sup>80</sup> *Northern Standard*, 4 November 1921; National Archives of Ireland, *Census of Ireland 1901/1911* (<http://www.census.nationalarchives.ie> : accessed 24 November 2016).

<sup>81</sup> For the North Eastern Boundary Bureau (N.A.I., North Eastern Boundary Bureau files, NEBB/1/5/3); for the Boundary Commission (T.N.A., Boundary Commission Files, CAB/61/14).

provided their own private censuses of the religious demography of their Unions in an attempt to convince the Commission one way or the other.<sup>82</sup> The County Donegal Protestant Registration Association happily conflated the terms in its name. It noted of Strabane No. 2 Rural District: 'it had a population last census of 10,332 of whom 5,056 were Unionists and 5,276 Nationalists'.<sup>83</sup>

When the community opposed to the I.R.A. in Smithboro assembled to form a guard capable of protecting those houses suffering raids they named it not the Loyalist Defence Association but the Protestant Defence Association.<sup>84</sup> In the 1920s, John James Cole, Alexander Haslett and James Sproule Myles all ran for the Dáil under the banner of 'Independent Unionist' in Cavan, Monaghan and Donegal respectively. This implicit association can also be seen in the choice of venues for certain events. Typical 'loyalist' activities such as recruiting meetings were held in Protestant halls as were a great deal of the meetings and speeches given by Michael Knight during his election campaign in North Monaghan in 1918.<sup>85</sup>

This is not to deny the word's importance. We shall note later in the chapter that the emphasis placed on terms like 'Protestant' or 'loyalist' in reports describing raids or other acts of violence during the revolution was crucial in shaping the community's view of it. However, this ambiguity in terminology complicates our understanding of the motivations behind revolutionary attacks on Protestants. It also suggests that such violence was justified in different ways to different individuals, and that a suspicion of the Protestant community as a broad oppositional group informed much of the attacks against them. Whether this attitude was valid or not will be examined in Chapters 2 and 3.

To what degree can we characterise Cavan and Monaghan Protestantism and loyalism as having a unique 'Ulster' character?

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<sup>82</sup> Evidence of residents of Glaslough D.E.D. (T.N.A., Boundary Commission files, CAB/61/71).

<sup>83</sup> Representation of the Donegal Protestant Association to the North Eastern Boundary Bureau (N.A.I., North Eastern Boundary Bureau files, TAOIS/NEBB/4/3/2).

<sup>84</sup> Wilson, 'Strange Death', pp 181 – 2.

<sup>85</sup> *Northern Standard*, 14 December 1918.

This section of the chapter focuses on the presence of an ‘Ulster’ identity in Cavan and Monaghan, as opposed to the ‘southern’ loyalism which existed in many neighbouring counties. This shall examine how important the concept of ‘Ulster’ was to the Protestant community. While this may seem like an obvious enough truth, provable by simple reference to a map, we should note the striking differences between the three ‘lost’ Ulster counties and the six counties of Northern Ireland. Even in the most Catholic Northern county of Fermanagh, the Protestant proportion of its population was nearly twice that of Monaghan and nearly three times that of Cavan. In absolute terms Antrim had over ten times the Protestant population of Monaghan. Cavan was also notably less Presbyterian than any other Ulster county except Fermanagh at 16.82% – compared with 54% in Derry.<sup>86</sup>

These ambiguities are why Cavan and Monaghan are a useful case study in the context of Irish Protestantism and Unionism. They represented an Ulster Protestant movement existing on the fringes of its homeland and outside of the numerical majority that its adherents enjoyed elsewhere and which bolstered their sense of identity. For Cavan and Monaghan Protestants, it was more difficult to belong to the Ulster Unionist tradition than for the rest of the province. Cavan and Monaghan, more than Donegal, formed a boundary with areas definitively not of Ulster and consequently existed in an ambiguous zone.

This section will look at the ways in which we can measure an Ulster identity (Ulsterism) within Cavan and Monaghan both quantitatively and qualitatively. It will then look in depth at the greatest crisis to Ulsterism in Cavan and Monaghan: the partition of Ireland and the ‘abandonment’ of Cavan, Monaghan and Donegal. The impact of partition is given its own examination as it is the most important element of the general crisis that this thesis seeks to examine and one that affected the entirety of the Protestant community. How the community coped with this ‘abandonment’ and with an alien border provides an insight into the centrality of Ulsterism to Cavan and Monaghan Protestantism. It also demonstrates how a community can reformulate an identity invalidated by political developments. Moreover, the question should be asked

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<sup>86</sup> All information from National Archives of Ireland, *Census of Ireland 1901/1911* (<http://www.census.nationalarchives.ie> : accessed 24 November 2016).



as to whether partition did constitute a true abandonment and whether Cavan and Monaghan Unionists were truly invested in the Ulster identity or if they viewed the movement as a way to ride on the coat-tails of their more numerous and fervent neighbours.

### *Ulsterism in Cavan and Monaghan*

Ulster presented itself as a natural unit of association for Cavan and Monaghan Protestants. It was a large territory with a noticeably larger Protestant population than the rest of Ireland. While Cavan and Monaghan may have been distinct from the other Ulster counties, they were equally distinct from their neighbours in Connacht or Leinster. Cavan's low of roughly 18.5% non-Catholic population in the 1911 census was still far greater than Louth or Leitrim's 8.5%, Meath's 7% or Longford's 8% despite these counties all being as close to some parts of the North.<sup>87</sup> Although the Protestant community in these areas might have felt some element of sympathy with the Ulster movement, they were generally too isolated to make anything of it.

But the appeal of Ulster went beyond simple demographics. After all, going by the 1911 census, only Down and Antrim had overwhelming Protestant majorities with Derry and Armagh holding slim majorities and Fermanagh and Tyrone slim minorities. Initial talk of partition focused not on the current six county state but on the four counties where there lived a majority of Protestants. John Dillon went so far as to declare in September 1912 that 'Ulster is now confined to four counties of Antrim, Down, Derry and Armagh.'<sup>88</sup>

The use of Ulster here is not a general geographic term but a cultural one. This is seen most prominently in the association of 'Ulster' with various strongly Protestant and Unionist movements such as the Ulster Covenant and the Ulster Volunteers. In *Lady of the Reef*, Frank Frankfort Moore returns to his major preoccupation: the character and

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<sup>87</sup> National Archives of Ireland, *Census of Ireland 1901/1911* (<http://www.census.nationalarchives.ie> : accessed 24 November 2016).

<sup>88</sup> *Anglo-Celt*, 21 September 1912.

prejudices of the Ulsterman. Inherent in Moore's view of Ulsterism is its rejection of Irishness. MacGowan places this distinction in terms grounded in cultural traditions, presenting the two people as having completely different worlds; 'you can't say worse of a man in Ulster than that he has kissed the Blarney stone'.<sup>89</sup> In a similar manner, *The Ulsterman's* James Alexander declares that 'the devil spoke with an Irish brogue in the Garden of Eden when he blarneyed Eve into eatin' the apple ... it's the accent of a deceiver'.<sup>90</sup> To *Lady of the Reef's* Ulsterman MacGowan, Ulster being part of Ireland is merely geographical, a description of tectonic necessity. He is horrified at the idea of being thought Irish, insisting that the only worthwhile term to use is British subject.<sup>91</sup>

There are two primary areas which we can investigate as markers of Ulsterism in Cavan and Monaghan. We can look at the level at which the community actively engaged with organisations associated with the Ulster movement; Unionist Clubs, the Ulster Volunteers and the British Army. Particular attention shall be paid to the domestic battles over recruitment and conscription in Cavan and Monaghan. We can also examine the degree to which members of the community itself engaged in the rhetoric of 'Ulster' and identified themselves as Ulstermen or conversely stated their difference from them.

Ulster organisation can be measured through a number of activities or memberships but the most obvious one to begin with is the Ulster Covenant. Signed mostly on Ulster Day on 28 September 1912, the Covenant was an oath binding its signatories to oppose any attempt to coerce Ulster into Home Rule. We should be careful with assigning a particular depth of fervour to any signatory of the Covenant. Especially in regard to Cavan, where the R.I.C. district inspector noted that in the majority of cases the Covenant was likely signed more as a statement of political preference than as a commitment to militarily resist.<sup>92</sup>

David Fitzpatrick has already tabulated the contribution of Cavan and Monaghan to the Covenant. This is summarised in the table below:

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<sup>89</sup> Frank Frankfort Moore, *The Lady of the Reef* (London, 1915), pp 14 – 20..

<sup>90</sup> Moore, *The Ulsterman*, p. 34.

<sup>91</sup> Moore, *Lady of the Reef*, p. 19.

<sup>92</sup> County Inspector's Returns Cavan, September 1912 (T.N.A.: CO 904/88).

Table 1.1 – Signatories of the Covenant and Declaration in Cavan and Monaghan in total numbers and as a percentage of the adult non-Catholic population.

	<b>Signatories</b>	<b>% of adult non-RC pop</b>
<b>Cavan Men</b>	4,423	71
<b>Cavan Women</b>	3,722	65
<b>Monaghan Men</b>	5,397	83
<b>Monaghan Women</b>	5,082	80

*Source: Fitzpatrick, Descendancy, p. 243.*

Not only was there a significant jump between Cavan and Monaghan in terms of commitment to the Covenant it also put Monaghan up there with the most subscribed counties such as Armagh and Tyrone while Cavan languished at the bottom of the table; its men only underperformed by those in Antrim and its women by those in Belfast.<sup>93</sup> Antrim and Belfast, however, had far larger Protestant populations to begin with and saw far higher total turnout than Cavan did.<sup>94</sup>

Cavan in particular experienced an upsurge in interest in the Unionist Clubs at the time of the Home Rule crisis. In November 1912 Cavan had twelve Unionist Clubs in the county with 1,425 members or 23% of the adult male population. By May 1913 this had become sixteen clubs with 1,949 members. Expressed as a percentage of the non-Catholic population this increase came to 3% (compared to an average increase across Ulster of 0.6%).<sup>95</sup> Monaghan’s increase of 466 represented 1% of the total non-Catholic population.

Membership of the U.V.F. in these counties was equally strong when compared to the rest of the province. The table below expresses membership of the Ulster Clubs and U.V.F. as a percentage of the adult male population in each county to show Cavan’s and

<sup>93</sup> Fitzpatrick, *Descendancy*, p. 243.

<sup>94</sup> P.R.O.N.I., *Ulster Solemn League and Covenant* (<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/services/search-ulster-covenant>, accessed 9 March 2017).

<sup>95</sup> Breandán Mac Giolla Choille, *Chief Secretary’s Office Dublin Castle Intelligence Notes 1913 – 1916* (Dublin, 1966), pp 19 – 20.

Monaghan's favourable membership record compared with stronger Ulster counties such as Antrim:

Table 1.1 – Membership of Ulster Clubs and Ulster Volunteer Force by percentage of adult non-Catholic male population in Ulster.

	Ulster Club 1912	U.V.F. 1914
Cavan	23	55.8
Monaghan	20.2	33.7
Donegal	3	26.1
Armagh	21.7	36
Tyrone	34.3	45.9
Fermanagh	14.6	30.9
Derry	14.2	37.5
Belfast	17.7	25.4
Down	22.5	25.3
Antrim	19.7	24.9

*Source: Fitzpatrick, Descendancy, p. 244.*

In spite of Monaghan's larger Protestant population, the Cavan U.V.F. boasted a membership of 3,451, while Monaghan could only muster 2,188.<sup>96</sup> Fitzpatrick has previously noted how these returns roughly matched the distribution of Orange Lodges across Ulster which provided money and manpower to the organisation.<sup>97</sup>

Despite these high figures, the peripherality of Cavan and Monaghan can be reflected in the low levels of arms held in the region for the U.V.F. In November 1913, the Monaghan U.V.F.'s 1,650 members had to share 385 arms between them, roughly one gun between every four volunteers.<sup>98</sup> Cavan fared better here with 1,691 weapons to share between 3,041 of them. Each Volunteer got roughly half a rifle. By March 1914 this had improved to where Cavan boasted 2,676 arms, including a quarter of all Martini-

<sup>96</sup> Mc Giolla Choille, *Intelligence Notes* p. 37; Figures also in Fitzpatrick, *Descendancy*, p. 244.

<sup>97</sup> Fitzpatrick, *Two Irelands*, p. 47.

<sup>98</sup> Mc Giolla Choille, *Intelligence Notes*, p. 33 – 4.

Enfield rifles held in Ulster. Overall, it held roughly 10% of all arms in Ulster in the period just before the Larne gunrunning. By contrast it held just 2% of all Protestants in Ulster. Monaghan meanwhile only increased its cache to 561, a fifth of what was held by Cavan.<sup>99</sup>

However, Cavan's commitment to the Ulster Volunteers was framed in different terms than elsewhere in Ulster. Aware of their isolated position in the county and fearful of hostility that could be engendered by the actions of the more bellicose Belfast Volunteers, Colonel Oliver Nugent, the Commanding Officer of the U.V.F. in Cavan renamed the organisation the Cavan Volunteer Force and downplayed any military associations.<sup>100</sup>

War recruiting was another area in which Ulster Unionists had distinguished themselves from the rest of the country. The rate of recruitment in Ulster roughly matched that in Britain and was far ahead of recruitment in any other Irish province.<sup>101</sup> Initial reports suggested that Cavan and Monaghan followed this trend, indicating that the Ulster Volunteers across the province were leading enlistment and Monaghan was singled out in in September 1914 as having seen a particularly large amount of its own Volunteers leave.<sup>102</sup>

Between 15 December 1914 and 15 December 1915, Cavan had an extremely high ratio of Protestant recruits to Protestant males with non-agricultural occupations of 105 per thousand. This was the second highest ratio in Ulster, only behind Antrim and Belfast (110 per thousand). Nationally, it tied with its neighbour Longford and fell short of Carlow (146 per thousand), both counties with substantially smaller Protestant populations. The ratio for Monaghan was much lower (65 per thousand) which echoes closely the disparity in U.V.F. membership.<sup>103</sup>

In October 1914, it was reported in Cavan that 218 reservists had joined the army, of whom 153 were National Volunteers, 55 Ulster Volunteers and 30 unknown. In this period there were also 210 new recruits, 47 being National Volunteers, 71 Ulster

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<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> Booklet entitled 'C.V.F. Scheme, Copy No. VI' (P.R.O.N.I., Farren Connell papers, MIC/57119).

<sup>101</sup> Charles Townsend, *Easter 1916: The Irish Rebellion* (Dublin, 2005), p. 65.

<sup>102</sup> County Inspector's Returns Monaghan, September 1914 (T.N.A.: CO 904/94).

<sup>103</sup> Figures provided and reproduced with permission of David Fitzpatrick.

Volunteers and 87 of unknown politics.<sup>104</sup> These numbers were disappointing especially on the Unionist end. The early days of the war nevertheless saw recruitment in Cavan described as 'brisk', with Killeshandra and Belturbet particularly commended.<sup>105</sup> However, 1915 saw only 453 recruits in the county for the entire period. Monaghan fared just as poorly, as early as December 1914 the County Inspector noted there was nobody coming forward.<sup>106</sup> A Rockcorry assembly in January 1915 despite attracting 140 members of the U.V.F. failed to yield a single recruit. By October 1916 only 738 recruits had come forward of an estimated eligible population of 2,234.<sup>107</sup> This is attributable partially to the war increasing agricultural prices and the profitability of staying home to sell one's labour but also due to a certain lack of enthusiasm.<sup>108</sup>

At a speech to a recruitment meeting in Cavan in August 1915, Thomas Lough M.P., the head of war recruitment in the county, reported that of the 521 recruits in the county so far in that year, 313 had been Catholics and 140 had been Protestants.<sup>109</sup> Although the Protestants of the county were contributing proportionally more to the wartime enlistment, their numbers were still disappointing. It became an article of faith that voluntary enlistment was becoming useless: 'the young men of this county will not go until they are brought'.<sup>110</sup>

If the broader Protestant population was not responding strongly to this campaign, then specific Protestants were still providing the public leadership of the movement. Recruitment among the gentry was higher than among other classes. Organisations such as the County Cavan War Relief Fund or the County Cavan Women's Patriotic Committee were led by members of the prominent families of the county such as the Saundersons, the Maxwells and the Burrowes. The failure of those Protestant classes below them to contribute was a great embarrassment. Dooley has accurately noted that different members of the gentry characterised this differently. Col. Lucas Scudamore dismissed it as a selfishness and a laziness inherent to smaller farmers while Col. John

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<sup>104</sup> County Inspector's Returns, Cavan October 1914 (T.N.A.: CO 904/95).

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> County Inspector's Returns, Monaghan, December 1914 (T.N.A.: CO 904/95).

<sup>107</sup> Terence Dooley, 'County Monaghan, 1914-1918: Recruitment, the Rise of Sinn Féin and the Partition Crisis', *Clogher Record*, 16, 2 (1998), p. 146.

<sup>108</sup> Dooley, 'Monaghan 1914-1918', p. 147, citing David Fitzpatrick, *Politics and Irish life 1913-21* (Dublin, 1977), pp. 68-9.

<sup>109</sup> *Anglo-Celt*, 7 August 1915.

<sup>110</sup> Eileen O'Reilly, 'Cavan in the Great War' in Raymond Gillespie (ed.), *Cavan: Essays on the History of an Irish County* (Dublin, 1995), p. 188.

Leslie was more sympathetic. He noted that it possibly also came from a fear of a long absence from the country handing more power in the county over to those Catholics who remained. Monaghan, with its significant Protestant population, was seen as one of the great disappointments of the entire enlistment campaign.<sup>111</sup>

This low level of recruitment meant that the Cavan and Monaghan Protestants also missed out on the scale of loss experienced deeper into Protestant Ulster. Thomas Hennessey has already described how the war and the losses at the Somme in particular became central to Ulster Unionist identity and rhetoric, describing it as ‘symbolising the psychological partition of Ireland’.<sup>112</sup> Examining the Great War memorials that identify the county of origin of the soldier commemorated is a rough but useful way of tabulating war losses in each county. Expressed as a percentage of its 1911 population Cavan saw 0.46% of its total population killed in the war and Monaghan 0.48%. These figures were lower than the losses occasioned in Antrim (1.09%), Down (0.67%) or Derry (0.96%). Cavan’s and Monaghan’s war losses in absolute or proportional terms were some of the lowest in the country while all other Ulster counties featured very highly.<sup>113</sup>

We will now turn to focus on how Cavan and Monaghan Protestants engaged with the idea of Ulster and the Ulster Unionist. For this we can continue our focus on the war effort in Cavan and Monaghan. Even though the war itself did not see a significant level of enthusiasm among the Protestant community in Cavan and Monaghan, it still formed an important part of its self-image. The Unionist papers like the *Northern Standard* thrilled to the exploits of local men abroad and returned tales of the heroism and sacrifice of those killed, often with an accompanying biography.<sup>114</sup> The *Irish Post and Weekly Telegraph*, took the step of abandoning advertisements on its front page and instead ran with various photographs of the war. Additionally, both papers carried frequent reports of pro-war recruiting events, generally entirely Protestant and held in Protestant halls.<sup>115</sup>

The concept of the war as Ulster’s war was as prevalent in Cavan and Monaghan as elsewhere. In August 1917, the *Northern Standard* published an editorial praising the ‘glory’ won by Ulster soldiers for Ulster as a whole, noting ‘Ulster has done splendidly

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<sup>111</sup> Dooley, ‘Monaghan 1914-1918’, pp 147 – 8.

<sup>112</sup> Thomas Hennessey, *Dividing Ireland: World War I and Partition* (London, 1998), pp 198 - 200.

<sup>113</sup> Memorials accessed via FindMyPast.ie (accessed 12 February 2016).

<sup>114</sup> As an example, see *Northern Standard*, 1 January 1916.

<sup>115</sup> *Irish Post and Weekly Telegraph*, 15 July 1916.

in this conflict' At least in part, this was made in a favourable comparison with the other three provinces: 'We do not wish to draw distinctions, yet we cannot but regret that in comparisons with the Northern Province the rest of Ireland has done so little.'<sup>116</sup> Monaghan's own record as regards recruiting was ignored.

At the general celebration of the Twelfth in Monaghan in 1918, the following resolution was proposed and unanimously accepted: '[affirming] our admiration for the gallant Irishmen who are now fighting their country's battles at the front ... and undying respect for the memory of the noble fellows who have fallen in the fight for freedom, especially those from Ulster.'<sup>117</sup> The various Twelfths of 1917 passed resolutions calling for the government to 'enforce the Military Service Act so as to bring the war to a speedy and successful termination.'<sup>118</sup> The *Irish Post* led their articles detailing the exploits of the Ulsterman fighting in France with the headline 'Hats off to the Ulster Division'.<sup>119</sup>

The issue of conscription became a way of distinguishing the Protestant community from their Catholic neighbours. *Northern Standard* editorials called for the inclusion of Ireland or at least Ulster in the scheme. Michael Knight, the most prominent Monaghan Protestant of the period, contributed to a meeting of Monaghan County Council in 1918 via letter to outline his own support for the matter along lines that were typical in the county:

On every principle of justice and equity I support the application of conscription to Ireland, holding as I do that we are vitally concerned in the result of the war as any other part of the United Kingdom ... we will gladly follow the example of those Irishmen who by their traditional bravery have so valiantly upheld their country's honour.<sup>120</sup>

In the same month, the Presbytery of Monaghan met and unanimously passed a motion supporting conscription and decrying the 'contemptible spirit' of those members

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<sup>116</sup> *Northern Standard*, 25 August 1917.

<sup>117</sup> *Northern Standard*, 20 July 1918; For similar Cavan resolutions see *Irish Post and Weekly Telegraph*, 20 July 1918.

<sup>118</sup> *Irish Post and Weekly Telegraph*, 21 July 1917.

<sup>119</sup> *Irish Post and Weekly Telegraph*, 6 April 1920.

<sup>120</sup> *Northern Standard*, 20 April 1918.



of the Church who had yet to join up: ‘we sincerely hope that Ulster will not say “we have done our part” but will rather say “we are willing for any sacrifice that is necessary to safeguard our shores from the invasion of the German horde”’.<sup>121</sup> These sentiments were echoed by the general Presbyterian Synod of Monaghan and Armagh a month later. The District Orange Lodges around the counties also expressed their own support for a county-wide introduction of conscription.<sup>122</sup>

This pro-conscription movement was limited to those same groups who were already attempting to improve recruitment in the country. Speeches in favour of the scheme were limited to traditional supporters of the war such as Michael Knight or Lord Farnham. Knight’s letter was in fact responded to by the Chair of the County Council, Thomas Toal who noted that if Knight had come he would have asked him to and go out with him on the streets of Monaghan and put those views before the farmers of his own community. Toal ‘thought the Protestant and Orange farmers in this part of the country were just as much opposed to this as they were. They had done their part in cropping the land and were they prepared now to sacrifice all that now to go out to Flanders and lose their lives.’<sup>123</sup> This echoes what Kevin O’Shiel had noted of the campaign, where he was surprised to see how much support their anti-compulsion speeches were given by ‘typical young Protestant farmers’.<sup>124</sup> Geoffrey Coulter, the Protestant deputy editor of *An Phoblacht*, also had capitalised on this reluctance by founding the Protestant Anti-Conscription Association which focused on Dublin and the border counties.<sup>125</sup>

As Irish politics became more radicalised in the years just after the Easter Rising, Monaghan and Cavan Protestants were able to overcome their inglorious recruiting record and buy into the greater Ulster war tradition simply by forming a contrast with the Catholic-Nationalist community. The announcement of victory in Monaghan in 1918 was greeted by exclusively Protestant cheers. Elizabeth Adams remembered in her compensation application going to ring the bells of the local Anglican Church to celebrate the armistice. This act marked her out in the community as ‘Protestant and loyalist’.<sup>126</sup> In Cavan, the celebrations were strongly Protestant. Fireworks were let off

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<sup>121</sup> *Irish Post and Weekly Telegraph*, 20 April 1918.

<sup>122</sup> *Irish Post and Weekly Telegraph*, 11 May 1918.

<sup>123</sup> *Northern Standard*, 20 April 1918.

<sup>124</sup> B.M.H. Ws.1770 (Kevin O’Shiel).

<sup>125</sup> Geoffrey Coulter Interview (C.O.F.L.A., O’Kane Collection, 01-LOK IV\_A\_84A).

<sup>126</sup> Elizabeth Adams claim (T.N.A: CO 762/137/9).

near Lord Farnham's estate, a special service was held in Kilmore cathedral and a sports day was organised outside Cavan town with the local reverend, William Askins, handing out prizes. In Ballyconnell, revellers marched from the Anglican parochial hall to the rectory, while in Redhills a band holding Union flags formed at the Protestant hall and marched through the village.<sup>127</sup>

If Cavan and Monaghan could not point to their losses in the war as the best example of their commitment to the cause, they could offer another example: their willingness to accept partition in wartime. Specifically, they looked back on the unanimous decision of the Ulster Unionist Council on 12 June 1916 to accept the six-county partition of Ireland offered by Lloyd George as a solution to the Irish problem. Although it emerged later on that the Nationalists had believed that this partition was temporary, all Unionist sources spoke of it as permanent and the Protestants of the three counties internalised this as the acceptance of a permanent sundering from their homeland.<sup>128</sup> Unlike the final partition, this was not presented as a betrayal by their Northern brethren but rather a patriotic decision taken by the three-county Unionists for the benefit of others. Commenting on the advent of partition in 1920, the *Northern Standard* framed the decision taken four years previously:

It was on the same lines as the action taken in 1916, when the Unionists of the three counties listened to an appeal said to come from the Government, and reluctantly agreed to make a great sacrifice for 'the sake of the Empire' – a sacrifice which they were afterwards assured would 'never again' be asked from them.<sup>129</sup>

A pamphlet published in 1920 by the representatives to the U.U.C. of Cavan, Monaghan and Donegal characterised this incident in similarly heroic terms. In a time of 'great national emergency' the three counties placed themselves in 'the hands of the other six counties' but never 'abandoned the Covenant'. The sacrifice itself was the

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<sup>127</sup> *Irish Post and Weekly Telegraph*, 25 July 1918.

<sup>128</sup> Patrick Buckland, *Irish Unionism II: Ulster Unionism and the Origins of Northern Ireland 1886 – 1922* (Dublin, 1973) p. 106 – 7.

<sup>129</sup> *Northern Standard*, 20 March 1920.

‘greatest of lasting evidence of their devoted unselfish loyalty to the King, Constitution and Empire’.<sup>130</sup> Michael Knight speaking at an election rally in 1918 also asserted that the three counties should never again be forced to make such a decision. This was an assertion he would repeat in private correspondence.<sup>131</sup> Carson had praised this decision as ‘the greatest piece of lasting evidence of their devoted, unselfish loyalty to the king, constitution and empire’ that he had seen in his career.<sup>132</sup>

This was an oversimplification on the part of all concerned. The delegates of 1916 never consulted with their home constituents and instead reached a consensus amongst themselves based on a political deal that had already passed. Their official statement at the time offered no heroic stoicism but rather protested against the Government’s proposals, especially while so many three-county covenanters were off fighting a war for the same Government.<sup>133</sup> They did not accept the decision but ‘abided by it’. It also ignored the attempts of Major Somerset Saunderson, one of the Cavan delegates, to have the decision revoked after he learned Lloyd George’s proposals had never even been before the cabinet.<sup>134</sup> The Archbishop of Armagh, John Crozier, himself a ‘Cavan Covenanter’, protested to Carson that it represented a ‘flagrant breach of faith and honour’.<sup>135</sup> Nevertheless, this was a useful fiction that allowed the three-county loyalists to stake a legitimate claim to inclusion in the Northern state.

Another important feature of an Ulster identity was a sense of pride in Ulster. Did Cavan and Monaghan Protestants talk about Ulster in the way of Mr MacGowan of *The Lady of the Reef*? MacGowan represented a comic version of a patriotic Ulsterman who expresses an absurd amount of pride in his native land. He off-handedly compares Belfast’s beauty to Paris, at one point showing the protagonist, Walter, the Belfast Free Library and asking him if Paris could match anything like that.<sup>136</sup> This is a theme Moore had approached in *The Ulsterman* too in which he attributed the fear of Home Rule in Ulster as much to a fear of non-Ulster rule as anything to do with Catholics. In that novel

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<sup>130</sup> *Ulster and Home Rule: No partition of Ulster* (Clones, 1920); *Northern Standard*, 4 October 1919.

<sup>131</sup> Letter of Michael Knight to Hugh de Fellenberg Montgomery, 22 November 1918 (P.R.O.N.I., Hugh de Fellenberg Montgomery Papers, D627/435/2).

<sup>132</sup> *Northern Standard*, 14 December 1918.

<sup>133</sup> *Northern Standard*, 19 June 1920.

<sup>134</sup> Letter of Major Saunderson to William Martin, 10 July 1916 shown in *Northern Standard*, 22 July 1916; Letter of Somerset Saunderson to Unionist Delegates of Monaghan, 13 July 1916 (P.R.O.N.I., Carson Papers, D1507/A/18/13).

<sup>135</sup> Letter from Primate Crozier to Carson, 26 June 1916 (P.R.O.N.I., Carson Papers, D1507/A/17/26).

<sup>136</sup> Moore, *Lady of the Reef* pp 14 – 20.

James Alexander even professes his own inherent distrust of Edward Carson because he speaks with a southern accent.<sup>137</sup>

In sources specifically from Cavan and Monaghan, we find an casual, unspoken use of the Ulster identity as it applied to the two counties. The 1918 Election saw Michael Knight running in North Monaghan as a self-professed ‘Ulster Unionist’ and was careful to pitch his speeches as such. Despite running against the odds his speeches aimed to give the impression that North Monaghan especially was a thriving outpost of Ulster Unionism.<sup>138</sup> In a private letter to Hugh de Fellenberg Montgomery following partition, Lord Farnham sadly noted that ‘we in Cavan were prouder of being Ulstermen than anyone in the whole Province.’<sup>139</sup> Even among some Catholics this partition was greeted with a disappointment at the fracturing of Ulster. Thomas Briody’s father, a Home Ruler, said he would have preferred to be in a nine-county Ulster state than in the three-county Ulster rump.<sup>140</sup>

Pride was expressed at a level beyond simply the local. During the War of Independence, the *Northern Standard* noted with satisfaction the ‘almost complete immunity of the greater part of Ulster from the dreadful crimes that blackened the rest of Ireland.’<sup>141</sup> Pan-Ulster pride was a feature of Protestantism in the counties and Belfast was a source of great admiration. In speeches such as that of Major McClean to the Monaghan Unionist Club in 1918 the virtues of Belfast’s industry and infrastructure were taken as matters of great pride.<sup>142</sup> As we shall see in Chapter 2, the cultural ties connecting Protestants in these counties to the city led many Protestants to attempt to break the Belfast Boycott. Shan Bullock, based on the border between Cavan and Fermanagh and normally moderate in his opinions, viewed Ulster as a Protestant construction. It was a creation of the Planters where before there had been no real organisation.<sup>143</sup>

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<sup>137</sup> Moore, *Ulsterman*, p. 23.

<sup>138</sup> *Northern Standard*, 14 December 1918.

<sup>139</sup> Letter from Lord Farnham to Hugh de Fellenberg Montgomery, 13 March 1920 (P.R.O.N.I., Hugh de Fellenberg Montgomery Papers, D627/435/10).

<sup>140</sup> Thomas Briody, *The Road to Avondale: the memoirs of an Irish forester*. Vol 1 (Drogheda, 2008), p. 62.

<sup>141</sup> *Northern Standard*, 10 April 1920.

<sup>142</sup> *Irish Times*, 13 March 1921.

<sup>143</sup> Shan Bullock, *After Sixty Years*, pp 125 – 8; Patrick Maume, ‘The Margins of Subsistence: The Novels of Shan Bullock’ in *New Hibernia Review / Iris Éireannach Nua*, Vol. 2, No. 4 (Winter, 1998), p. 144.

While partition was the greatest single factor in alienating Cavan and Monaghan Protestants from those Ulster Protestants north of the border, another significant event which has often been ignored were the intermittent Belfast riots of 1920 – 22. Some of this resentment came from the hardship experienced by Cavan and Monaghan Protestants who suffered under the retaliatory Belfast Boycott but it also came from a sense of shock at a violent facet of Ulster Unionism which had until then largely ignored. The *Northern Standard* described the rioting as a ‘disgrace’ and said that it ‘must be deplored ... by all Christian and right-thinking men in Ulster’.<sup>144</sup>

In 1920 a motion was raised in Monaghan County Council to support a boycott against Belfast business. The two Unionist members present, James Madden and Samuel Nixon, opposed a general boycott but without reservation condemned the rioting itself. Nixon later supported a limited boycott.<sup>145</sup> By August, the *Northern Standard* was directing editorials towards Belfast admonishing them as fellow Unionists: ‘it is an Orange (and we may say a Unionist) principle that tolerance and liberty must be extended to all. Let no section of Unionists, then, render themselves hypocrites in the eyes of the world by turning toleration to a tyranny and freedom to a farce’.<sup>146</sup>

### *Cavan and Monaghan Protestants and Partition*

The Belfast riots took place when the connection between three county Unionism and Ulster Unionism had already been fundamentally damaged. The single most important event in the Cavan and Monaghan Protestant community in the early period of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was not an act of revolutionary violence but the partition of Ireland and the ceding of Cavan and Monaghan to the future Free State.

The concept of partition underwent a number of redefinitions before coming to the form that established the division of the six and twenty-six county states. It is difficult to determine how likely partition was thought to be by Monaghan and Cavan Protestants

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<sup>144</sup> *Northern Standard*, 31 July 1920.

<sup>145</sup> Monaghan County Council minutes, August 1920 (Monaghan County Museum).

<sup>146</sup> *Northern Standard*, 14 August 1920.

before 1916. The shift of Unionism from an all-island opposition to exclusively Ulster had already established that the movement was willing to adapt to accept demographic realities. That the exclusion of the three counties now seems obvious is the imposition of present politics on past problems.

The manner in which partition was first suggested to Sir Edward Carson, in June 1912 by Liberal M.P. Thomas Agar-Robartes, was for a four-county Ulster state. Only those counties with Protestant majorities were to be considered. This was rejected out of hand by most politicians although Carson only expressed an unwillingness to leave behind Fermanagh and Tyrone.<sup>147</sup> When partition was next proposed it was for Ulster as a whole in January 1913 as an amendment to the Third Home Rule Bill. The Covenant itself with its enthusiastic uptake in the three counties also served as a direct rebuke to any form of reduced Ulsterism – a point made by Carson in an address to Newbliss Unionists in August 1913.<sup>148</sup>

Terence Dooley has correctly highlighted that the first time Monaghan Unionists truly engaged with their potential abandonment was after Asquith's proposal in March 1914 for any Ulster county to vote themselves out of Home Rule. Monaghan, Cavan and Donegal would have been effectively abandoned by this principle with the futures of Tyrone and Fermanagh more ambiguous. Frederick Crawford, writing to Carson from Hamburg, noted that such a proposal would 'place the Protestants of Cavan, Donegal, Fermanagh and Monaghan in a position to say we deserted them'.<sup>149</sup> The idea was denounced in Monaghan as 'of such contemptuous merit as to not deserve discussion' but it had established in the highest corridors of power an alternative framework for an Ulster without the three counties.<sup>150</sup> The proposal was resisted by the Ulster Unionist Council. Their compromise was to insist the opt-out should operate on an Ulster-wide and not county by county basis. The Ulster Covenant became an important article of faith among the three-county loyalist population. When Carson travelled to the Buckingham Palace conference he was telegraphed by Monaghan Unionists saying,

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<sup>147</sup> Kieran J Rankin, 'The Search for Statutory Ulster', *History Ireland*, Vol. 17, No. 3 (2009) p. 29.

<sup>148</sup> *Northern Standard*, 9 August 1913.

<sup>149</sup> Letter of Major Frederick Crawford to Carson, 13 March 1914 (P.R.O.N.I., Carson Papers, D1700/5/17/1/11).

<sup>150</sup> Dooley, 'Monaghan 1914-1918', p. 55.

‘Fellow covenanters in Monaghan expect you to stand firm better fight than break covenant.’<sup>151</sup>

Following the outbreak of war these questions were placed on hold until Lloyd George’s 1916 proposal which we have discussed earlier. This event established for the Ulster Unionist Council and three-county Unionists that there were circumstances in which Ulster could be broken up. The failure of this scheme led to some celebration in Cavan and Monaghan. By the end of 1918 the *Northern Standard* was in a bullish mood and reasonably confident regarding any partition of Ulster: ‘Monaghan is not going to tamely submit to be governed by a Dublin Parliament and when the time comes will let it be understood that our county is still a part of Ulster’.<sup>152</sup> At a speech to the Cavan Twelfth in 1917, the county Chair, Travers Blackley, declared the Covenant proven inviolable by events and ironically advised Cavan Protestants to prepare themselves for ‘frontier duty’.<sup>153</sup>

The incident had planted seeds of distrust in the minds of the three-county Unionists. Speaking at a Unionist meeting in Drum in 1920 James Madden declared his wish to never again see the three counties ‘place themselves into the hands of the six counties.’<sup>154</sup> Michael Knight, speaking to the Monaghan Grand Orange Lodge in 1917, also hoped that ‘we not again be asked to sacrifice ourselves in that way’.<sup>155</sup> At meeting of the Royal Black Chapter in Clones in 1917, Cavan, Monaghan and Donegal Unionists arrayed themselves under the collective ‘three-county’ banner.<sup>156</sup>

This mistrust of six county loyalists did not extend to Carson himself who was still held in high esteem. A letter of 9 September 1919 from Mary Murray-Ker of Newbliss House to the *Northern Standard*, noted with pleasure Carson’s speech to the U.U.C. in which he praised the self-sacrifice of the three-county Unionists. Murray-Ker and the *Standard*’s editor took this as a sign that Carson had reaffirmed himself to the inclusion of the three counties in the North: ‘there is no uncertain sound there!’<sup>157</sup> The *Standard*

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<sup>151</sup> Ibid.

<sup>152</sup> *Northern Standard*, 30 November 1918.

<sup>153</sup> *Irish Post and Weekly Telegraph*, 21 July 1917.

<sup>154</sup> *Northern Standard*, 26 July 1920.

<sup>155</sup> *Irish Post and Weekly Telegraph*, 26 May 1917.

<sup>156</sup> *Northern Standard*, 26 August 1916.

<sup>157</sup> *Northern Standard*, 13 September 1919.

enthusiastically endorsed Carson's statement as a 'great speech' and drew laboured attention to every round of applause it coaxed from the audience.

The Government of Ireland Bill introduced to the House of Commons in February 1920 aimed to establish two Parliaments in Ireland on a twenty-six county, six-county split. This principle was accepted by the Ulster Unionist Council in March 1920. The response to the U.U.C.'s decision in Cavan and Monaghan was swift and outraged. At a general meeting of the three-county delegates to the U.U.C. in Clones, delegates to the Council unanimously agreed to resign.<sup>158</sup> The *Northern Standard* ran an editorial titled 'Cast Out!'.<sup>159</sup> Orange Lodges in Monaghan and Cavan played on pan-Ulster fraternal ties, calling upon their brother Orangemen to take up the cause of resistance in the nine counties.<sup>160</sup> At a Twelfth Assembly in Clones, Robert Burns, rector of Drum, bitterly stated: 'in this country it does not pay to be loyal ... one would almost think that we would get far more consideration from the British Government if we plotted against the King and murdered His Majesty's forces from behind stone walls and hedges.'<sup>161</sup> Michael Knight, who along with Farnham became the leader of the brief three-county fight against partition, declared it a 'betrayal by those who professed to be our friends'.<sup>162</sup>

Resistance to partition had focused heavily on the binding oath of the Covenant, employing a stricter and stricter definition of what the Covenant stood for, just as more Northern Unionists were attempting to define it more loosely.<sup>163</sup> Even in the preceding years something of the anxiety of the three counties could be seen in the growing importance of 'Covenant Day', the anniversary of its signing. It was marked in Cavan and Monaghan by religious services around the counties. The *Northern Standard* covered these events quite heavily to counterbalance the otherwise quiet media focus on Cavan and Monaghan: 'very little has been said about "the three counties" during the past week, but it is enough for us to know that the Ulster Unionists stand where they did

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<sup>158</sup> Correspondence with the U.U.C. secretary including letters of resignation, May 1920 (P.R.O.N.I., U.U.C files, D1327/18/29 - 30).

<sup>159</sup> *Northern Standard*, 13 March 1920.

<sup>160</sup> Correspondence with the U.U.C. secretary including letters of resignation, May 1920 (P.R.O.N.I., U.U.C files, D1327/18/30); *Northern Standard*, 29 May 1920.

<sup>161</sup> *Northern Standard*, 15 July 1921.

<sup>162</sup> *Northern Standard*, 15 July 1921; Buckland, *Irish Unionism II*, p. 119.

<sup>163</sup> Correspondence with the U.U.C. secretary including letters of resignation, April 1920 (P.R.O.N.I., U.U.C files, D1327/18/28).



five or six years ago – a thoroughly united party.’<sup>164</sup> The *Irish Post* published a series by Herbert Moore Pim on different covenants throughout history, casting them in a heroic light and ending on the refrain: ‘we know what we mean and we mean what we say’.<sup>165</sup>

The three-county delegates responded to the decision of the U.U.C. by submitting a requisition, signed by 100 members of the Council, forcing a special meeting of the Council on 27 May to reconsider the issue. This riposte was performed under Rule 3 of the Council’s own constitution. The statement requesting this meeting called plaintively to their Ulster brethren not to abandon them: ‘the Ulster people have stood together for many generations and that confidence and reliance in each other has been the chief cause of their success and prosperity.’<sup>166</sup> In the lead up to this meeting, a pamphlet was produced by the delegates to the U.U.C. from the three counties. It opened with a copy of the direct text of the Covenant as a combination of reminder and guilt-trip to sway other delegates’ minds. The only edit made to the original text of the Covenant was to capitalise the word ‘nine’ in the title. It now read ‘the Solemn Covenant entered into between the Unionists of the NINE Counties of Ulster’.<sup>167</sup> The pamphlet argued that the same demographic and political facts were true of the three counties in 1920 as they had been in 1911. Abandoning the counties now in face of such little change was to invalidate the word of Ulster Unionism. The decision of the U.U.C. was criticised as rushed. The delegates had lacked the time to consult with their local associations, and ill-informed as it had been reported erroneously that Sinn Féin would hold a majority across nine counties.

The perfidy of the six county delegates was excoriated. Their arguments to invalidate the Covenant were dismissed as ‘idiotic’ and ‘childish’. A six-county state was dismissed as impractically small, impractically bordered and pointlessly politically uniform. The key argument was to dismiss the idea that the three counties should be excluded because of their Nationalist majority:

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<sup>164</sup> *Northern Standard*, 4 October 1918.

<sup>165</sup> *Irish Post and Weekly Telegraph*, 7 September 1918.

<sup>166</sup> Buckland, *Irish Unionism II*, p.120 – 1; *Northern Standard*, 24 April 1920.

<sup>167</sup> *Ulster and Home Rule: No partition of Ulster* (Clones, 1920).

That is true. But so does Derry City, Fermanagh County, Tyrone County, South Armagh, South Down and the Falls Division of Belfast. Yet no one proposes to exclude them. The truth is that it is impossible to fix upon any exclusively Unionist area.<sup>168</sup>

Unfortunately for three-county loyalists this move was merely a delaying tactic as the U.U.C. again affirmed their commitment to a six-county state.<sup>169</sup> The requisition was dismissed as unrepresentative of the entire community while the three-county loyalists were assured the decision had only been taken after ‘much heart-searching’, presumably this was little solace.<sup>170</sup> The three-county media was swift to criticise the dishonesty of the six-county delegates: ‘it is clearly obvious that to attain the full measure of selfish safety for themselves they are prepared to jeopardise the safety of their Southern friends’.<sup>171</sup> A meeting of the County Cavan Unionist Association passed a motion protesting ‘most emphatically against the breach of the Covenant caused by ... the Ulster Council on March 10 in deserting their fellow Covenanters’.<sup>172</sup> Similar motions were passed by Donegal and Monaghan and then collectively at a meeting in Clones in March 1920. The idea of the violation of the Covenant had currency even outside of Cavan and Monaghan. Irish Parliamentary Party M.P. T.P. O’Connor teased James Craig in the House of Commons on 29 March 1920: ‘the Covenanters of Donegal, Cavan and Monaghan have been given up to the Papist and Nationalists’.<sup>173</sup>

As R.B. McDowell has described, for all this anger, adaptation followed resistance almost as rapidly.<sup>174</sup> For some this manifested itself as expressing a willingness to cooperate with the Irish Free State, once established.<sup>175</sup> Judge Samuel Browne K.C., to general surprise, opened the Clones Quarter Sessions of February 1922 by pledging his allegiance to the new Irish government.<sup>176</sup> By the 1922 general election the *Northern Standard* was urging its voters to take an active role: ‘the votes of the Unionists, or ex-

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<sup>168</sup> Ibid.

<sup>169</sup> Buckland, *Irish Unionism II*, p. 120.

<sup>170</sup> *Northern Standard*, 24 April 1920.

<sup>171</sup> *Northern Standard*, 19 June 1920; *Irish Post and Weekly Telegraph*, 20 July 1918.

<sup>172</sup> *Irish Post and Weekly Telegraph*, 13 March 1920.

<sup>173</sup> House of Commons Debates, 5<sup>th</sup> series, vol. 127, 29 March 1920, col. 968.

<sup>174</sup> McDowell, *Crisis and Decline*, pp 109 – 10.

<sup>175</sup> *Northern Standard*, 11 February 1922.

<sup>176</sup> *Northern Standard*, 3 February 1922.

Unionists, will play an important part in deciding the contest in this country ... the fate of Ireland is in the balance ... we are concerned solely and absolutely for the fate of the plain people ... the ex-Unionist voters therefore must decide which candidates are more likely to bring peace and prosperity'.<sup>177</sup> At the combined Cavan-Monaghan Twelfth held at Drum in 1920, Thomas Clements D.L. of Rathkenny, offered a resigned vision of their place in Ireland. He assured the audience that: 'for ourselves and our property I honestly think there is no special danger' before contenting himself to note that the worst-case scenario would not come to pass: Sinn Féin were 'not Communists'. He urged the Protestant community to commit themselves to the new Irish state and to protect their schools which he feared would be the real victims of any new regime.<sup>178</sup> In this they were following the rhetoric that had already been employed by Protestants from outside of Ulster who had been making their peace with being in a Catholic state for nearly a decade at that point.<sup>179</sup>

While Ian d'Alton has described the manner in which southern Protestants kept their heads down and largely associated amongst themselves following partition as a 'parallel state' this was not exactly the case in Cavan and Monaghan with their larger and more assertive communities.<sup>180</sup> Protestants (referred to as 'exunionists' by Thomas Toal) such as Colonel James Madden and William Martin remained active on local councils. They played a crucial role in supporting their old political adversary Toal in maintaining the Chairship of Monaghan County Council in the face of opposition from Fianna Fáil post-1934. This adaptation did not mean the complete abandonment of Unionism as an element of their political identity. Colonel Madden, in particular, continued to put forward a 'Unionist' perspective in debates. Despite owing his political survival to the support of the Protestant councillors, Thomas Toal refused outright to hear a motion proposed by Colonel Madden congratulating the King and Queen on their Jubilee. Madden's proposal was justified through Ireland's status as a dominion. Even over a decade after its establishment, the Free State meant different things to Protestant

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<sup>177</sup> *Northern Standard*, 9 June 1922.

<sup>178</sup> *Irish Post and Weekly Telegraph*, 17 July 1920.

<sup>179</sup> Hennessey, *Dividing Ireland*, pp 189 – 91.

<sup>180</sup> Ian d'Alton, 'No country?': the parallel Protestant state in independent Ireland, 1922-49', paper present to 'Outsiders in Independent Ireland, 1922-49' Conference in Maynooth University, 4 September 2014.

and Catholic. In a recognition of their new political environment Madden and the Unionists continued to support Toal in the Chair election in spite of this rebuke.<sup>181</sup>

In a speech to the 155 Monaghan Lodge, the chairman of the lodge Dr J. Campbell Hall counselled his brethren to show ‘restraint, defence, not defiance and appealed to Orangemen and loyalists to do nothing without consulting their leaders’. The same meeting saw William Coote, M.P. for Tyrone and Fermanagh, frame the terms of accommodation with the new Irish state in a very traditional Unionist manner: ‘loyalists must take things like trusty Britons, make the best of them. They had to keep a stiff upper lip and hammer away.’ Coote expressed disdain for the settlement, praising the bravery of the Monaghan Orangeman who were not afraid to gather in public and blamed partition on a weak English government that allowed de Valera ‘to go masquerading as “President”’. The audience was assured that the incompetence of the Republican movement would cause the Free State to fail within the year.<sup>182</sup>

Colonel Madden, a director of the Great Northern Railway, wrote a letter to the Prime Minister on 18 February 1920 less than a day after learning of the forthcoming partition of Ireland. His letter did not attempt to change the Prime Minister’s mind or protest at the harsh treatment of the three-county Protestants. Rather, Madden immediately stated to Lloyd George: ‘I have determined to write and place the following considerations before you and to suggest what to my mind is the only correct boundary.’ The border he proposed happily sacrificed Cavan and Monaghan to the south while also removing half of Fermanagh from Northern Ireland and transferring northwards Donegal and the upper half of Louth. In doing so, he showed no concern for his own status in a Protestant state nor for any idea of the integrity of Ulster. He admitted his main concern is to keep the majority of the Great Northern Railway’s lines in Ulster.<sup>183</sup>

For others this transition was not so easy. A disheartened voter wrote a letter to the *Northern Standard* in 1921 under the penname ‘In the Wilderness’. In this letter he detailed his own sense of political disorientation. No longer did he feel like he could vote for the Unionist Party but neither could he not vote Sinn Féin. He was left without anyone who could represent him politically.<sup>184</sup> As we will see in the next section,

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<sup>181</sup> Thomas Toal diary (Monaghan County Museum).

<sup>182</sup> *Northern Standard*, 18 November 1921.

<sup>183</sup> Evidence of John Madden (T.N.A., Boundary Commission files, CAB/61/103).

<sup>184</sup> *Northern Standard*, 8 July 1921.

political apathy among Protestants was a significant issue for those trying to run a Unionist candidate. Norma McMaster described her Cavan Presbyterian community post-independence as a ‘lost and schizoid people’ recalled her mother’s distress on occasions at being so cut off from Belfast and summarised their position using a Cavan phrase ‘we had one foot in Mullagh [Cavan] and one in Moynalty [Meath]’.<sup>185</sup>

It was not until the 1927 June general election that an ‘Independent Protestant’ candidate, Alexander Haslett, ran in Monaghan. He was elected in last place on the ballot despite receiving the highest number of first preference votes (6,964) reflecting his singular appeal.<sup>186</sup> In Cavan, a similar Protestant candidate John James Cole failed to be elected in the June general election of 1927, despite polling 2,000 more first preferences than Philip Baxter, the Farmer’s candidate who took the final electoral position. In the September election of the same year he succeeded in reaching the quota.

Neither Cole nor Haslett were Protestants in religion only. They presented themselves in strongly traditional terms. Both were members of the Orange Order: Cole was grand master of Cavan and Haslett deputy master of Monaghan. Fitzpatrick has noted that the Order became one of the main sources of organisation and fundraising for such Protestant candidates.<sup>187</sup> Cole was a Down Protestant who had moved to Cavan in his twenties and was particularly explicit about his constituency: ‘you can call them ex-Unionists, or, if you wish to be more precise, you can call them Protestants.’<sup>188</sup>

This adaptation was echoed by the *Northern Standard* who urged three-county Protestants to ‘look at the Bill from the point of view of the Southern Unionists and the Irish Unionist Alliance, instead of from the old (or correct) Ulster standpoint.’<sup>189</sup> By July 1921 this position was even more advanced with the paper now viewing the ‘Six Counties’ as a wholly distinct entity and speaking on behalf of ‘the Southern Unionists’. The paper accepted that this group did ‘not belong to the Six Counties’ and would have to continue on their own course.<sup>190</sup>

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<sup>185</sup> Norma McMaster, *Over My Shoulder: A Memoir* (Dublin, 2008) pp 43 – 4.

<sup>186</sup> Ironically, another candidate elected for Monaghan in the same election was Protestant, Ernest Blythe. However, he ran for Sinn Féin and drew few votes from the Protestant community.

<sup>187</sup> Fitzpatrick, *Descendancy*, p 55 – 6.

<sup>188</sup> Liam Weeks, *Independents in Irish Party Democracy* (Manchester, 2017), p. 36.

<sup>189</sup> *Northern Standard*, 19 June 1920.

<sup>190</sup> *Northern Standard* 15 July 1921.

As the counties shifted into a 'southern' perspective they moved to associate amongst each other. They shared a unique position not fully understood now either North or South. Canon Given of Dartrey gloomily conceded that they could no longer consider themselves in Ulster but rather 'they were the buffers between the North and South'.<sup>191</sup> In the words of William Martin, of Lodge 155 in Monaghan, 'we are rather in a state of suspended animation: we are neither the one thing nor the other'.<sup>192</sup> Traditionally cross-Ulster events such as the Twelfth became more local with the Twelfth of 1920 and the Clones Twelfth of 1921 organised on a three-county basis.<sup>193</sup> In November 1921 the Cavan, Donegal and Monaghan Loyalist Association was established to 'safeguard the interests of the 70,000 loyalists in the three counties'.<sup>194</sup>

This new perspective was combined with a growing criticism of Northern Ireland. This was a natural product of the initial anger at the U.U.C. itself. In a speech to the House of Lords on 1 December 1920, the Earl of Clanwilliam noted that six county Unionists had earned 'the hostility and perhaps the hatred of those who live in the three counties' for reasons which were 'more selfish than anything else'.<sup>195</sup> Frederick Crawford, in a letter to Carson, decried the 'criminal betrayal by the Imperial government'.<sup>196</sup>

The same delegates who had voted for partition were now seen as running the new state. The very claim of these delegates to call themselves Unionists was disparaged. In a speech near Clones, Michael Knight, grandmaster of the Monaghan Orange Lodge declared the 'six county "Unionists" had accomplished their desire. They had sat tight in order to make for themselves places of trust and emolument'.<sup>197</sup> We do not know if the quotation marks around Unionist in this quotation were added by the editor of the *Northern Standard* or contextually implied, or both. The claims of the U.U.C. that a nine-county Ulster state could not guarantee a Unionist majority were also disparaged. The comfortable Unionist majority attained in the first Northern Irish elections seemed

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<sup>191</sup> *Northern Standard*, 22 July 1921.

<sup>192</sup> *Northern Standard*, 18 November 1921.

<sup>193</sup> *Irish Post and Weekly Telegraph*, 17 July 1920; *Northern Standard*, 17 July 1920; *Northern Standard*, 5 August 1921.

<sup>194</sup> *Northern Standard*, 4 November 1921.

<sup>195</sup> House of Lords Debates, 5<sup>th</sup> series, vol. 42, 1 December 1920, col. 808.

<sup>196</sup> Letter of Major Frederick Crawford to Carson, No Date (P.R.O.N.I., Carson Papers, D640/7/1).

<sup>197</sup> *Northern Standard*, 15 July 1921.

to confirm in the eyes of three-county Unionists that this argument had simply been a pretence by those in the North to shore up their own position.<sup>198</sup>

By May 1921, the *Northern Standard* was of the opinion that the true issue with the Government of Ireland Act was partition itself and not the establishment of a Home Government. ‘If the Six Counties were to be induced or forced, to give up the idea of a separate Parliament and agree to a central Assembly in Dublin, we would probably have a peace’.<sup>199</sup> In April of the same year the paper had complained about the expense of setting up two such Parliaments and advised that costs would be reduced should one Parliament be established in Dublin.<sup>200</sup>

Cavan and Monaghan did articulate a distinct Ulster identity. In terms of proportional contribution to the various Ulster movements and organisations both Cavan and Monaghan held their own, although the lack of a strong recruiting drive in both counties is a surprise.<sup>201</sup> This did not prevent the two counties from enthusiastically buying into the glorification of Ulster’s role in the war. In those restricted Protestant spaces Ulster identity can be said to have been as strong as anywhere in the province. However, the partition of Ireland came as a significant shock and in spite of the chorus of anger which followed it, the speed with which Monaghan and Cavan Unionists readjusted suggests that they were never as tightly bound to Ulsterism as Down or Antrim may have been.

#### How did the Protestant and loyalist community in Cavan and Monaghan view and integrate with their Catholic neighbours?

Contemporary accounts, both fictional and autobiographical, of this period emphasise two communities with cordial relations but with largely separate social

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<sup>198</sup> *Northern Standard*, 15 July 1921; *Northern Standard*, 14 May 1921.

<sup>199</sup> *Northern Standard*, 13 May 1921.

<sup>200</sup> *Northern Standard*, 8 June 1921

<sup>201</sup> For an examination of the level of Catholic recruitment in Ulster see David Fitzpatrick, ‘The logic of collective sacrifice: Ireland and the British army, 1914-1918’, *Historical Journal*, Vol. 38, No. 4 (1995), p 1017 – 30

worlds and with an underlying tension that frequently emerged. Kevin O'Shiel was an astute observer of society and noted of his own Omagh childhood that

My little world was sharply divided into two great disparate sections of humanity, to one or other of which each one was born into and belonged as irrevocably as he belonged to his particular sex. These 'Great Divides' were the Catholics and the Protestants ... it was sanctioned by the custom of circumstances and accepted as inevitable, so that it seemed quite the law of nature for people who went to a Protestant Church to live a life more or less apart from their Catholic neighbours.<sup>202</sup>

O'Shiel characterises this division as a 'kind of involuntary or unconscious apartheid' that seemed to the average Northerner 'quite in order, and according to the natural law.'<sup>203</sup> O'Shiel was talking not about Cavan or Monaghan but Tyrone. However, O'Shiel's Omagh while more Protestant than Cavan or Monaghan was still a town in a primarily rural, Catholic majority county. It had more in common with Monaghan than with Belfast. It was, for example, only 5% more Protestant than Clones in the 1911 census.<sup>204</sup>

This portrayal of two separate communities living simultaneous lives in the same space was echoed in accounts from the three counties themselves. Thomas Toal noted the rapidity with which the Catholics of Smithborough shifted their business to his own fledgling shop: 'this was the first time for a Catholic of any standing to make an effort to capture a share of the trade of his own people'.<sup>205</sup> Thomas Briody failed to recall any specific Protestants from his local area growing up noting 'I think there was a Protestant school at Carrick ... I only knew of one family ... there may have been more'.<sup>206</sup> Norma McMaster, a Cavan Presbyterian, summarised her experience in the 1940s very simply 'Roman Catholics don't attend our social gatherings and we don't attend theirs ... I have

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<sup>202</sup> B.M.H. Ws. 1770 (Kevin O'Shiel).

<sup>203</sup> Ibid.

<sup>204</sup> National Archives of Ireland, *Census of Ireland 1901/1911* (<http://www.census.nationalarchives.ie> : accessed 24 November 2016).

<sup>205</sup> Thomas Toal Diary (Monaghan County Museum).

<sup>206</sup> Thomas Briody, *The Road to Avondale*, p. 51.



never been inside a Roman Catholic house. A Presbyterian girl starts to go out with a Roman Catholic man and a terrible cloud descends on our congregation.’ In contrast to Toal’s Catholic customers, McMaster was sent to the shops to ask for ‘English thread not Irish’.<sup>207</sup>

Sandra Carolan has already noted the separate social worlds of Cavan Protestants and Catholics through a comparative analysis of the *Northern Standard* and *Anglo-Celt*. This separation extended to and was augmented by the advertisements used (with the *Standard* favouring ads that used ‘British’ as the assumed demonym of the customer), the sports covered (the *Standard* favouring cricket, football and rugby; the *Anglo-Celt* favouring Gaelic games) and the social events advertised.<sup>208</sup> Monaghan farmers even organised on broad religious lines, with the Ulster Farmers Union and the Irish Farmers Union competing for members in the county.<sup>209</sup> Additionally, fraternal organisations like the Ancient Order of Hibernians, the Orange Order and the Freemasons fell along religious lines (although less stringently with the Freemasons).

Local events reinforced this division; dances were held in Orange or Protestant halls and it was generally through the churches or organisations like the Orange Order that social gatherings were organised.<sup>210</sup> O’Shiel also noted that religious halls formed the basis of social interactions. These halls were particularly valuable to the Protestant community in isolated country districts, supplying them with invaluable centres for their political and religious meetings.<sup>211</sup> Such events featured a talk on a topic such as patriotism or local history and would often have featured the singing of patriotic songs. This was especially pronounced during the war when such social events doubled as fundraisers for the war and were almost exclusively attended by Protestants.<sup>212</sup> A petition to celebrate Peace Day was brought to Clones Urban Council in July 1919 signed exclusively by Protestant members of the town. When the town’s strong Catholic recruitment, to which the Chair of the Council had been central, was pointed out, the Unionist councillors were apologetic and noted that it was not intended as a Protestant

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<sup>207</sup> McMaster, *Over My Shoulder* p 41.

<sup>208</sup> Sandra M Carolan, ‘Cavan Protestants in an age of upheaval, 1919-22’ (M.A. thesis, National University of Ireland, Maynooth, 2002) pp 58 – 60.

<sup>209</sup> *Northern Standard*, 28 February 1920.

<sup>210</sup> *Irish Post and Weekly Telegraph*, 10 March 1916; *Irish Post and Weekly Telegraph*, 5 May 1916; *Irish Post and Weekly Telegraph*, 5 February 1918.

<sup>211</sup> B.M.H. Ws. 1770 (Kevin O’Shiel).

<sup>212</sup> *Northern Standard*, 17 June 1916; *Northern Standard*, 29 April 1916.

petition but had seemed to only come to Protestant hands.<sup>213</sup> Thomas Briody, recalled a range of social activities from his Cavan childhood of the 1920s all of which were strongly Irish and Catholic such as céilís, feiseanna and G.A.A. socials.<sup>214</sup>

Shan Bullock presented an even more fundamental division than this. Bullock was born into a Protestant family and raised a loyalist but had strong sympathies for Catholicism and Nationalism. The bulk of his work was more concerned with the idiosyncrasies of rural life, but he frequently engaged with religion and sectarianism. Bullock's vision of Cavan and southern Fermanagh was that there existed 'two distinct people'. Bullock echoed the view of Frank Frankfort Moore when he characterised the Protestant community as being an inherently colonial entity 'not native save through long sojourn and absorption'.<sup>215</sup>

In Bullock's Cavan, the difference between the two communities was so fundamental as to be written in their physical appearance. 'It was easy, as easy, Father would say, as telling a parsnip from a carrot, to decide at once which was which.' The attitudes of both groups distinguished them as completely alien from one another:

Their colouring facial lines and contours, their bearing and manner, were different; had you a doubt, and it was important not to have doubts, you had only to hold five minutes of friendly talk with them. The phrases they used differed, the common household words, the way of looking at things and taking them, the spirit animating each in his attitude as man and mortal towards God and man.<sup>216</sup>

The 1925 representation of the Donegal Protestant Registration Association to the North-Eastern Boundary Bureau identified the 'Unionist' inhabitants of the county as largely 'descendants of the Scotch and English Planters and by race, religion, association and sentiment different to the remainder of the population'.<sup>217</sup> O'Shiel rejected the idea

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<sup>213</sup> *Northern Standard*, 19 July 1919.

<sup>214</sup> Thomas Briody, *The Road to Avondale*, p 46.

<sup>215</sup> Shan Bullock, *After Sixty Years* (London, 1931) pp 16 – 17.

<sup>216</sup> *Idem*, p. 18 – 19.

<sup>217</sup> Representation of the Donegal Protestant Association to the North Eastern Boundary Bureau (N.A.I., North Eastern Boundary Bureau files, TAOIS/NEBB/4/3/2).

that this was a Protestant innovation. Noting that a large section of the Catholic population adhered to it ‘as firmly as the most bigotted [sic] Orangeman.’<sup>218</sup> McMaster commented ‘we sometimes quarrel[led] with the Roman Catholic children and then generally for no reason it’s just “us” and “them”.’<sup>219</sup>

Bullock also introduced the idea of Protestant spaces, these were physical areas where Protestants were in the majority, a fact which was reflected in the physical appearance of the area. He referred to areas like Protestant majority Gorteen as ‘colonies’ or ‘islands’.<sup>220</sup> They were Protestant lands adrift in a sea of Catholicism and thus could only be maintained in Ulster in a few counties. They had neater hedges, greener grass and cleaner roads in his novel *The Squireen*.<sup>221</sup> In *Awkward Squads* when the Catholic Volunteers crossed the river and climb Rhamus Hill they were uneasy, sensing that they had entered ‘inimy territory [sic]’.<sup>222</sup> Maume has characterised this as Bullock expressing a sort of proto-border but his own writings suggest that he actually saw southern Fermanagh as being largely an extension of Northern Cavan and Monaghan. In the context of his other writings it makes more sense for this sense of transgression to come from the entering of the squad not over a border but into an ‘island’.<sup>223</sup>

The idea of Protestant spaces was not unique to Bullock even if he gave them clarity. I.R.A. divisions in Monaghan planned their activities around avoiding unsafe ‘Unionist districts’.<sup>224</sup> The emergence of the Boundary Commission in the 1920s and the statements made to it by various interested parties give further prominence to this idea of certain areas being irredeemably Protestant. J.R. Meara, Anglican priest of Annaghmore, defined the Drummully region as being a Protestant region in spite of the small Catholic majority therein. This was due to Meara seeing most of the Catholic population as not truly belonging to the area, being largely temporary labourers, while the Protestant community owned the most land and paid the highest rates.<sup>225</sup> This

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<sup>218</sup> B.M.H. Ws.1770 (Kevin O’Shiel).

<sup>219</sup> McMaster, *Over My Shoulder*, p. 42.

<sup>220</sup> Shan Bullock, *The Squireen* (London, 1903), p. 4.

<sup>221</sup> Bullock, *Squireen*, p. 6.

<sup>222</sup> Shan Bullock, *The Awkward Squads* (Dublin, 1903), p. 10.

<sup>223</sup> Patrick Maume, ‘Ulstermen of Letters: The Unionism of Frank Frankfort Moore, Shan Bullock, and St John Ervine’, in Richard English and Graham Walker (ed.), *Unionism in Modern Ireland: New Perspectives on Politics and Culture* (London, 1996), p. 70.

<sup>224</sup> Monthly Report of Monaghan Brigade, March 1921 (U.C.D.A., Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/39).

<sup>225</sup> Evidence of Drummully Residents (T.N.A., Boundary Commission files, CAB/61/56).

argument was a common school of thought in Fermanagh Unionism as to why the county should stay in Northern Ireland.<sup>226</sup> We should be careful of the concept as in many cases it was expressed simply as a means to allow Protestants to claim a local majority. However, it did also tie into deeper views of the land belonging more fundamentally to Protestants than Catholics. This was especially true of the former estates like those of the Leslies of Glaslough, the Maddens of Hilton Park and the Saundersons of Castlesaunderson. Indeed, the Saundersons made their own application to the Commission, for the border to detour southwards for a mile around their estate, on precisely these grounds.<sup>227</sup>

In this atmosphere of division even surnames were imbued with meaning. In his own interviews, Fr. Louis O’Kane noted that in certain parts of the country ‘McKenna’ had been categorised as a Protestant surname, but his interviewees John and James McKenna of the Newbliss Battalion affirmed that this was a common misconception.<sup>228</sup> Edward Brady, Chair of Clones Urban Council, noted a petition was entirely Protestant from the surnames on the list while Peter Carron, a Nationalist councillor, quipped that he had known because ‘there is no white and green in it at all’.<sup>229</sup> In his memoir, Thomas Toal, Chair of Monaghan County Council, diligently included the religion of an individual in brackets if it contradicted their surname such as with his father’s Catholic neighbour William Campbell.<sup>230</sup>

Intra-Protestant relations are not a strong feature of these memoirs, the minority Protestant populations in both counties (Presbyterians and Methodists in Cavan, Anglicans and Methodists in Monaghan) being small sections of a population that was small enough already. McMaster also recalled Cavan Anglicans as being ‘the more uppity Protestants who went to posh boarding schools.’<sup>231</sup> This was in comparison to the middle-class character of Presbyterians. O’Shiel also noted that the Church of Ireland here held the greatest social prestige and ‘that when Presbyterians, Methodists and other dissenters got on well in life, it was no unusual thing for them to transfer themselves and their families from the Presbyterian “Meetinghouse” to the Episcopal Church, thereby

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<sup>226</sup> See Chapter 4.

<sup>227</sup> Evidence of Colonel Saunderson (T.N.A., Boundary Commission files, CAB/61/131).

<sup>228</sup> Interview of John and James McKenna (C.O.F.L.A., O’Kane Collection, LOK IV\_A\_77 -01).

<sup>229</sup> *Northern Standard*, 19 July 1919.

<sup>230</sup> Diary of Thomas Toal (Monaghan County Museum).

<sup>231</sup> McMaster, *Over My Shoulder*, p, 83.

hoping to immerse themselves in some of the aura that still lingered after the Disestablishment and thus acquire the stamp of indelible respectability'.<sup>232</sup> Esler's *Maid of the Manse* focuses on the Donegal Protestant community. She was keen to portray the town's religious divide as overlapping with its broader socio-economic splits. The town itself is described as 'chiefly Episcopal' while the rural population was Presbyterian, and the servant or labouring class Roman Catholic.<sup>233</sup>

However, there is little on such internal divisions in the work of Bullock or in the recollections of, Briody or Anita Leslie. More mainstream Ulster literary sources such as the work of Frank Frankfort Moore emphasise a fluidity underpinned by a tension that was dwarfed by the neighbouring Catholic-Protestant tension. In Moore's *Lady of the Reef*, the protagonist Walter's old uncle, the previous lord of the manor, who was presented throughout as an admired and archetypal Ulsterman, is described as 'a bit of all sects except a Papist'. His uncle shifted religion based primarily on his social allegiances. For example, he left Episcopalianism the first time when his friend was refused a Deanery.<sup>234</sup> In *The Ulsterman* the parliamentary candidate Oliver Kinghan is careful to portray his religion as being as ambiguous as he can – 'the most Presbyterian Episcopalian possible' – and refuses to correct anyone who referred to him as a Presbyterian.<sup>235</sup>

The exact hostility of the Catholic-Protestant divide is never agreed upon in memoirs but in all of them there exists an underlying tension. The community relations Bullock describes are of an uneasy peace. Both sides co-exist and can even co-operate but real interaction is rare and steps are actively taken to prevent trouble. In the land near Bullock's own home the Catholics and Protestants as frequently as possible worked in separate groups with separate foremen and kept their distance from one another. As Bullock puts it 'as a good Protestant Wee James had a deep suspicion that only fear and a lack of opportunity kept Thady as a good Catholic and rebel from cutting his throat'.<sup>236</sup>

This casual prejudice against Catholics emerges in Erminda Esler's novel *Trackless Way* set in Presbyterian Donegal (of which Esler herself was a member). The

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<sup>232</sup> B.M.H. Ws.1770 (Kevin O'Shiel).

<sup>233</sup> E Rentoul Esler, *A Maid of the Manse* (London, 1895), pp. 5 – 6; 10; 33.

<sup>234</sup> Moore, *Lady of the Reef*, p. 24.

<sup>235</sup> Moore, *Ulsterman*, p. 10.

<sup>236</sup> Bullock, *After Sixty Years*, p. 52 – 3.

Manse children of the area who, despite living a life as frugal and pleasureless as the other religious communities in the area ‘nevertheless assumed that a wide gulf of social distinction separated them [from the Catholic children].’<sup>237</sup> The devout Presbyterian Venner has a reputation in the novel of refusing to hire Catholic servants. He declares Catholicism ‘an immeasurable evil’ although it is pointed out that this is in spite of his tendency to like and admire every individual Catholic he encounters, to the point of having more Catholic friends than Protestant ones. He can only support his prejudices through generalisations about ‘Paris or Rome’.<sup>238</sup>

The separation and mistrust between the two communities was established early on. O’Shiel noted that even as children there were forces keeping the two communities apart. He remembered a game played as children where passing carts would have slogans of varying political persuasions shouted at them: ‘To hell with the King!’ or ‘To hell with the Pope!’.<sup>239</sup> The aim of the game was simply to provoke a reaction either positive or negative and thereby see the person’s persuasion. The Presbyterian children described in Esler’s Donegal set *Maid of the Manse* frequently mock other children of the same age in confidence of their own superiority.<sup>240</sup> Briody never saw the local Protestant children who were sent to separate schools.<sup>241</sup> Norma McMaster noted that she attended a separate school in the 1940s and had a single Catholic friend who was distinguished by her ‘strange ways’.<sup>242</sup>

The tension between Catholic and Protestant was generally unspoken but came to the fore in moments of high emotion. In the Monaghan armistice celebrations, conflict erupted between Catholic and Protestant crowds after some Catholics jeered those celebrating the victory.<sup>243</sup> It is also demonstrated in the frequent vandalism of Protestant churches in Cavan and Monaghan. The stained-glass windows of the Presbyterian Church in Monaghan town were destroyed in 1918.<sup>244</sup> In June 1920, Clones Anglican Church was broken into and the Union flag taken off the wall and burned in the town

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<sup>237</sup> E. Rentoul Esler, *A Maid of the Manse* (London, 1895), pp. 5 – 6; 10; 33.

<sup>238</sup> E. Rentoul Esler, *Trackless Way*, pp. 103 – 4. Esler’s sympathies are hard to place. She herself was of Donegal Presbyterian stock and her stories focus primarily on this community, but simultaneously she displays little sympathy for the plantation origin of the rural Presbyterians.

<sup>239</sup> B.M.H. Ws. 1770 (Kevin O’Shiel).

<sup>240</sup> Esler, *Maid of the Manse*, pp. 4 – 6.

<sup>241</sup> Briody, *Road to Avondale*, p. 51.

<sup>242</sup> McMaster, *Over My Shoulder*, p. 39.

<sup>243</sup> *Northern Standard*, 16 November 1918.

<sup>244</sup> *Northern Standard*, 15 June 1918.

centre.<sup>245</sup> Ballyhaise Church was similarly damaged in August 1920.<sup>246</sup> These cases were inevitably followed by assertions that the relations of the Church with its Catholic neighbours were good and this was only the work of vandals, but it emphasised that element of religious difference. Pre-Revolution boycotts, such as that of John McNeill in Arva in 1910, divided the communities as they were broken by those not in sympathy with it, generally Protestants.<sup>247</sup>

Geoffrey Coulter saw the traditional town life of his upbringing in Fivemiletown as one in which the religious split never normally emerged. The divide only manifested itself on the days of marches and even then, in his own majority Protestant town, the nationalists in the village were tolerated enough to have their own flag flown too. The tension only surfaced following the Easter Rising. Even then, Coulter noted that the two Hacket brothers, local republicans, who had left to join the Rising, returned on its failure with little comment or hostility from the Protestant population. Fear was depersonalised, reserved for those unseen Fenians who Coulter said were believed to have gathered in a 600-strong cabal in the mountains and were poised to descend on the town and slaughter all Protestants.<sup>248</sup>

This is not to suggest that Cavan and Monaghan existed in a state of permanent undeclared sectarian conflict merely that an undercurrent of tension and separation is captured in most depictions of the counties. Cross-religious social relations were not uncommon and economic relationships even more prevalent. In Esler's *Maid of the Manse* the warmest relations in the story are between the Anglican Mrs Hamilton and the local Catholic priest.<sup>249</sup> Duncan Scarlett, recalling his father's life in Clones in the 1920s, noted that his father made multiple Catholic friends through his involvement in Clones musical societies and through his job with the Great Northern Railway but framed this as being unusual.<sup>250</sup>

Apoliticality was the cost of such relationships. Despite his sympathy for their people Shan Bullock's own attempts to befriend Catholics were only mildly successful.

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<sup>245</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 10 June 1920.

<sup>246</sup> *Northern Standard*, 21 August 1920.

<sup>247</sup> For case of McNeill see County Inspectors Returns Cavan January 1910 (T.N.A.: CO 904/80); *Irish Times*, 25 February 1910.

<sup>248</sup> Geoffrey Coulter Interview (C.O.F.L.A., O'Kane Collection, 01-LOK IV\_A\_84A).

<sup>249</sup> Esler, *Maid of the Manse*, p. 45.

<sup>250</sup> Interview of Duncan Scarlett by Daniel Purcell on 25 November 2016.

He records a reserve that prevented them from ever truly trusting him: ‘Therein was something secret and sacred, I supposed, that belonged to them and I the black Protestant was not fit to come near.’<sup>251</sup> Were it not for their close economic ties to the Catholic community Cavan and Monaghan businesses would not have suffered so heavily during the Belfast Boycott.<sup>252</sup> O’Shiel also noted that warm relations between the different communities were possible but generally only between members of the professional classes.<sup>253</sup> Thomas Briody’s father did extensive business with local Protestants buying and selling meadows and he noted the large number who attended his funeral. Briody also recalled being shown very warm welcomes when sent by his father to express condolences to Protestant neighbours after a death<sup>254</sup>

### *Public Protestantism*

However, a crucial complicating factor in Catholic-Protestant relations was the public, symbol-heavy nature of Ulster Protestantism which served to emphasise and deepen the divisions in the community. Of particular importance were the marches of the Orange Order and Royal Black Preceptory on the anniversary of the battle of the Boyne and the Relief of Derry. These were large events drawing in marchers from multiple counties. The Monaghan Grand Orange Lodge’s anniversary of the siege of Derry in 1918 saw marchers from five Cavan preceptories, two from Armagh and eighteen from Monaghan.<sup>255</sup> Two years later the Monaghan Royal Black Preceptory’s monster rally for the same occasion drew in thousands of individuals, twenty-one preceptories from Monaghan and nine from Cavan.<sup>256</sup>

While the rallies themselves were normally held on estates outside of urban areas and were not necessarily major public impositions, the marches were bright, loud and prominent affairs that made their way through the centre of whichever town they were

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<sup>251</sup> Bullock, *After Sixty Years*, p. 45.

<sup>252</sup> See Chapter 2.

<sup>253</sup> B.M.H. Ws. 1770 (Kevin O’Shiel).

<sup>254</sup> Briody, *The Road to Avondale*, p. 51.

<sup>255</sup> *Northern Standard*, 17 August 1918.

<sup>256</sup> *Northern Standard*, 14 August 1920.



located in. In Darrach McDonald's *Sons of Levi*, set in Drum in Monaghan, the sound of the Lambeg is 'a great tidal rush' forcibly drawing out the areas' Catholics 'watching guardedly with more than a trace of resentment'.<sup>257</sup> Even without their long and mutually understood history, such marches were very prominent and problematic displays of Protestantism. For Bullock inter-communal hostility was reinforced by this public and aggressive form. 'What did the others think of the hubbub? ... How could there ever be peace and fellowship in face of such folly?'<sup>258</sup> These marches served to identify in the minds of both communities which side of the divide an individual fell on. James Gordon, in his application to the Irish Grants Committee, noted that his own marching in various Orange parades had served to bring him to the attention of the local I.R.A. as a potential threat.<sup>259</sup>

Frankfort Moore, speaking for elsewhere in Ulster, captured in *The Ulsterman* how Twelfths played an important role in reinforcing a common Protestant identity. The majority of people attending a rally were unable to even hear the speaker but knew the words and rhythms of a typical Orange speech so well that they could appreciate the fervour with which it was delivered. Even those who could hear did not so much pay attention to the words of the speech as deliver them in unison: 'every man felt himself to be the orator; every man had probably said a thousand times and so felt, not that he was being instructed, but that he himself was the instructor'. Nor could this display of loyalism be seen as anything other than a challenge to Catholics: 'there was no suggestion of good fellowship or jollity in any direction, the men wore the expression of seasoned soldiers going into battle'.<sup>260</sup>

Thomas Toal recalled the other public set pieces that defined the contest between Catholic and Protestant from the 1880s to the 1920s. For many prominent nationalists and Unionists these were the events that came to define their relationship to the other community. An Orange flag hung from Smithborough Orange Hall provoked local Catholics to remove it and tearing it up. A second flag hung even higher was again torn down, this time by Catholics paid to come in from Shankill. On the second occasion word was passed around town what would happen and the removal was witnessed by a

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<sup>257</sup> Darrach McDonald, *Sons of Levi* (Monaghan, 1998), p. 11.

<sup>258</sup> Bullock, *After Sixty Years* p. 24.

<sup>259</sup> James Gordon claim (T.N.A.: C.O 762/177/7).

<sup>260</sup> Moore, *Ulsterman*, p. 10; pp 35 – 6.

crowd of Catholics and a number of Orangemen too fearful to intervene. A third flag was flown under permanent armed guard. On another occasion a meeting of Hibernians in Smithborough was issued a public challenge to a fight at Johnston's cross by the local Orangeman. On arriving at the location, the Hibernians were ambushed and had guns fired above their heads.<sup>261</sup> Even after independence this public element complicated relations between the groups. Norma McMaster recalled peaceful relations with her Catholic neighbours disturbed only when they wore the poppy on Remembrance Day when the poppies were snatched from them and smashed on the ground or it was shouted at them: 'on St Patrick's Day we'll be happy and gay and we'll kick the aul Protestant out of the way'. This did not stop the family wearing the poppy and indeed they responded in kind: 'up the long ladder, down the short rope up with King Billy, to hell with the Pope'.<sup>262</sup>

Given this prominent publicness to Protestant and Unionist culture in Cavan and Monaghan we might expect an equally active political culture. However, Protestant politicians in Cavan and Monaghan were surprisingly quiet. In elected bodies, they took few stands and their primary goal seemed to be minimising conflict. This is unexpected as using such bodies to expound one's political views was one of the key tactics of Sinn Féin in Ulster.<sup>263</sup> A political point made in the County Council or a Board of Guardians could reach far more individuals than a speech as such events were reported across multiple counties in the local newspaper. Protestants themselves used appointed positions, in which they were represented more strongly, to similar ends. Samuel L. Brown K.C., County Court Judge for Cavan, used the opening of the Bailieborough Quarter Sessions in May 1916 to denounce the Easter Rising as a 'criminal act'.<sup>264</sup>

However, Monaghan and especially Cavan Protestants' presence on elected bodies was characterised by a reluctance to assert any sort of community identity or interest. References to Unionists as 'cowards' and 'political matricides' at the time of the partition crisis in 1916 were passed by in Cavan County Council with no opposition.<sup>265</sup> The Unionist members of Monaghan Guardians were equally compliant when the Chair

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<sup>261</sup> Thomas Toal Diary (Monaghan County Museum).

<sup>262</sup> McMaster, *Over My Shoulder*, p. 43.

<sup>263</sup> For an example of the resolutions passed in Cavan local bodies see Carolan 'Cavan Protestants', p 44 – 5.

<sup>264</sup> *Irish Post and Weekly Telegraph*, 20 May 1916.

<sup>265</sup> *Irish Post and Weekly Telegraph*, 24 June 1916

of the Board referred to the R.I.C. as ‘scamps, convicts and blackguards.’<sup>266</sup> Resolutions on key political issues such as the recognition of Dáil Éireann passed Cavan’s and Monaghan’s local councils with surprisingly little opposition. Samuel Nixon, a Unionist member of Monaghan County Council, supported a resolution calling a boycott of goods from Belfast (what would become the Belfast Boycott). He stated that many of his friends would be hurt by the Boycott but if they were guilty of what they were accused of then it was justified.<sup>267</sup>

Where Unionist protest and political statement did exist in Cavan and Monaghan, it was characterised by its mildness. In 1919, Monaghan County Council received a deputation from Sinn Féin comprised of Eóin MacNeill and Darrell Figgis. While this move was loudly and publicly protested by the R.I.C. county inspector, the two Unionist members of the Council, William Martin and Michael Knight, limited themselves to publicly refusing to attend.<sup>268</sup> They again used this method of protest when the Council’s finance committee refused to disclose its financial situation following the split from the Local Government Board.<sup>269</sup>

Consequently, much public Unionism passed in tones of relative friendship between councillors from both communities. A discussion in Clones Urban Council in July 1919 on celebrating Armistice Day on the topic took place in friendly terms despite strong opposition from the Sinn Féin members. The *Standard* went to the trouble of transcribing the exchange and adding ‘(warmly)’ after most exchanges.<sup>270</sup> The Chair of Monaghan County Council, Thomas Toal, was treated with particular respect by Unionist councillors and the *Northern Standard*.<sup>271</sup> These good relations continued long after the Revolution. We have already seen how Toal relied on the votes of ‘exunionists’ to maintain his position as chair of the council, following the 1934 election. He noted, with some surprise, that ‘Colonel Madden was one of my strongest supporters and very bitterly resented any attack made against me.’<sup>272</sup> This friendliness was mutual. A motion welcoming back the Unionist James Lougheed to Monaghan County Council after an

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<sup>266</sup> *Northern Standard*, 12 November 1920.

<sup>267</sup> Monaghan County Council minutes, August 1920 (Monaghan County Museum).

<sup>268</sup> *Fermanagh Times*, 21 December 1919.

<sup>269</sup> *Northern Standard*, 7 January 1921.

<sup>270</sup> *Northern Standard*, 19 July 1919.

<sup>271</sup> *Northern Standard*, 24 January 1919.

<sup>272</sup> Thomas Toal diary (Monaghan County Museum).

illness was greeted with cries of ‘hear, hear’ from his Catholic counterparts.<sup>273</sup> Loughheed’s resistance in 1920 to the Monaghan Guardians rejecting the British Local Government Board was also taken in good humour. His exasperated ‘what’s the point?’ on being asked if he had any objections was greeted with laughter and cheers.<sup>274</sup>

Unionist was still a label by which Protestant members of local government bodies were identified and through which their actions were interpreted. Unionist councillors were themselves aware of these associations and made significant efforts to manage them. When opposing a motion in Cavan Urban Council rebuking the wasteful use of water by British soldiers, William Reid, a Unionist councillor, assured his fellow councillors he was speaking ‘as a ratepayer, not as politician or a Unionist or a Carsonite’.<sup>275</sup> Others would assert they had nothing to do with politics. In opposing a Sinn Féin motion on the partition of Ireland, Monaghan County Council’s Unionist members Alexander Haslett and James Loughheed framed their opposition merely as a jurisdictional question. They did not outright oppose the motion merely contended that it was not the business of the council to rule on such matters.<sup>276</sup>

Particular issues, normally those revolving around key symbolic points, still divided both factions and could turn otherwise innocuous debates back to political recriminations. A meeting of Cootehill Guardians in June 1916 moved to pass a motion criticising the arrest of James Timoney’s (the Chair) fifteen-year-old son, Patrick. This was uncontentious, and the Unionist members of the Board were even willing to support a reference to Crown forces importing ‘terrorism’ into the county. However, a final addition placed the blame for the Easter Rising, which was not otherwise the focus of the resolution, on ‘the example set by Sir Edward Carson’. This was objected to by the two Unionist members, William Potts and John McConkey. A long acrimonious debate followed in which both members were personally held responsible for the actions of the Ulster Volunteers: ‘if you had gone much further there would have been no Sinn Féin Rising.’ Eventually, the members retreated from their objections, protesting simply that it was not fit for discussion at a Board of Guardians.<sup>277</sup> The attempts of Colonel James Madden to pass a motion of sympathy with the members of the R.I.C. killed in

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<sup>273</sup> *Northern Standard*, 8 June 1921.

<sup>274</sup> *Northern Standard*, 21 August 1920.

<sup>275</sup> *Anglo-Celt*, 10 July 1920.

<sup>276</sup> *Northern Standard*, 7 July 1917.

<sup>277</sup> *Irish Post and Weekly Telegraph*, 10 June 1916.

Stranooden in February 1921 were acrimoniously derailed by Sinn Féin amendments holding the British government responsible for the attack. Madden's attempts to make the resolution as apolitical as possible (the motion referred only to condemning 'murder') were undermined by the Sinn Féin members asking him persistent questions about events he was held culturally responsible for, such as the fight between B Specials and the I.R.A. in Clones.<sup>278</sup>

The most significant, and probably most practical, conflict between the two factions came in the second half of 1920 after the decision of all local bodies in Cavan and Monaghan to repudiate the British Local Government Board. Opposition to this was less ideological and focused primarily on the question of funding. Dáil Éireann in 1920 had not yet built enough capital to support the various bodies in their work and the British government would cease funding after the L.G.B. was rejected. The Monaghan Guardians' decision to do so was opposed by the Unionist members who described the decision as 'too radical' and done without sufficient planning.<sup>279</sup> Samuel Nixon referred to it as 'madness' in Monaghan County Council telling them 'it meant bankruptcy'.<sup>280</sup>

This manner of opposition can only be understood through an awareness of the minority status of Cavan and Monaghan Protestants, which fundamentally shaped how they negotiated the public space. The First Past The Post (F.P.T.P.) Electoral system used in local and national elections meant that the community was heavily underrepresented in all local bodies and elected no Unionist M.P.s. The ability of the County Councils to co-opt members and the presence there of the Chairs of the (nationalist dominated) Rural Councils reinforced the Catholic majority on these bodies. In 1919, three-county Unionists were so excited at the prospect of Proportional Representation finally increasing their share of local seats that the *Northern Standard* was willing to break ranks and openly criticise Edward Carson's opposition to the plan.<sup>281</sup> Lord Farnham was rebuked by his friend Hugh de Fellenberg Montgomery for his own support of the issue even though he knew it would cost Unionists in the North more than it would gain them in the south.<sup>282</sup>

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<sup>278</sup> *Northern Standard*, 4 February 1921; for an account of the Clones Affray see Chapter 5.

<sup>279</sup> *Northern Standard*, 21 August 1920.

<sup>280</sup> *Northern Standard*, 2 December 1920.

<sup>281</sup> *Northern Standard*, 29 March 1919.

<sup>282</sup> Letter of Hugh de Fellenberg Montgomery to Lord Farnham, 25 March 1919 (P.R.O.N.I., Hugh de Fellenberg Montgomery Papers, D627/437/62).

Monaghan Protestants were lucky to achieve more than a single representative on a local body outside Clones, Cavan Protestants were lucky to even achieve one. In 1920 using Proportional Representation, four Unionists were elected to Monaghan County Council: Michael Knight, Colonel James Madden, Samuel Nixon and John Holdcroft. This was in comparison to sixteen Sinn Féin members. Previously under FPTP they had held two with Colonel Madden and William Martin representing them. This was roughly in line with their proportion of the population (20%), however in the final council this was diluted to 13% after the extra ten councillors (all Sinn Féin) had taken their seats. On lower boards they fared better, in the same election five Unionists were elected to a twenty-two-man Monaghan Rural Council and six to a twenty-six-man Board of Guardians both roughly in line with their proportion of the population.<sup>283</sup> However in Cavan even under proportional representation not one Unionist candidate was elected to the County Council while only one Unionist was elected to the Rural Council, a Robert Caldwell.<sup>284</sup>

Some aspect of their underrepresentation may have been a consequence of a political naivete. The *Irish Post* complained following local elections in January 1920 that only two Unionists had been elected to an eighteen-member Cavan Urban Council after they had run six candidates over two wards and ignored another ward entirely.<sup>285</sup> However the Unionists of Cavan and Monaghan demonstrated considerable reluctance to contest elections. In both Cavan constituencies (East and West Cavan) no Unionist had run in a general election since 1892. While South Monaghan followed the same pattern as Cavan, in North Monaghan Michael Knight ran consistently and unsuccessfully in every election from January 1920 until the establishment of the Free State.

There were two prominent strands of thought to the Unionist reluctance to run in more elections. There were those who noted that Unionist candidates were unlikely to dominate the vote in the face of Sinn Féin and the Irish Parliamentary Party's large organisations. Instead the Unionist vote, a ninth of the electorate in East Cavan, could help swing the election to whatever candidate was most favourable to Unionists, generally the I.P.P. candidate. This was a strategy laid out explicitly by the Rev. Dr

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<sup>283</sup> *Anglo-Celt*, 5 June 1920.

<sup>284</sup> *Anglo-Celt*, 12 June 1920.

<sup>285</sup> *Irish Post and Weekly Telegraph*, 24 January 1920.

Finegan, bishop of Kilmore, in a letter before the East Cavan by-election of 1918: ‘I am convinced that if the Unionists record their votes in favour of any of the candidates they will decide the issue’.<sup>286</sup> The *Northern Standard* expressed its own fear that Ernest Blythe, the Sinn Féin candidate, would win the North Monaghan seat in the 1918 general election and that electing such a man ‘rebel to his King and country – and a prisoner’ would reflect poorly on Monaghan.<sup>287</sup>

The more common opinion was held by those who resented both Sinn Féin and the I.P.P. for their consistent attacks on Unionism and who felt the best option was to stay at home. A letter to the *Irish Post* angrily took issue with the assumption the I.P.P. would have the Unionist vote: ‘does Mr. O’Hanlon think the Protestants have such a short memory that they forget the attacks on them, week after week?’<sup>288</sup> The *Impartial Reporter* advised exactly this to its three-county readers during the 1918 election, advising them that the politics of Sinn Féin and the conduct of the I.P.P. made them electorally impossible.<sup>289</sup>

Additionally, as the Revolution wore on a greater strain of hopelessness and fearfulness emerged. The *Standard* acknowledged that many Protestants were fundamentally opposed to a southern parliament and could not bring themselves to vote in its election.<sup>290</sup> Even Michael Knight did not run despite the *Standard*’s hopes of a change of heart at the ‘eleventh hour’.<sup>291</sup> The Monaghan Unionist Association put forward four main reasons for refusing to field a candidate, all of which demonstrate the fatigue and terror brought on by the Revolution:

1. That doing so would raise ‘avoidable friction’ between Catholic and Protestant and members living in isolated communities would vote ‘at risk of their lives’
2. That previous elections had already demonstrated the strength of North Monaghan opposition to Home Rule and another such poll would add nothing significant.
3. That even members returned under proportional representation would constitute a minority ‘so small that it would be unable to accomplish anything’

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<sup>286</sup> *Irish Post and Weekly Telegraph*, 4 May 1918.

<sup>287</sup> *Northern Standard*, 7 December 1918.

<sup>288</sup> *Irish Post and Weekly Telegraph*, 11 May 1918.

<sup>289</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 12 December 1920.

<sup>290</sup> *Northern Standard*, 22 April 1921.

<sup>291</sup> *Northern Standard*, 6 May 1921.

4. That holding an election in the middle of an armed conflict was a ‘farce’.<sup>292</sup>

Criticisms of such an approach also acknowledged the implausibility of a Unionist candidate gaining a seat. However, they instead hoped for a candidate to demonstrate the strength of the community. In the 1918 General Election it was considered by the East Cavan Unionist Association to put Robert Johnstone of Bawnboy House forward as a candidate to demonstrate the depth of their opposition to partition. He was estimated to be able to get around 6,000 votes. However, ultimately this plan was rejected due to the ill-feeling in the community it risked stirring up.<sup>293</sup> The *Standard* prayed for a Monaghan Unionist candidate in 1918 to give the community someone to ‘conscientiously vote for’.<sup>294</sup> In 1921, it did so in the hope that Sinn Féin would not run unopposed.<sup>295</sup> These active Unionists were not insignificant, a meeting in Clones Orange Hall in December 1919 for the benefit of perennial Unionist candidate Michael Knight was reported as being so well attended that people crowded out of doors and around the corner.<sup>296</sup> The *Impartial Reporter* noted with pleasure the number of women voters at his rallies.<sup>297</sup>

Knight stood in North Monaghan, where the Protestant population was the greatest. His campaign speeches emphasised the same symbolic element of his campaign – that he was running to demonstrate the power of the Unionist community, ‘keeping the Unionist banner flying’.<sup>298</sup> In his speech opening his 1918 campaign he declared his purpose in running ‘in order that the Unionists might have an opportunity of recording their votes for the Union ... and of showing that there is in Co. Monaghan a strong united and determined body of Unionists.’<sup>299</sup> However, it was also hoped that an even split in the Catholic vote could allow him to sneak into power, much of this hope was based on an uncertainty as to how the new, vastly expanded electorate would shape the election.<sup>300</sup> Knight’s campaign in 1918 was effective and proactive and he himself was an experienced canvasser. He outpolled the I.P.P. candidate John Joseph Turley but still

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<sup>292</sup> *Northern Standard*, 13 May 1921.

<sup>293</sup> *Irish Post and Weekly Telegraph*, 30 November 1918.

<sup>294</sup> *Northern Standard*, 7 December 1918.

<sup>295</sup> *Northern Standard*, 22 April 1921

<sup>296</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 1 January 1920.

<sup>297</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 12 December 1918.

<sup>298</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>299</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 12 December 1918.

<sup>300</sup> *Northern Standard*, 7 December 1918



fell over 2,000 votes short of Ernest Blythe. It was subsequently reported that registration had been neglected in those counties as most Unionist voters did not believe Knight stood a chance of winning.<sup>301</sup>

The failure or unwillingness of Unionists to organise properly was not just an issue for Michael Knight at a national level. At all levels the Protestant minority made maximising turnout essential and it was a task they failed at more often than succeeded. Smaller bodies like the Boards of Guardians were capable of having multiple Protestants elected to them. At the Cavan Twelfth of 1920 the Rev. W.J. Rooney of Bailieborough complained that the Protestant community had only elected one Unionist candidate to the Board of Guardians when they had the numbers to get three elected. He put this down to the same lack of organisation and unwillingness to draw attention to oneself that blighted Knight in 1918.<sup>302</sup>

The result of this, however, was that Cavan and Monaghan Protestants, as with their relative passivity in local Councils, were spared the vicious fighting that characterised the political campaigns. In 1918, the East Cavan by-election and the general election saw significant fighting between supporters the I.P.P. and Sinn Féin. Thomas Toal later recalled the election as being ‘very hot’ and that people were ‘a good deal divided’.<sup>303</sup> Following voting in the East Cavan by-election, Patrick Short, a labourer of Aghaclaw, was assaulted with a knife by a number of local Sinn Féiners.<sup>304</sup> At the Monaghan fair of December 1918 both the Sinn Féin and I.P.P. candidate were attacked by the crowd as they attempted to speak.<sup>305</sup> These conflicts caused rifts that would continue beyond the election. The following September, in Castleblayney fighting between the two groups got so bad the R.I.C. were called in and were fired on themselves.<sup>306</sup> The main instigator of electoral violence against Sinn Féin in Cavan and Monaghan, Arthur Trainor, was one of the few civilians shot by the I.R.A. during the period.<sup>307</sup> Protestants by contrast avoided this conflict. Knight’s 1918 campaign was characterised as ‘quiet’ and no political fighting was recorded between Nationalist and

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<sup>301</sup> *Irish Post and Weekly Telegraph*, 30 November 1918.

<sup>302</sup> *Irish Post and Weekly Telegraph*, 17 July 1920.

<sup>303</sup> Thomas Toal diary (Monaghan County Museum).

<sup>304</sup> *Northern Standard*, 17 August 1918.

<sup>305</sup> *Northern Standard*, 7 December 1918.

<sup>306</sup> *Northern Standard*, 20 September 1919.

<sup>307</sup> See Chapter 3.

Unionist.<sup>308</sup> Electoral reticence was an underappreciated survival trait of three-county Protestants.

It is a mistake to characterise Protestant-Catholic relations as entirely good or entirely bad in this period. Rather there existed two communities, traditionally in opposition to one another but whose primary concern was to get on with their own business. These communities, by virtue of their separate social lives and cultural traditions experienced significant tension between each other but were also aware of this tension and in most cases acted with an awareness of it. Protestants in particular were obliged to navigate the hazards of intercommunal relations more delicately than Catholics as their marginal position in the county meant that any rise in social tensions would place them in greater danger. This was seen in Col. Nugent's tactful renaming of the Cavan branch of the Ulster Volunteers, in Samuel Nixon's support for the Belfast Boycott and in the welcome shown to Thomas Briody when his father sent him to a Protestant house.

Understanding the place of the Protestant in their local community is crucial to a number of elements of our study. Firstly, the tension that existed between Catholic and Protestant even in peaceful counties like Cavan and Monaghan helps explain how we can see the level of violence against Protestants and loyalists that we do, even though the county is relatively sedate and, has been shown, often characterised by amiable relations between the communities. Secondly, these good relations and how they were created are important. The tact shown by Cavan and Monaghan Unionists throughout this period serves as a 'hidden explanation' for the attacks that did not happen, the houses that were not burned and the boycotts that were not implemented. This management of intercommunal tensions is an element of life in the revolution that is underexamined. Thirdly, identifying those flashpoints where bad relations were created will help us understand the motivation behind such hostile acts that do emerge in the Revolution and contextualise the appropriateness of 'Protestant' as a justification for targeting.

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<sup>308</sup> *Northern Standard*, 14 December 1918.

How did the Protestant and loyalist community understand and represent the violence and chaos of the Revolutionary period, specifically in relation to the targeting of their community?

This section of the chapter will investigate how the violence of the Revolution was represented to Protestants in Cavan and Monaghan as senseless and brutal. This fundamentally changed how the Revolution itself was understood among the Protestant community and heightened their fear and sense of persecution. The sectarian elements of the Revolution in general were strongly emphasised in Ulster, which in turn led to a greater propensity to interpret revolutionary actions as sectarian. These processes are key to correctly understanding the subjective Protestant ‘experience’ of the Revolution.

Local Protestant dialogues about the Revolution and revolutionary violence did not exist in isolation but were informed by, and often conceived in reaction to, dialogues at a national and regional scale. It is important to note that this section of the chapter is concerned exclusively with the subjective impressions of certain events and not their reality. Whether actions such as the burning of a Protestant school at Drummully in April 1922 were sectarian will be discussed in Chapter 3.<sup>309</sup> What matters is what was understood as sectarian. There is also a distinction between whether it was thought by the Protestant community that a general campaign against them was being carried out and whether the Catholics in their locality were doing so.

From 1918 reports of ‘outrages’ around Ireland begin to appear. When these reports did start to appear, the terminology used by the papers was striking. The shooting at R.I.C. constables in Clare was referred to as ‘Russianism’ and the commandeering of livestock in Dublin as ‘Mob Rule’.<sup>310</sup> The *Standard* is more prosaic when referring to affairs ‘comparable to the anarchy prevailing in Russia’.<sup>311</sup> The language used here was much stronger and more dramatic than that employed by the *Gazette* or the *Times* who were more content to decry each event as an ‘outrage’ or ‘lawlessness’.<sup>312</sup> The *Post* made headlines out of the most violent and dramatic quotes they found: ‘Kill them and

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<sup>309</sup> *Northern Standard*, 5 May 1922.

<sup>310</sup> *Irish Post and Weekly Telegraph*, 2 March 1918.

<sup>311</sup> *Northern Standard*, 2 March 1918.

<sup>312</sup> Examples: *Irish Times*, 20 April 1918; *Irish Times*, 4 April 1919; *Church of Ireland Gazette* 19 Sept 1919.

take the barracks’, allegedly said by a republican mob in Carrickfergus, or ‘Your money or your life’, attributed to a Post Office robbery in Galway.<sup>313</sup> Events such as Soloheadbeg were described as murders or a ‘murder campaign’ and in terms of traditional crime instead of as military or revolutionary actions.<sup>314</sup>

This reporting was designed to rouse support for the Unionist cause but on a broader level it emphasised the North-South division within Unionism itself. Ambushes, arson and raiding were described as ‘southern warfare.’<sup>315</sup> The most common comparison was with the Land War of the previous century and the poor record of counties like Tipperary and Clare in that time was used as an explanation for why they were so violent during the Revolution.<sup>316</sup> The *Post* commonly referred to general lawlessness in Ireland as ‘southern Terror’ and produced multiple cartoons demonstrating Ulster’s apparent immunity from violence.<sup>317</sup> In reality this immunity of Cavan or Monaghan from revolutionary violence was tenuous at best.<sup>318</sup>

Reporting emphasised the brutality of the Revolution. Attacks on the elderly, on widows and priests were emphasised. The stories employed strongly theatrical language: the *Post* noted of policemen in 1920 that ‘[Protestants in Cavan] never know when the sun sets that they will ever see the light of day.’<sup>319</sup> Policemen, as in the *Gazette* or *Times*, were held up as innocent victims of a complicit Catholic population and an indolent, incompetent British administration. This apparent complicity of the vast majority of the Irish polarised both communities. In a letter to her son in America, Cavan Protestant Sarah Bridges described the difference from the previous genial inter-communal relations: ‘the people are all changed.’<sup>320</sup> The *Post* railed that ‘the majority of these crimes were committed in the open. Their perpetrators were seen by many eyes, yet the assassins are at large.’<sup>321</sup> The bleak tone was not limited to newspapers. At a speech for the opening of a new Orange Hall in Breakey near Bailieborough, John Vogan

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<sup>313</sup> *Irish Post and Weekly Telegraph*, 2 March 1918.

<sup>314</sup> *Irish Post and Weekly Telegraph*, 17 May 1918; *Irish Post and Weekly Telegraph*, 3 April 1920; *Northern Standard*, 25 January 1919.

<sup>315</sup> *Northern Standard*, 20 June 1921.

<sup>316</sup> *Irish Post and Weekly Telegraph*, 12 July 1919.

<sup>317</sup> *Irish Post and Weekly Telegraph*, 1 May 1920.

<sup>318</sup> *Irish Post and Weekly Telegraph*, 20 April 1920.

<sup>319</sup> *Irish Post and Weekly Telegraph*, 13 March 1920.

<sup>320</sup> Letter of Sarah Bridges to Joseph Bridges of 21 January 1922 (P.R.O.N.I., Miscellaneous Papers Deposited, D3300/211/3).

<sup>321</sup> *Irish Post and Weekly Telegraph*, 12 July 1919.

the district master, declared the outlook of the country to be ‘the blackest ... our countrymen are courting a shadow and seeking to embrace a ghost.’<sup>322</sup>

Coverage of these events was national, even in local papers. The *Standard* carried lists of outrages committed around the country. These lists included extracts from Dublin Castle’s official statistical bulletin as well as individual reports on incidents from every county.<sup>323</sup> While certain counties were understood to be more violent than others the nature of this violence was also generalised. Speaking at Cavan Assizes in 1920, Mr. Justice Kenny referred to the campaign of arson in Cavan as being part of ‘the system of terrorism used generally throughout the country’.<sup>324</sup> Even Chief Secretary for Ireland, Hamar Greenwood, declared there to be a ‘campaign against Protestants’ in a sitting of the House of Commons on 28 April 1921.<sup>325</sup>

The denunciation of this violence was common across a great variety of Protestant organisations and groups, particularly so in Cavan and Monaghan. These resolutions may have been general or motivated by a specific incident. Clones Unionists met in the local Orange Hall and passed a resolution of sympathy with the victims of all arson attacks in September 1920, following the burning of the home of a Frank Murray in Lisoarty.<sup>326</sup> Carrickmacross Select Vestry in the same month passed a motion condemning all ‘murders and outrages.’<sup>327</sup> Monaghan Grand Orange Lodge passed a motion in October 1920 specifically against ‘the raids perpetrated in connection with the Sinn Féin organisation.’<sup>328</sup>

This combined public culture of outrage, calls to action and denunciations ensured that the article of faith that the Revolution was completely lawless was relatively unchallenged in public discourse. The Ireland of this world was one where raids and burnings were common, police were being hunted and law and order did not exist. This is important because it served as the mental background in which the threatening letters, boycotts and arms raids, which we will look at in the next two chapters, were understood.

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<sup>322</sup> *Northern Standard*, 1 June 1921.

<sup>323</sup> *Northern Standard*, 22 May 1920; *Northern Standard*, 15 May 1920.

<sup>324</sup> *Northern Standard*, 3 July 1920.

<sup>325</sup> House of Commons Debates, 5<sup>th</sup> series, vol. 141, 28 April 1921, col. 442.

<sup>326</sup> *Northern Standard*, 10 September 1920.

<sup>327</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>328</sup> *Northern Standard*, 8 October 1920.

It helps explain why a man like John Sloan would stay up for six nights in a row with arms waiting for a raid that never materialised.<sup>329</sup>

The motivation for such attacks was not immediately obvious to the Protestant community, apart from their general political goal. After all, it was rare to have consistent and clear communication between raider and victim over the reasons for an attack. How they were understood therefore came down to how the attacks were reported and which sources were believed. Most often, newspaper reports tied the motivation for violence to uncontroversial political labels – those committing the violence were identified with non-ethnic non-religious terminology such as ‘Sinn Féin’ or ‘De Valera’s men’.<sup>330</sup> The *Standard* published a summary of outrages from May 1916 to December 1918 under the headline: ‘Just Sinn Féin!’<sup>331</sup>

Although there was a general awareness of the perpetrators of revolutionary violence, the exact nature of those perpetrators was less universally understood. In particular whether violence against Protestants was viewed as a sectarian movement or one based on more general revolutionary motivations. Attacks on the Protestant community were reported on in a way that reflected this confusion. Political and religious markers were often conflated or sometimes ignored altogether in favour of unspoken implication. Following a raid in Ballybay on a number of houses including two Protestant clergymen, the *Standard* identified the victims variously as ‘those who do not possess Sinn Féin sympathies’ and ‘the minority’.<sup>332</sup>

That I.R.A. violence had a particular vendetta against Protestants was a common theme in national narratives of the period and particularly of Ulster Unionist narratives. At the General Assembly of the Irish Presbyterian Church in Belfast, Hugh Pollock, Convenor of the Committee upon the State of the Country, declared the Irish violence as ‘Unionist extermination’, declaring that the ‘defenceless minority of Protestants are suffering severely.’<sup>333</sup>

Northern Presbyterians were keen to produce public material detailing the poor treatment of Protestants in the Free State. The *Belfast Telegraph* published a pamphlet

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<sup>329</sup> John Mansergh Sloane claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/114/1).

<sup>330</sup> *Irish Post and Weekly Telegraph*, 13 September 1919.

<sup>331</sup> *Northern Standard*, 24 January 1919.

<sup>332</sup> *Northern Standard*, 10 June 1921.

<sup>333</sup> *Irish Times*, 11 June 1921; *Northern Standard*, 17 June 1921.

in 1922 entitled *The Terror in Ireland; Murder, Outrage, Intimidation*, which was a compilation of various stories run in the previous few years that involved attacks on Protestant lives or property in the south. In these we find the emphasis on the sordid details such as the claim that John Harrison a Protestant farmer from Drumreilly Co. Leitrim had not only been shot but ‘so chopped about with an axe that even the doctor examining the remains fainted at the sight’.<sup>334</sup> The Irish Unionist Alliance also kept lists of individuals who had been targeted and forced to leave their homes.<sup>335</sup>

At the same time pressure groups such as the Southern Loyalist Relief Fund were publishing pamphlets like *Victims of the Suspension of the Law* as part of their fundraising campaign of April 1923. The pamphlet is a list of seven cases of the suffering of Irish Loyalists at the hands of the Irregulars in the Civil War.<sup>336</sup> The Ulster Relief Association spoke openly of ‘terrible persecution’.<sup>337</sup> A similar though more extensive pamphlet had been published two years earlier in 1921 entitled ‘Plight of Southern Loyalists’. This was again a sampling of stories from the Irish press about the deprivations suffered by Southern Loyalists during the first four months of 1921. It included a list of 16 murders of Protestant Irishmen in this time (of whom 8 were associated with British rule either as informers, policemen, magistrates or ex-soldiers) and of 81 attempts made on the person or property of loyalists.<sup>338</sup>

A lesser strain of this argument appears in the speeches made on occasion in annual General Synods of the Church and reported in the *Gazette*. The Primate of All Ireland, Charles D’Arcy, opened the General Synod of 1923 with the comment that ‘It has been a year of suspense and of trouble ... Our Church especially has suffered.’<sup>339</sup> The year before he had been even more direct stating:

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<sup>334</sup> The Belfast Telegraph, *The Terror in Ireland; Murder, Outrage, Intimidation* (Belfast, 1922).

<sup>335</sup> Memorandum on Exodus of Loyalists from Galway (P.R.O.N.I., I.U.A. files, D989/A/8/2/41).

<sup>336</sup> Southern Irish Loyalists Relief Association, *Victims of the Suspension of the Law: What the Southern Irish Loyalists Relief Association Is Doing* (London: Southern Irish Loyalists Relief Association, 1922).

<sup>337</sup> Ulster Relief Association Papers (P.R.O.N.I. PM/6/2).

<sup>338</sup> Southern Irish Loyalist Relief Association, ‘Plight of Southern Irish Loyalists’ (London, 1921,) in Arthur Mitchell and Pádraigh Ó’Snoaigh (eds), *Irish Political Documents, 1916-1949* (Dublin, 1985).

<sup>339</sup> General Church Synod 1923 (15 May): *Journal of The Session Of The General Synod of the Church of Ireland Holden in Dublin anno domini MDCCCXXIII with an Appendix containing Statutes Passed and Reports of Committees etc.* (Dublin, 1923).

It is a sinister fact that, in one district, there should be so many terrible crimes of which the victims were all Protestants. Nothing more awful could have happened than that the political strife in our country should become a war of religions ... it should surely be a point of honour with a majority to protect its minority from violence ...there are parts of this country where the members of our Church are so few and scattered as to be incapable of resistance against any attack<sup>340</sup>

These messages were repeated on a local level. At the Clones Twelfth of 1921, Robert Burns, Rector of Drum, referred to the I.R.A. as ‘our deadly enemies who are thirsting for our blood’. He defined this sectarianism in stark terms: ‘[they] would murder us on the slightest pretext or without any pretext at all and simply because we are Protestants ... that was the reason why scores had been brutally done to death already – the “crime” of being Protestant’.<sup>341</sup> The *Northern Standard* pessimistically characterised the year as a ‘reign of terror under which loyalists were murdered’.<sup>342</sup> Such messages were reinforced by the more extreme editorial lines taken by the Fermanagh papers which were present in Cavan and Monaghan. The *Reporter* repeatedly referred to the ‘clearing out of Protestants’ from the South.<sup>343</sup>

Nor was it only in explicit statements that the Revolution was characterised as explicitly targeting Protestants and loyalists. The manner in which the Revolution was reported served to reinforce this view. This included extensive reporting on phenomena such as loyalist ‘expulsions’ from the south or attacks on Protestant churches and Orange Halls.<sup>344</sup> In one instance, the *Standard* published an article on the Huguenot expulsion from France with the subheading ‘a lesson for Modern Ireland’.<sup>345</sup> Less obviously, the religion of victims of raids or other attacks was emphasised when they were Protestant and reports of such attacks tended to use headlines that made their religion central to the

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<sup>340</sup> General Church Synod 1922 (9 May): *Journal of The Session Of The General Synod of the Church of Ireland Holden in Dublin anno domini MDCCCXXII with an Appendix containing Statutes Passed and Reports of Committees etc.* (Dublin, 1922).

<sup>341</sup> *Northern Standard*, 15 July 1921.

<sup>342</sup> *Northern Standard*, 30 December 1921.

<sup>343</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 11 November 1920; *Impartial Reporter*, 4 May 1922; *Impartial Reporter*, 11 May 1922.

<sup>344</sup> *Northern Standard*, 29 March 1919; *Northern Standard*, 26 May 1922; *Northern Standard*, 17 March 1922; *Irish Post and Weekly Telegraph*, 10 April 1920.

<sup>345</sup> *Northern Standard*, 25 November 1921.



report, such as ‘Protestant’s experience’ or ‘Protestant Houses burned’.<sup>346</sup> Colonel James Madden’s resolution to Monaghan County Council of November 1920 against the raiding of private homes framed revolutionary violence as being fundamentally based on the sectarian divide when it referred to the ‘bitter feeling and rancour’ such actions created between ‘the two different classes in this country’.<sup>347</sup> A letter the following week to the *Northern Standard* from ‘Loyalist’ supported Madden and characterised the victims of raiding as the ‘Protestant neighbours’ of the I.R.A.<sup>348</sup>

Additionally, in the Civil War period of the Revolution certain specific incidents came to define Protestant fears of sectarian targeting. The Dunmanway ‘massacre’ of May 1922 gave physical form to the unspoken worries of anti-Protestant pogroms. That these attacks were anti-Protestant was uncontroversial – the Archbishop of Dublin, Dr John Gregg, called for the R.I.C. to ‘defend the Protestants of West Cork from a repetition of these atrocities’.<sup>349</sup> The *Church of Ireland Gazette* assumed the attack to have been committed by those who ‘believe they are avenging in some way the outrages which have been committed against the Roman Catholic of the North.’<sup>350</sup> The *Impartial Reporter* took a more extreme view expressing ‘a shudder of horror’ and characterising the murder as being ‘for no other reason than the religion of which they were members’.<sup>351</sup> Later in the same issue a full page spread with the title ‘Massacre of Nine Protestants in County Cork’ spanning the full page.

That this dialogue had a practical effect is obvious and can be seen in Chapters 2 and 3 in the anxiety threatened raids caused their victim, the discussions of the Belfast Boycott as an anti-Protestant phenomenon and the sophistication and planning required of the response of many Protestant communities to resisting raiders. Following the burning of a number of houses in the district in May 1921, the Protestant community of Castleblayney were sufficiently fearful to send an official deputation to the Northern government asking for protection. In a letter sent to Thomas Moles M.P. they declared: ‘people here are in fear and dread of their lives even in day time and the Protestant

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<sup>346</sup> *Northern Standard*, 5 August 1921; *Northern Standard*, 13 May 1921.

<sup>347</sup> *Northern Standard*, 12 November 1920.

<sup>348</sup> *Northern Standard*, 19 November 1920.

<sup>349</sup> *Irish Times*, 2 May 1922.

<sup>350</sup> *Church of Ireland Gazette*, 2 Jun 1922.

<sup>351</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 4 May 1921.

people have no protection ... all Protestant shops are boycotted.<sup>352</sup> Much of the context and nuance of specific incidents were lost in subsequent accounts. In Chapter 3 we will examine the case of Margaret Livingstone, a young girl who was shot by accident during a raid on her house. In a later statement made to the Boundary Commission her cousin James Woodhouse made no mention of the accidental nature of the shooting instead placing her in a broader list of sectarian victims of the I.R.A.<sup>353</sup>

The application claims made to the Irish Grants Committee also make reference to a general campaign against loyalists and Protestants. These claims, particularly in reference to the reasons behind an individual's targeting, must be read with the awareness that remuneration was dependent on proving targeting because of loyalism. However, descriptions of a general campaign against Protestants as a fundamental feature of revolutionary violence, used this reference as a commonly understood truth to prove their loyalism. William Pinkerton of Arva claimed he lost his job as foreman in a flax mill because he was 'the only Protestant in an I.R.A. mill'.<sup>354</sup> James Anderson was raided on 18 January 1923 and had a gun and two bikes stolen. Both of them claimed to know it was the I.R.A. who perpetrated this due to the belt of a well-known Republican being found on the premises. Anderson when asked for the motive behind the attack wrote 'suppose just owing to the fact that I'm a Protestant and they were all Protestant houses which were raided'.<sup>355</sup>

This perception of a larger anti-Protestant campaign promoted that element of identity when searching for the justification behind an attack at the expense of others. There are cases like that of William Storey a farmer from Derrylane and one of the few people to have their case personally endorsed by Sergeant Vincent Elliott, one of the I.G.C.'s contacts in Ireland. Storey rented a farm of thirty-two acres in Drumroe that, forty years previously, had seen a tenant evicted. He said he was boycotted for taking these lands from 1921. He underwent a campaign of intimidation that peaked when twenty armed men broke into his house on 4 April 1922 and put him against a wall and threatened to shoot him or burn his farm if he returned to Drumroe.

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<sup>352</sup> Correspondence relating to police protection for loyalists in border regions (P.R.O.N.I., Department of Finance files, FIN 18/1/125).

<sup>353</sup> Statement of James Woodhouse, Fermanagh County Council Evidence (T.N.A., Boundary Commission files, CAB/61/65).

<sup>354</sup> William Pinkerton claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/183/19).

<sup>355</sup> James Anderson claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/126/5).

When asked to ascribe a reason to this campaign Storey partly blamed it on his leasing eviction land but also that his Protestantism had made him unacceptable as an alternate landholder and acceptable as a target. This may have been Storey attempting to change the nature of his troubles from agrarian to political which would increase his likelihood of a grant but his references both backed up his claim as did the normally reliable Sgt. Elliott. In the end Storey's case was rejected due partly to factual errors on numerous dates in his application. W.M. Warner, the civil servant handling the case, remained unconvinced despite the best efforts of the references that this was in fact a religious or political issue instead of an agrarian one.<sup>356</sup>

In ambiguous cases, where the victim was unsure why they were targeted, this assumption of fundamental sectarian motives provided an obvious and readymade explanation. John Huggins a Killeshandra farmer commented on his own boycott in the cattle fairs and markets around the country by saying 'at least 90% of the population were Catholics and were all Sinn Féiners'.<sup>357</sup> This stands in marked contrast to the line put forward in the national papers that the majority of people were bullied into following unrepresentative extremist leaders. When discussing the boycotts, they suffered, or the death threats made against them we are given the impression in most cases that these were not rulings against them enforced by the rebels but rather a natural and spontaneous community-wide reaction to their loyalty. Robert Latimer, a gunsmith in Ballyjamesduff, was boycotted and went bankrupt. He tied this in to a broader campaign by noting his circumstances were similar to many 'poor old Loyalists'.<sup>358</sup>

This impression is reinforced by the heavy overrepresentation of non-Catholics in applications to the I.G.C. Of the 107 applications made from Cavan and Monaghan, eighty-four belong to non-Catholics, sixteen to Catholics and seven are untraceable. Non-Catholic statements were also successful in 68% of applications while only four Catholic applications were accepted (25% acceptance rate). An application claiming anti-loyalist violence was, in effect, an application claiming anti-Protestant violence, and Protestants were able to effectively use the pre-existing narrative surrounding this to aid their applications.

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<sup>356</sup> William Storey claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/161/15).

<sup>357</sup> John Huggins claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/160/5).

<sup>358</sup> Robert Latimer claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/11/2.).

This public acceptance that the Revolution was violent, even if mostly confined elsewhere, and that this violence had a sectarian element to it informed the Protestant community's engagement with their own local Revolution. The sectarianism of Dunmanway may not have manifested in the arms raids of Monaghan but this was only known for certain after the raids had passed off quietly and this uncertainty is difficult to capture in sources all compiled after the event had happened. Most importantly this informs how Cavan and Monaghan Protestants subjectively perceived the Revolution. By the nature of these events more time was spent fearing a raid than was spent being raided. More people feared being raided than were eventually raided. Such fear and perception of a general anti-Protestant campaign not only represents perhaps the most common revolutionary experience but also should fundamentally inform any future debate on the targeting of Protestants. Looking only at whether Protestants were actually targeted ignores a full half of the debate.

## Conclusion

In this chapter we have established a number of key points about Protestant identity in Cavan and Monaghan in the early 1900s. Firstly, we have demonstrated the fluidity of terminology as regards the community showing that both internally and externally terms like Protestant, Unionist and loyalists were used interchangeably in most cases, despite an implication of active action or political association for Unionists. Catholics and nationalists conflated all of these terms as a broad oppositional band while Protestant sources emphasised the fundamental Protestantism of loyalism. Establishing this confusion of terms is crucial for this thesis as it challenges the facile idea that the targeting of Protestants for cultural and political/military reasons can be meaningfully separated. We will come back to this examination of labelling and terminology in Chapter 3 when we look at justifications for the raiding of specific individuals and the misuse of terms of 'Specials' and 'Orangeman' by Volunteers to mean any armed Protestant.

Secondly, we demonstrated that Protestantism in Cavan and Monaghan had a distinctly Ulster character. It was important to establish this as peripheral groups can often be disassociated from the centre and have their authenticity called into question. In this case for the partition of Ireland and the establishment of a six-county Northern state to represent a true betrayal and crisis, we had to demonstrate that the commitment to, and affection for, Ulster in both counties was genuine. Additionally, the discussion of partition and reactions to partition in Cavan and Monaghan is one of the most direct examinations of the dual crisis that this thesis examines. It demonstrates a community caught between two worlds and in a state of flux. In this it is both important context for the future chapters' descriptions of revolutionary violence and an important subject in its own right.

Thirdly, we examined how Cavan and Monaghan Protestants managed their relations with their Catholic neighbours. In this we used literary sources and memoirs to describe a general pattern of a community with a tense, largely separate but not fundamentally unfriendly relationship with their Catholic counterparts. We then provided an in-depth examination of this through looking at public Unionism in the county, showing that public Unionism both reflected the tensions and relationships of the early section but also that it provided a clear example of how Cavan and Monaghan Protestants managed this tension. This will be contrasted strongly in Chapters 4 and 5 when we see how a larger, less conscientious Protestant community used the public sphere to exacerbate inter-communal tensions which then played out during the Revolution.

Finally, we examined how Protestant portrayals of the Revolution both at a national and local level reinforced the idea that Ireland was in a state of anarchy in which Protestants were particular victims. This section provides important context for Chapters 2 and 3 particularly as it allows us to see a revolutionary action not as an event that causes suffering when it happens but one which also causes suffering through its anticipation and consequences. In Chapters 4 and 5 we will also see how the perception of a lawless, sectarian southern Ireland had currency also in Fermanagh but that this definition of southern Ireland included Cavan and Monaghan and was used to undermine their claim to inclusion in Northern Ireland..

Taken together, the key questions of this chapter provide important and often neglected cultural and mental contexts in which we can examine the revolutionary violence of the next two chapters. It also demonstrates how the Revolution was experienced and was still distressing in ways outside of military action.

## **Chapter 2: Boycotting in Cavan and Monaghan, 1916 – 1923.**

This chapter will look at the act of boycotting, and other forms of non-violent revolutionary action, and their role in the revolutionary experience of Protestants. Boycotting, while not uniquely Irish, has a unique connection to Ireland – the country in which it emerged as a legitimate instrument to force social change. Boycotting was a common occurrence in the revolutionary period, sitting comfortably in the transition zone between passive and aggressive; violent and non-violent. Boycotting is a useful revolutionary activity to examine. By its nature it could affect far more victims than raiding or other violent acts. It required far greater community support to be successful and as a result came to be as strong a symbol for Protestant fears about their future place in a Catholic state as the raid after midnight. For many without the profile to be a likely raid target, boycotting would have constituted their entire Revolution. Boycotts were structurally more inclined to the targeting of particular communities, in this case Protestants. Unlike the mostly self-contained raids, boycotts had the potential to grow and extend themselves to those who broke them.<sup>359</sup> This allowed it to spread along the social connections of the boycotted and to those who by passive preference would be inclined to break a republican boycott: Protestants and loyalists. Passive inclination led to boycotting conforming very easily to the political and social divide in Cavan and Monaghan.

This chapter explores these ideas in two sections. Firstly, it engages with the most prevalent campaign of boycotting in the period and one that hit Protestants in Cavan and Monaghan with a unique intensity: the Belfast Boycott of 1920 – 1921. Secondly, it deals with ‘normal’ boycotting, that is boycotting initiated outside of the Belfast campaign and normally carried on at a local level. It demonstrates that the Belfast Boycott was clearly understood in sectarian terms and disproportionately hit the Protestant community. Normal boycotting meanwhile was motivated by a range of concerns, none of which are explicitly sectarian and few of which are even strongly revolutionary, however it still came to target the Protestant community in particular ways.

There were numerous boycotts in the revolutionary period motivated primarily by

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<sup>359</sup> For a detailed examination of how boycotts could spread and target those who broke them see Hughes, *Defying the IRA*, pp 21 – 38.

agrarian concerns. However, these very boycotts could only exist because of the breakdown in authority during the Revolution. We must be careful therefore to discern between those boycotts which represent 'normal' agrarian unrest and those which are motivated or enabled by the particular features of the revolutionary period and are thus unique to it. While smaller localised boycotts took place during this time, the most significant occurrence of the phenomenon was the nationwide Belfast Boycott in which goods from Belfast were boycotted from August 1920 in response to sectarian violence in the city.

Cavan's and Monaghan's experience of boycotting was inherently different from the majority of the country. This was a consequence of two factors. Firstly, their closer geographical and cultural proximity to Belfast meant that there were more and deeper connections between the two that made conforming to the Belfast Boycott a far greater economic and cultural burden. Secondly, the greater proportion of Protestants (and consequently loyalists) meant that the communities being targeted were larger and more coherent than we find in Cork or Clare or Tipperary. The greater presence of natural opponents changed the dynamics of the boycott. This is unsurprisingly as boycotting was an inherently communal and consensus-based action. More so than elsewhere the boycott in Cavan and Monaghan served to heighten and make explicit the differences between the county's two communities.

Boycotting was commonly used in the revolutionary period, in Gemma Clark's words, 'to render unviable and undesirable a victim's livelihood – and ultimately his life in Ireland'.<sup>360</sup> In quieter counties like Sligo and Cavan, boycotting was the primary means for a community to enforce obedience to its particular set of values. Clark also identified the increased efficacy of boycotting in isolated Protestant communities. However even in large concentrated numbers the Protestant community could be threatened with a boycott. Clark noted that across the towns and cities of Munster boycotts 'destroyed minority livelihoods.'<sup>361</sup>

Boycotts occupied a particular place of fear in the minds of Irish Protestants. This came from an awareness of their inherent differentness from their Catholic neighbours and their precariousness and helplessness should that community turn on them. The 1920

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<sup>360</sup> Clark, *Everyday Violence*, pp 45 – 46.

<sup>361</sup> Clark, *Everyday Violence*, p. 44.



propaganda pamphlet *Facts about Ireland* published by the Philadelphia Protestant Federation at the behest of Irish Protestants cited the boycott as the key tool by which the community would be punished should the parish priest turn against them in a Catholic state. It used as an example the tale of a Cavan Protestant whose business was inexplicably boycotted on the decision of the local priest. His Catholic customers, despite their warm relations with him, settled their accounts while the priest in question would question the origin of every meal he was served to ensure it was of Catholic origin. The merchant in question was only saved after he removed himself to Northern Ireland.<sup>362</sup> This tale, although unsupported and highly dubious, was presented as fact and also within a commonly accepted paradigm in which boycotting worked as a uniquely Catholic form of punishment.

Shan Bullock's short story 'The State Official' also captured this fear that ran through Irish Protestant thought. The story deals with an eccentric local postmaster who is boycotted, intimidated and driven to madness after making conversation with a 'landgrabber'. Ultimately the postmaster dies of fright after a raid by a punitive gang.<sup>363</sup> The story though exaggerated tapped into the same Protestant fear of boycotting.

Nor did the phenomenon target all equally. Urban and propertied individuals are more likely to be victims. The Belfast Boycott was targeted specifically at the merchant classes and, while it could spread to those poorer individuals who shopped with them, they were not the centre of the activity. In the claims made to the Irish Grants Committee by individuals in Cavan, four of the five claims made by carters, and six of the seven claims made by tradespeople were in relation to boycotting. Proportionally, farmers are underrepresented (thirty-six farming households claimed for compensation but only fifteen in relation to a boycott) while other urban workers (publicans, those working in hospitality, traders) appear more strongly. Looking at the class of house owned by the applicants in the 1911 census (a rough but useful guide to economic status) we see that those claiming for boycotts are proportionally larger owners of houses scoring 7, 8, 9 or 10 points although they are less predominant again towards the even larger first-class houses. This suggests that boycotts were most useful targeting a certain urban class. However, working class voices are underrepresented in the Irish Grants Committee files

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<sup>362</sup> Delegation from The Protestant Churches of Ireland, *Facts about Ireland for consideration of American citizens by the delegates of the Protestant churches of Ireland* (Philadelphia, 1920).

<sup>363</sup> Shan Bullock, *The Awkward Squads and other stories* (London, 1893), pp 154 – 72.

generally, so this may marginalise working class narratives of boycotting.<sup>364</sup>

We can identify two broader forms of revolutionary boycotting in this time frame. These are those boycotts that formed part of the nationwide campaign of boycott against Belfast and those that were more local in origin and varied in form. It is important to examine both of these types as the predominance of sources for the Belfast Boycott can lead to it smothering all other subtler forms of boycotting in the historical record.

### The Belfast Boycott

The Belfast Boycott was first suggested in August 1920 when Sean McEntee, T.D. for Monaghan, read a petition calling for the boycotting of goods from Belfast and a withdrawing of money from Belfast-based banks. Following the continuation of anti-Catholic riots in the city, the Boycott was instituted in September. It was seconded by Paul Galligan, T.D. for Cavan West. One of the prominent voices to speak against its implementation was the other T.D. from Monaghan, Ernest Blythe. It was fitting that T.D.s from both counties should have been so prominent in the debates on the Boycott when Cavan and Monaghan would be most heavily hit. No other county outside of the province was as heavily affected by the Belfast Boycott as Monaghan.<sup>365</sup>

Terence Dooley has already described how Belfast had become central to the economies of Cavan and Monaghan. Monaghan's entire flax crop was sent north to Belfast – a rail network connected the city to Clones. By 1919 most of Monaghan's largest traders were distributors for Belfast firms.<sup>366</sup> Even Thomas Toal, later to be Chair of Monaghan County Council and a devout Nationalist, was forced to buy his stock from Belfast when establishing his business.<sup>367</sup> While Cavan was also in Belfast's economic zone and had many merchants who primarily traded northward it would not suffer as heavily as its neighbour because of its greater number of Catholic traders and its lower

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<sup>364</sup> Figures taken from Cavan applicants to Irish Grants Committee files (T.N.A.: CO/762/3 - 206).

<sup>365</sup> Michael Farrell, *Northern Ireland: The Orange State* (London, 1976), p 32.

<sup>366</sup> Terence Dooley 'From the Belfast Boycott to the Boundary Commission: Fears and Hopes in County Monaghan, 1920-26', *Clogher Record*, Vol. 15, No. 1 (1994), p. 91.

<sup>367</sup> Diary of Thomas Toal (Monaghan County Museum).

dependence on flax-growing as an industry.

Although the Boycott would come to target the Protestant community particularly, this was not immediately evident. Three-county Protestants had been effusive in their condemnation of the Belfast rioting. In September, traders in Killeshandra, a district with a strong Protestant population, released a condemnation of the religious violence in Belfast, describing it as 'barbarous'.<sup>368</sup> A meeting of Cavan traders in late August was attended by both Catholic and Protestant traders, a fact welcomed by Galligan in his opening remarks.<sup>369</sup> Shercock traders also committed themselves unanimously to the boycott in a meeting of August 1920.<sup>370</sup>

However, tensions between the rival groups of traders and merchants quickly disabused anyone of the notion that the Boycott could be held free of religious animosities. Attempts in Monaghan to compel all traders in the county to sign a public pledge against dealing with Belfast businesses saw a split roughly along communal lines.<sup>371</sup> For many Protestants this decision was defended not in terms of sympathy but in terms of economic necessity. They argued that rearranging their lines of supply was impractical: 'we cannot see our way to sign any undertaking in reference to the conduct of our business which would limit our capacity to buy in the best markets.'<sup>372</sup>

This may seem an apolitical justification, motivated by pragmatism instead of their broader Protestant identity. It was a valid concern; even Catholic traders in Cavan town complained of their new difficulties in obtaining goods from Dublin.<sup>373</sup> However the very economic links which compelled Protestant traders to act in such a manner were themselves established as a function of that same Ulster Protestantism. The broad religious divide that determined who signed the pledge and who did not also lends credence to this interpretation. Even before the institution of the Boycott an informal ban had developed against Belfast firms that fell on religious lines. As early as July 1920, the *Northern Standard* was reporting the refusal of Catholic merchants to order from Belfast firms.<sup>374</sup>

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<sup>368</sup> *Anglo-Celt*, 18 September 1920.

<sup>369</sup> *Anglo-Celt*, 4 September 1920.

<sup>370</sup> *Northern Standard*, 7 August 1920.

<sup>371</sup> Dooley, 'Belfast Boycott', p. 92.

<sup>372</sup> *Northern Standard*, 28 August 1920.

<sup>373</sup> *Northern Standard*, 6 September 1920.

<sup>374</sup> *Northern Standard*, 30 July 1920.

The pledge that the Protestant traders had refused to sign was not a product of Sinn Féin or the I.R.A. but of the Catholic traders in the town. Many of these men had vested interests in escalating matters. The majority of the large traders in Monaghan, those who relied most on Belfast goods, were Protestant. There had been an attempt the previous week to compel Protestant traders to sign the pledge in Monaghan which had been declined as they wished to hold a meeting amongst themselves first, in effect making the decision a communal one.<sup>375</sup>

This significant and influential Protestant population was likely crucial in Monaghan's rapid uptake of the Boycott. Dooley posited that a significant reason behind the campaign was the desire of the Catholic middle-class who constituted the nationalist political establishment to break into their business.<sup>376</sup> Many of those who were significant merchants in 1920 would have established themselves in an early period when Protestant domination of the market was much stronger and Catholics were shut out. Thomas Toal would carry the resentments of establishing himself in business in the 1880s with him for his entire career, remembering later on that 'no Catholic would get a fair chance in business or in public life.'<sup>377</sup> These local factors were certainly crucial. The R.I.C. County Inspector's report for Cavan for 1921 noted that there was 'no doubt that the boycott is being made use of by greedy and unscrupulous traders to bring custom to their own shops.'<sup>378</sup> As the *Northern Standard* noted, in as small an environment as the towns of the counties, even excluding one or two traders from commerce inevitably funnelled business into the others.<sup>379</sup>

It is problematic to categorise the Belfast Boycott as exclusively anti-Protestant or anti-Unionist as numerous Catholic traders were also targeted. However, it was certainly disproportionately hard on the Protestant community and the Boycott was represented within the community as an anti-Protestant Boycott. A meeting of Monaghan Unionists in September 1920 passed a resolution decrying the 'boycott of Protestant traders'.<sup>380</sup> The *Northern Standard* persistently subtitled letters on the boycott 'The Boycott of Protestant Traders' while those letters themselves were signed off with religion-based pennames

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<sup>375</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 26 August 1920; *Northern Standard*, 21 August 1920.

<sup>376</sup> Dooley, 'Belfast Boycott', p. 91.

<sup>377</sup> Diary of Thomas Toal (Monaghan County Museum).

<sup>378</sup> County Inspectors Returns Cavan September 1921 (T.N.A.: CO 904/116).

<sup>379</sup> *Northern Standard*, 27 January 1922.

<sup>380</sup> *Northern Standard*, 24 September 1920.

such as ‘Protestant’. In another letter from the same issue, the Protestant Traders Association framed the boycott explicitly as a boycott of Protestant traders by Catholic ones.<sup>381</sup> The County Inspector meanwhile referred to the affair as ‘the boycotting of Unionist traders’<sup>382</sup>

So widespread were these accusations that the Boycott Committee in Monaghan was obliged to take out a large ad in the *Northern Standard* asserting that it was not acting against Protestants and only those who traded with Belfast.<sup>383</sup> Dooley has noted that of the nineteen boycotted businesses compiled by the second brigade of the 5<sup>th</sup> Northern Division all but three were Protestant.<sup>384</sup> A similar list by Castleblayney merchants in 1921 listed twenty-one traders of whom eighteen were Protestant.<sup>385</sup>

If the imposition of such a ban represented the worst cultural fears of the community, they didn’t need to have worried at first. Boycotting was sporadically enforced across the county, lacking centralisation and seemingly triggered based on local resentments. Ballybay and Cootehill, which had seen some of the earliest opposition to Belfast goods, barely registered the Boycott by September 1920.<sup>386</sup>

It manifested itself initially through the occasional picketing of blacklisted shops and the expulsion of commercial travellers from the North. In February 1921, a commercial traveller was forcefully ejected from Carrickmacross.<sup>387</sup> The same had happened to two Belfast travellers in the town the previous August who had been given an hour to leave town.<sup>388</sup> In Bailieborough, a commercial traveller named Mills had his car seized and burned in front of the Market House in the town square.<sup>389</sup> Matthew Smith of Bailieborough described the care that went into the identification of travellers from Belfast:

People travelling to and from Belfast were watched for Belfast goods and if

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<sup>381</sup> *Northern Standard*, 8 October 1920.

<sup>382</sup> County Inspectors Returns Monaghan December 1920, (T.N.A.: CO 904/113).

<sup>383</sup> *Northern Standard*, 3 December 1920.

<sup>384</sup> Dooley, 'Belfast Boycott', p. 92; See also Black list of traders dealing with Belfast firms, compiled by O.C. No. 2 Brigade, 5th Northern Division, I.R.A. (Monaghan County Museum, Marron Papers).

<sup>385</sup> Report from Head Constable, Castleblayney to County Inspector Cavan, 31 September 1921 (T.N.A.: CO904/116).

<sup>386</sup> *Northern Standard*, 6 September 1920.

<sup>387</sup> County Inspectors Returns Monaghan, February 1921 (T.N.A.: CO 904/114).

<sup>388</sup> *Northern Standard*, 21 August 1920.

<sup>389</sup> B.M.H. Ws. 1663 (Francis Connell).

there was evidence that they had such their house were raided and night searched, and goods seized and destroyed there and then. If they were of an immediate consumable nature such as cigarettes and tobacco they were taken possession of and sent to men of Flying Column.<sup>390</sup>

In Monaghan Town pickets were organised on a schedule with Monday, market days, being the day of highest activity. In Newbliss meanwhile, they appear to have been constant.<sup>391</sup> Pickets remained a feature of the Boycott throughout its existence but fell inactive towards the end of 1920.<sup>392</sup> In other cases, Tom Carragher noted, picketing served as a default activity: 'We did our section sometimes on instruction and sometimes when we had nothing else to do to pass the time.'<sup>393</sup> It seems also that the pickets themselves were not quite so strong as they would become later, waxing and waning in intensity. Early pickets in Monaghan town did not even prevent customers from entering targeted shops only giving out handbills to those who did.<sup>394</sup>

John Donohue has noted that although this period of boycotting was disparate and with little of the drive and organisation that was to come it still caused significant disruption in the life of the counties. Cavan Unionist paper *The Irish Post and Weekly Telegraph* shut its doors as a result while the Clones fair of August 1920 was described by the *Northern Standard* as the most deficient in demand in recent memory.<sup>395</sup> However campaigns remained unevenly enforced and in October 1920, the County Inspector for Monaghan expressed hope that the Boycott was already weakening.<sup>396</sup>

Greater momentum and centralisation came in the early months of 1921 with a renewed push from Dublin and Joseph McDonagh in the Department of Labour.<sup>397</sup> Committees leading the boycott in each town were established and all reported to the

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<sup>390</sup> Letter of Matthew Smith, Kells, 1986 (Monaghan County Museum, Marron Papers).

<sup>391</sup> James Mulligan Copybook (Monaghan County Museum, Marron Papers); *Northern Standard*, 21 August 1920.

<sup>392</sup> Treasury correspondence discussing Trade Boycott in Monaghan (P.R.O.N.I., Minister of Finance Files, FIN 18/1/103).

<sup>393</sup> Account of Tom Carragher (Monaghan County Museum, Marron Papers).

<sup>394</sup> *Northern Standard*, 6 September 1920.

<sup>395</sup> John Anthony Donohue 'The Impact of the Partition Crisis on Cavan and Monaghan, 1914 – 1926' (MA Thesis, National University of Ireland, Maynooth 1999), p. 77.

<sup>396</sup> County Inspectors Returns Monaghan, November 1920 (T.N.A.: CO 904/113).

<sup>397</sup> D.S. Johnson, 'The Belfast Boycott 1920 – 1922' in Goldstrom and Clarkson (eds.), *Irish Population, Economy and Society* (Oxford, 1981), p. 190.

central Belfast Boycott Committee.<sup>398</sup> The boycott also spread to rural areas outside of the city, particularly in the barony of Farney around Carrickmacross.<sup>399</sup> In January 1921, the County Inspector for Monaghan expressed concern that the Boycott was 'hardening.'<sup>400</sup> A memorandum for I.R.A. battalion commanders for July 1921 stated that the ban was 'to be enforced rigorously and every effort made to prevent even a single article being used from the prohibited area.'<sup>401</sup>

This growth in organisation was matched by an increased stringency of enforcement. Blacklists of businesses who had refused to sign up to the pledge were circulated. Those on the blacklist in Cavan were sent a letter with clear instructions on how to end the ban against them:

Should you be anxious to have your name removed from Black List you must comply with the following terms: 1) a signed guarantee not to offend again 2) all Belfast goods on hands to be returned to Belfast consignor 3) Payment to me of whatever fine imposed.<sup>402</sup>

As Hughes has described, such threats were made in public and for the benefit of the public.<sup>403</sup> Pronouncements were posted in town squares both warning potential Belfast-sympathisers against breaking the Boycott and any potential customers of the boycotters not to associate with them. Notices were posted in Cavan in late January and in Belturbet in early February to this effect.<sup>404</sup> In March similar notices were posted in Monaghan and in July in Carrickmacross.<sup>405</sup> This was undoubtedly successful. Eoin O' Duffy was able to report to Michael Collins in April 1921 that numerous businesses had fallen into line and paid heavy fines while noting with satisfaction 'the burning [of a train carrying Belfast goods] has had a great effect.'<sup>406</sup>

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<sup>398</sup> Donohue, 'Partition Crisis', p. 79.

<sup>399</sup> B.M.H. Ws. 530 (P.V. Hoey).

<sup>400</sup> County Inspectors Returns Monaghan, January 1921 (T.N.A.: CO 904/114).

<sup>401</sup> 5<sup>th</sup> Northern Division Memorandum Cir. No. 1. 07/07/1921 (Monaghan County Museum, Brennan Papers).

<sup>402</sup> Letter to Belfast Boycottees (Monaghan County Museum, Marron Papers).

<sup>403</sup> Hughes, *Defying the IRA*, p. 117.

<sup>404</sup> *Anglo-Celt*, 19 February 1921.

<sup>405</sup> *Anglo-Celt*, 19 March 1921; *Impartial Reporter*, 21 July 1921.

<sup>406</sup> Monthly report of Monaghan Brigade, April 1921 (U.C.D.A., Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/39).

This was coupled with a more military approach to enforcement. Warnings about breaking the boycott were delivered in person while those who insisted on doing so had their shops raided and the goods forcibly removed.<sup>407</sup> John McGahey of Rockcorry described the role of the I.R.A. in enforcing the boycott and how the scope of victims was so easily expanded along networks of association:

Shopkeepers stocking Belfast goods were warned to cease trading with Belfast. Regular inspections of shops were carried out and special Intelligence Officers were appointed for this particular work. Any shopkeeper who persisted in dealing in Belfast goods was boycotted and the people were warned against buying in boycotted shops. Any goods which were traced back to boycotted houses were seized from purchasers and destroyed. In this way the boycott campaign became more effective as the country people feared to visit shops on which the boycott ban was placed.

Those who defied such orders could also be taken by the I.R.A. to the Sinn Féin courts and fined in retribution.<sup>408</sup> Such punishments were not normally extreme. In March 1921 Francis Cassidy of Killycarnan had a quantity of coal taken off him and thrown into the river while John Connelly of Derryarit was held up and the contents of his trap were scattered about.<sup>409</sup> Although these raids normally focused on goods instead of people, that is not to say they were without human cost. In June 1921 in Augher, a man Francis Connelly was shot following an anti-boycott raid on his house. Although the raid initially passed off peacefully, Connolly was shot after he attempted to run away from the raiders.<sup>410</sup>

Personal threats were only a minor element of the Belfast Boycott. Its focus was not just preventing shops from being patronised but also preventing those shops from being supplied. Raids on trains bringing Belfast goods into the county and on vans delivering food became one of the primary revolutionary activities in the county, particularly in Monaghan which had Clones serving as a rail hub. Bread vans were a

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<sup>407</sup> B.M.H. Ws. 681 (Tom Carragher).

<sup>408</sup> B.M.H. Ws. 657 (Philip Marron).

<sup>409</sup> *Northern Standard*, 11 March 1921.

<sup>410</sup> *Northern Standard*, 24 June 1921.



particular target due to the problems associated with getting bread from Dublin fast enough for it to stay fresh which made those selling it more reluctant to switch.<sup>411</sup>

Throughout 1921, multiple trains were stopped and searched for Belfast goods.<sup>412</sup> Stationmasters whose properties might store goods overnight became a target of raiding. This was not new and had previously been employed to search for mail being carried on the train.<sup>413</sup> Trains were targeted more heavily than vans as the main trunk roads into the counties were heavily patrolled while the majority of goods arrived by rail.<sup>414</sup> Any bread vans found distributing Belfast bread were liable to be destroyed.<sup>415</sup> Vans from the Inglis company, strongly associated with Belfast and Unionism, were particularly targeted.<sup>416</sup>

These acts may have taken place far away from the homes of those affected merchants but the damage they caused was very real and was a key reason behind many of them succumbing to the Boycott. Aside from invoices being recovered in said raids that incriminated those breaking the Boycott it was also effective as a tool of economic pressure. As James McKenna, O/C of the North Monaghan brigade, later recounted: 'When a considerable number of these delivery vans had been destroyed by the volunteers and finally the destruction of a train load of Belfast Goods which had just entered the County, the traders were compelled in the interest of economy to reduce their orders for such goods to a minimum.'<sup>417</sup>

The Boycott was to continue until the Collins-Craig pact in January 1922 and its cessation was greeted with enthusiasm in Monaghan as it had led to a rise in living costs.<sup>418</sup> Despite these local hardships, at a national level the Boycott had not been effective. The *Northern Standard* noted that its greatest effect had been to drive a wedge between North and South, and between Protestants and their Catholic neighbours.<sup>419</sup>

The Belfast Boycott is important in Cavan and Monaghan, and particularly in North Monaghan, because of its specific focus on Belfast. Dooley has characterised the Boycott as giving physical form to undefined Protestant and Unionist fears about life in

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<sup>411</sup> Circular to Division Commanders and C/O Monaghan, 6 June 1921 (U.C.D.A., Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/19).

<sup>412</sup> Dooley, 'Belfast Boycott', p. 93.

<sup>413</sup> B.M.H. Ws. 657 (Philip Marron).

<sup>414</sup> Statement of James McKenna (Monaghan County Museum, Marron Papers).

<sup>415</sup> B.M.H. Ws. 681 (Tom Carragher).

<sup>416</sup> B.M.H. Ws. 740 (John McGahey).

<sup>417</sup> Statement of James McKenna (Monaghan County Museum, Marron Papers).

<sup>418</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 2 February 1922; *Northern Standard*, 27 January 1922.

<sup>419</sup> *Northern Standard*, 27 January 1922.

a Catholic and nationalist Ireland.<sup>420</sup> The sense of helplessness engendered by the Boycott and the failure of any government to help them contributed to the growth of several Protestant Defence Associations as we will see in the next chapter.

It also underlined for Cavan and Monaghan Protestants how small and isolated they were without their co-religionists in Northern Ireland. Even North Monaghan with its larger Protestant population and greater proximity to Unionist heartlands suffered under the Boycott. In fact, these connections to the North intensified rather than alleviated this suffering. The greatest champions of three-county Protestants during the Boycott were not southern politicians but Northern M.P.s William Coote and Thomas Moles, who received multiple petitions from disadvantaged Protestants and presented their case repeatedly to Sir Ernest Clark head of the Northern Irish Civil Service.<sup>421</sup>

It is a mistake to view the Boycott, however, as an inexorable tide glumly endured by those unfortunate enough to be in its path. Cavan's and Monaghan's significant Protestant population allowed for a resistance that was not possible elsewhere. Newbliss Protestants in August 1920 organised a convoy of fifty Ulster Volunteers to escort bread vans from Belfast to the town. The same escorts were planned in Clones and Drum although they were foiled as the bread vans were attacked before they reached their escort.<sup>422</sup> Following an unsuccessful attack on Carrickmacross barracks in April 1921 the house of a Nationalist named John Hand was burned down. P.V. Hoey, captain of the South Monaghan Brigade, determined that the only reason that could be assigned for such an act of 'vandalism was the fact that Hand was prominently identified with enforcing the Belfast Boycott.'<sup>423</sup> Picketers outside of targeted businesses in Monaghan were often forced to abandon their posts after their activities were reported to the authorities by those being boycotted.<sup>424</sup> In other cases defiance was more casual, almost playful. In Ballybay a ban on 'entering the houses' of those being boycotted was circumvented by business being performed out on the street.<sup>425</sup>

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<sup>420</sup> Dooley, 'Belfast Boycott', p 91.

<sup>421</sup> Treasury correspondence discussing Trade Boycott in Monaghan (P.R.O.N.I., Minister of Finance Files, FIN18/1/103).

<sup>422</sup> *Northern Standard*, 28 August 1920.

<sup>423</sup> P.V. Hoey, *Farney in the Fight for Freedom 1914 – 1921* (Dundalk, 1949), p. 20.

<sup>424</sup> James Mulligan Copybook (Monaghan County Museum, Marron Papers).

<sup>425</sup> *Northern Standard*, 1 April 1921.

## Non-Belfast Boycotting

While the Belfast Boycott was the most prevalent case of its type in Cavan and Monaghan and the case that affected the most people, it manifested itself idiosyncratically. It would be a mistake to apply our understanding of the causes and form of the Belfast Boycott to a general understanding of boycotting in Cavan and Monaghan or to assume that it was the predominant experience of boycotting at this time. Boycotts not inspired by Belfast were an important feature of the lived revolution in Cavan and Monaghan. Due to their smaller size and sporadic enforcement, these boycotts occupied less attention than other forms of revolutionary activity and emerge most clearly in the compensation claims made to the Irish Grants Committee.

Boycotts took different forms in different areas during the revolutionary period depending on the scale of the boycott, the local environment and the economic action in question. Sometimes the boycott was limited to a few economic activities as at Shantonagh Desmesne in Monaghan, where the boycott against Bertram Fitzherbert, the landlord, only manifested itself as a refusal to pay for cattle-grazing on his land or buy timber from his agents.<sup>426</sup> In other cases, boycotts lasted months, extending to the target's entire engagement with the community as happened to a large proportion of the Protestant community of Arva after 1921.

An individual boycott in a rural area could have served as a means of individual coercion, forcing through a change in land ownership or a punishment for informing. Local farmers like Michael Martin of Beagh in Monaghan found themselves the focus of single-issue or once-off boycotts. In his case, the auction of a single plot of his land found no-one willing to bid. In these cases, however, this once-off boycott had to be supported by outside action. Martin was only compelled to sell the land after his attempts to work it himself were disrupted by outside actors scattering his crops.<sup>427</sup> Supplementary intimidation and raiding was normally effective. John J. Cartwright, a farmer of Carrickaclevin in County Cavan, weathered a boycott which lasted for over a year from 1921 until 13 December 1922 and which deprived him of almost an entire crop. The property was only seized in December 1922, when a raiding party forcibly took

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<sup>426</sup> Bertram Fitzherbert claim (N.A.I.: FIN/COMP/2/18/209).

<sup>427</sup> Michael Martin claim (N.A.I.: FIN/COMP/2/18/280).

occupation of it. It was immediately sold for a loss and Cartwright was told to leave the district. Cartwright's crime had been to hide his brother, an ex-soldier, from the I.R.A.<sup>428</sup>

Gemma Clark has also emphasised how a boycott in a community also served as a wider warning to enforce communal adherence to the rules of the boycotters.<sup>429</sup> While this is true in Cavan and Monaghan, a fundamental difference between them and counties Clark has looked at is their greater proportion of Protestants. Consequently, boycotting did not manifest in the individualist manner that Clark has described with isolated individuals serving as unhappy examples of what happened when the boycott was invoked. Rather it affected large groups of people at once as opposed to the individual boycotts in Clark's counties of Limerick, Tipperary and Waterford.

In Cavan, boycotting aimed to isolate opponents of the republican movement. As a referee for Richard Kemp, Richard Thompson, a clerk at the local branch of the Ulster Bank noted: 'so perfect was the system of espionage of the I.R.A. and their friends that once a man incurred their censure it was absolutely impossible for him to sell cattle or goods publicly'.<sup>430</sup> Thomas Anderson, a farmer of Foxfield just over the border into Leitrim, noted not only the loss of his usual markets and workers but also the consequent damage to his dairy and piggery as he had to sell his assets in order to survive.<sup>431</sup> As a result of boycotting, John Scott faced financial ruin and was forced to emigrate to New South Wales. He was awarded the huge sum of £3,000 for his losses. Scott originally operated a haulage business on the six miles between Bailieborough and Kingscourt railway station. After undertaking haulage for the R.I.C. and the military the Drogheda brigade of the I.R.A. declared a boycott against him, and even brought in their own man and cart from Dundalk to replace him. The boycott was maintained to such a degree that even when Scott's infant child died he could find nobody to provide a coffin for the child.<sup>432</sup>

Robert Latimer, a gunsmith from Ballyjamesduff had his business collapse twice. The first time when he was compelled on 8 October 1918, by a British Army proclamation, to surrender all his stock to the R.I.C. barracks in the town. The second

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<sup>428</sup> John Cartwright claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/116/15). See also Ann Cox claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/175/5).

<sup>429</sup> Clark, *Everyday Violence*, p. 140.

<sup>430</sup> Richard Kemp claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/187/10).

<sup>431</sup> Thomas Anderson case (P.R.O.N.I, S.I.L.R.A. files, D989/B/2/8).

<sup>432</sup> John Scott claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/175/17).

was when his revived business suffered a boycott five years later. Latimer was boycotted primarily because he had obeyed the army's proclamation. Due to hardship, his children were forced to leave the district in August 1922. At the time of application, Latimer had been forced out of the district and was living solely on his £10 pension. He stated that he had applied out of desperation as his means were gone and he had been sundered from the community that he might have relied upon: 'like many poor old Loyalists'. Indeed, it transpired that the Cavan referees he provided to back up his case had both died without Latimer's knowledge.<sup>433</sup>

Bernard Browne, a Carrickmacross draper, was similarly ruined and echoed this sense of abandonment in his compensation application: 'all our old friends deserted us. I attribute this ruin of my business to the boycotting of my premises by the organisation known as Sinn Féin'. In Browne's case we also see the supplementary intimidation and raiding that characterised so much of boycotting. While being boycotted Browne's children were insulted whenever they walked into the town and eventually refused to run messages for their mother. This social intimidation matches what Clark has described as typical for urban boycotts.<sup>434</sup> The eldest girl, Molly, suffered particularly and had slogans such as 'down with Browne the old Recruiting Sergeant who is recruiting our best men to serve John Bull' and 'Up the I.R.A.' chanted at her. The abuse eventually got so bad that she went to speak with the Very Rev. Daniel O'Connor, Dean of St. Joseph's Church in the town, to ask for his intervention. She was told by the Reverend that, while he was sorry, he could not do anything and that the trouble would die down soon.<sup>435</sup>

Perhaps the most relevant and important question to ask regarding boycotts is what drew one upon an individual? Can we discern a campaign that led to a general boycott of the Protestant community? This does not seem to be the case. Certainly, a victim's Protestantism was never used on its own as a justification for a boycott. Rather revolutionary boycotts were triggered by a few primary reasons which were likely to disproportionately fall on the Protestant community. The cases we have already mentioned are united in that the boycotting in those cases was brought on by an association with British rule and its agents, generally the R.I.C. or the Black and Tans. Bernard Browne joined the army, Robert Latimer provided weapons to the army, John

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<sup>433</sup> Robert Latimer claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/11/2).

<sup>434</sup> Clark, *Everyday Violence*, p. 146.

<sup>435</sup> Bernard Browne claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/7/5).

Scott provided haulage for the R.I.C., John Cartwright's brother was a soldier.

Cases like that of William Storey who was boycotted in the district of Drumore for renting a 32-acre farm which had seen a tenant unfairly evicted 40 years earlier are present but rare.<sup>436</sup> Land redistribution tended more towards campaigns of intimidation and raiding. Identifying a purely agrarian boycott is problematic in this period. Frequently the political and the agrarian become conflated. Robert Foster of Rockcorry in the north of the country, in his application to the I.G.C. claimed to have been under some form of boycott since 1906, when he purchased land formerly owned by a parish priest. Almost immediately he found notices put up calling on those living near him to boycott him. Foster however says that this was only to mark him out as 'in favour with the Sinn Féiners and... always very much opposed to their principles' and that he really only began to suffer the effects of a boycott during the revolution.<sup>437</sup> In effect an agrarian incident marked someone as a potential political target. We may be cynical and read this as Foster trying to make a 1906 boycott relevant to a 1920s compensation process, but it is unlikely Foster would have attempted to do without some grounds to support his claim and his claim was accepted.

What was deemed worthy of boycotting encompassed a broad range of activities: from explicitly 'loyal' acts such as recruiting for the army during the Great War to simply socialising with government forces. Bernard Browne despite his lamentations about his complete isolation post-boycott, claimed in his Irish Grants Committee form to have initially been an influential member of the community. He noted that 'prior to joining his majesty's army I was a general favourite in town and district and was an Elected Member of Carrickmacross Urban Council'. This is backed up by a letter from one of his customers, a Thomas Conlon, who said 'I never met anyone who had a word to say against you personally and I have no doubt at all but that had you remained at home and carried on your business as I knew you to do you would today be among the most popular and prosperous men in town'. Browne's own service became intimately linked to his family's targeting, making central the reasons for his targeting. When Browne's name was mentioned in dispatches after winning a medal for bravery at Beaumontamel, the family's windows were smashed. When he was reported wounded in 1917 a bonfire was

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<sup>436</sup> William Storey claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/161/15).

<sup>437</sup> Robert Foster claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/102/11).

lit across the road from the house.<sup>438</sup>

In Arva, the arrival of the Black and Tans in February 1921 precipitated the boycott campaign. A number of applicants record the reason for their boycott as their social or economic interactions with the men. In effect, breaking the boycott against the Black and Tans was responded to with a boycott. Lizzie Anderson began entertaining the men from their arrival in the town in February and noted an immediate turn in the opinion of the town against her. However, it was not until the Truce was signed and police authority was undermined, that the boycott came into operation. Lizzie noted: ‘as soon as the truce became operative, production ceased’.<sup>439</sup>

Boycotting in this way was a mechanism by which a more specific ban on interactions with government forces (initially the R.I.C.) could spread through that community likely to interact with them. Séan Sheridan of the Ballinagh Battalion noted that the R.I.C. had been completely, though informally, boycotted in the town since the rise of Sinn Féin.<sup>440</sup> In August 1920 three farmers in Cavan were reported as being boycotted after refusing to recall their sons from the R.I.C. and had notices posted warning others to boycott the family.<sup>441</sup> James Bradish noted that his own boycott only began after he broke a separate boycott being carried out against his employer, George McParran. He offered to the I.G.C. this willingness to bypass a boycott as evidence of his loyalty.<sup>442</sup> Boycotts in this manner, spread through familial and social connections, were partially based in religious communities.

There was no strict rule for what unacceptable levels of interaction were. James Young said his 12-acre farm was boycotted at auction and that afterwards he received letters threatening him with execution. The offence given was Young hitching a lift from the Black and Tans. While this infraction may seem minor, even Young recognised the symbolic significance of this act in such politically charged times by using it as evidence of his own loyalty.<sup>443</sup> In Inniskeen a train driver and firemen were held up by the I.R.A. in July 1920 for having driven the train the R.I.C. were taking.<sup>444</sup> Simon Hewitt, a

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<sup>438</sup> Bernard Browne claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/7/5).

<sup>439</sup> Lizzie Anderson claim (T.N.A.: CO/762/174/30). See also John Lang claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/186/6).

<sup>440</sup> B.M.H. Ws. 1613 (Sean Sheridan).

<sup>441</sup> County Inspectors Returns Cavan, August 1920 (T.N.A.: CO 904/112).

<sup>442</sup> James Bradish case (P.R.O.N.I, S.I.L.R.A. files, D989/B/2/8).

<sup>443</sup> James Young claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/175/22).

<sup>444</sup> House of Commons Debates, 5th series, vol. 131, 7 July 1921, col. 1429.

publican, was boycotted on even looser grounds. Raiders entering his pub told him just that he 'would have to pay dearly for having supported the 'dirty Union Jack''.<sup>445</sup>

This was ostensibly an apolitical trigger for boycott in that either community could theoretically interact with British forces and be targeted. However, in reality this fell almost entirely upon the Protestant community for whom social interaction with groups like the Black and Tans was often the result of some shared culture. Richard Kemp was a shoemaker by trade but also owned a small farm of 10 acres at Brankhill, one of the most Protestant districts in the county. He had served in the Irish Guards but had been discharged in 1916 due a leg injury. Since then he had been active in recruiting drives in the local area which had marked him out for mild harassment and the boycotting of his business. However, it was not until the arrival of the Auxiliaries into Arva that he began to experience real intimidation. As a former serviceman and a Protestant, Kemp found he had much in the common with the men and was frequently seen paying them social visits. He was later warned by the I.R.A. that if he did not stop this he would be shot and would have been already if he was not a cripple. This might also explain why he had been subjected previously to only a mild campaign of alienation. From this point he was boycotted at markets, forced to sell cattle at a huge loss to fellow Protestants and suffered his cattle being consistently chased off his land.<sup>446</sup>

This was also present in the claim of Kate Pinkerton, a café owner. Her crime against the republicans in the town was to host the Black and Tans in her shop and to be seen engaging socially with them. Pinkerton claimed not to have noticed the boycott until the Truce when all of her customers pulled out of the town.<sup>447</sup> Pinkerton's husband William, a foreman in the local flax mill, reported being constantly under surveillance at work and found his workmen refusing to engage with him directly. I.R.A. sympathy in the mill grew and he found his wages reduced until he was forced to leave his job. After this he had trouble finding any work at all. It was also William who started receiving

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<sup>445</sup> Simon Hewitt claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/196/13). For other Arva applicants allegedly targeted on the basis of their friendship with the Crown forces see Johnston and Richard Hewitt 's applications (T.N.A.: CO 762/168/11 & T.N.A.: CO 762/168/12).

<sup>446</sup> Richard Kemp claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/187/10). For another example of this see John Lang of Castlepoles (T.N.A.: CO 762/186/6); District Master of Royal Black Preceptory, Master of the local Loyal Orange Lodge, and Deputy Grandmaster of the County Grand Black Chapter.

<sup>447</sup> Kate Pinkerton claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/170/4). Seen also in the case of Mary Anne Curtis (T.N.A.: CO 762/27/16), a restaurateur. Although Curtis portrayed herself as an unwilling host she makes it clear that RIC and Auxiliary patronage drove off her Catholic customers.



threatening letters from the community in January 1922. It was the cafe's position as the main social haunt of the forces of the Crown which brought this treatment on an otherwise apolitical William.<sup>448</sup>

In other cases, the Protestant community's greater willingness to engage economically with the British establishment – either by sympathy or reasons of practicality – served to distinguish them. In many cases businesses based on serving the R.I.C. were forced to transition to serving other government forces when the R.I.C. withdrew. While this was most frequently supplying them with goods, it needed not be. David Hewitt, a carter in Arva, was targeted for the relatively minor crime of carrying goods between the train station and their barracks. He had performed the same service for the R.I.C. until the attack on the local barracks in September 1920. After the initiation of the boycott, Hewitt was forced to continue serving the Auxiliaries. In the entire period 1921 – 1923, he was only able to attract two other customers.<sup>449</sup> Hewitt's case can show how such supplying of the government forces can be self-reinforcing or an economic necessity. Bernard Matthews, a tailor, had initially been employed to make uniforms for the R.I.C. When told by the I.R.A. to stop, he refused as he had few other customers he could so rely on.<sup>450</sup> Wilson Johnston suffered the same fate for the same offense. Again, strategic and personal concerns intersect here as Johnston himself believed the biggest crime was not that he carted supplies for the R.I.C., but the more personal errand of helping the new sergeant of the local barracks, John McKeon, move his furniture from the train station to the barracks.<sup>451</sup>

Often, these dealings were necessary or made economic sense, but they still served to mark out those involved as 'loyalist'. This stands in comparison to the cases where the supplying of British forces is itself openly defiant. By 1922, William Scott of Brankhill, had been reduced to eking out a living serving as a Temporary Constable with the R.I.C. The boycott of him at markets and fairs had destroyed his farming business and forced him to sell his land at Brankhill for a reduced price. Scott was a prominent loyalist and had fought off an I.R.A. raid on his home for guns in the winter of 1920. He had previously served in the North Irish Horse. A boycott was only implemented against him

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<sup>448</sup> William Pinkerton claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/183/19).

<sup>449</sup> David Hewitt claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/94/16).

<sup>450</sup> Bernard Matthews claim (T.N.A.: CO/762/23/1).

<sup>451</sup> Wilson Johnston claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/173/15).

following the collapse of the Arva R.I.C. barracks and even then, only really began following the arrival of the Auxiliaries. This was because Scott was the first to defy the direct warnings against supplying them and provide them with the produce of his farm.<sup>452</sup> We should not underestimate the commitment of those who broke the boycott to their cause. John Scott of Arva town, also defied orders from the I.R.A. to cease supplying the R.I.C. but handed all death threats directly over to Sgt. Hanks of the barracks. He continued to supply the forces until they withdrew, and a lack of business forced him to sell his land and cattle at a loss.<sup>453</sup>

The cause of a boycott is inherently political, and we must be careful not to accept the accounts of the victims of such campaigns uncritically. Thankfully the boycott was a public act and was, in many cases, performed precisely to be seen. Picketing, pronouncements and explicit judgements all elucidating the nominal reasons for a boycott were common. Occasions like the death of Terence McSwiney were marked by the breaking up of fairs and closure of shops for the day. Those that refused could be boycotted.<sup>454</sup> This could often be theatrical – a boycott announced with an initial act of aggression such as a raid or the forceful expulsion of all customers from a shop. This was a pronouncement of guilt, declaring a reason for the boycott and aiming to provide a disincentive to further loyal acts by the victim. Although we must be aware that compensation claims in particular have a vested interest in defining the cause of the boycott as explicitly as possible – in order to shore up their claims for reimbursement.

Kate, Bernard Browne's wife, noticed that business had begun to decline as early as January 1916 and a number of her assistants handed in their notices; she still recorded high patronage at the town fair of that month. On Thursday 10 February, two men declaring themselves to be 'Sinn Féiners' entered the shop and ordered a crowd of her customers out saying that 'Browne had joined the British army and they were determined to boycott the business so that he would have no business coming back to Carrickmacross.' After this point the family only had Protestant and loyalist customers until closing down on 30 September 1916.<sup>455</sup> Thomas Conlon described attempting to enter the shop as early as 1915 and being turned away by a 'large crowd of rough looking

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<sup>452</sup> William Scott claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/170/13).

<sup>453</sup> John Scott claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/175/17).

<sup>454</sup> House of Commons Debates, 5th series, vol. 134, 9 November 1920, col. 990.

<sup>455</sup> Bernard Browne claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/7/5).

country fellows' who held him off along with a large number of other customers looking to get in.<sup>456</sup> George William Hill, of Arva town, was directly told during a raid on his boycotted shop that 'if he hadn't been on such easy terms with the Black and Tans he would have gotten off easier'.<sup>457</sup>

An explicit reason provided by the boycotters should not be accepted uncritically. This problem is demonstrated in the case of Maggie Masterson, a 58-year-old farmer who lived in Gorteen near Killeshandra with her 46-year-old husband in 1926. By their own account, they had lived uneventfully in their neighbourhood until the evening of 6 March 1922 when they were raided by ten armed men who labelled them 'spies and informers' and warned they would be shot were they to supply any more goods to the Black and Tans. They then took John Masterson out into the fields nearby, telling Maggie he would be shot. He was not, but in her claim, she emphasised the permanent damage this incident had on his health. From this point on they were boycotted, and their live-in maid was forced to quit and find work elsewhere.<sup>458</sup>

There was some dissonance between the pronouncement of guilt, focusing on their alleged spying, and the actual threats of violence which were preoccupied with their continuing to supply enemy forces. There was a clear difference between informing and supplying and such public judgements showed the confusing and contradictory way in which social improprieties were understood and punished. The Mastersons continued to receive threatening letters saying things like 'spy and informer beware' adorned with the iconography Clark has demonstrated we should expect (coffins, stick figures with guns), but were never again physically threatened on those grounds.<sup>459</sup> They themselves did not claim to be informers (a detail which would surely have aided their application) and rather see the boycott as an economic sanction for an economic crime.

These pronouncements were not necessarily for specific infractions but could represent a punishment for a more general unacceptability. An individual boycott was understood with previous incidents in mind. Crimes were put into categories which may not have been relevant, but which had precedent and justification in republican tradition. For example, the Mastersons' crime of supplying the enemy was replaced with the more

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<sup>456</sup> Thomas Conlon claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/7/5).

<sup>457</sup> George William Hill (T.N.A.: CO 762/156/3).

<sup>458</sup> Maggie Masterson claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/175/16).

<sup>459</sup> Ibid.

obvious infraction of spying.

The accusation of spying was rare among those boycotted. Far more common responses to passing intelligence were threats and kidnappings; the silent ruination of a boycott was reserved for more minor infractions. The only other compensation claim from Cavan or Monaghan in which a boycott was justified by claims that the victim had passed on information to British forces is that of John Huggins. Huggins was fifty-one at the time of his application in 1927 and lived in Kilbracken, Belturbet. A successful cattle-dealer, he first drew on the ire of local republicans after his vocal opposition to the Easter Rising. Perhaps because of this he was accused in December 1920 of passing information to the British forces in the area. Who specifically these British forces were is not specified in his claim. However, as the Auxiliary depot at Castlesaunderson was not established until June 1921, it is most likely that this was the local R.I.C. garrison in Holborn Hill, Belturbet.<sup>460</sup> Huggins neither confirmed nor denied that he did so in his application but does say that the accusation led to his boycotting. He was forced to stop attending fairs and markets and expended most of his capital to keep himself in business. Otherwise he makes no report of being raided or threatened and it appears the local I.R.A. did not consider him a threat.<sup>461</sup>

This is not to imply that in every case the reasoning behind a boycott was clear, or even articulated. In multiple incidents the reasoning behind a boycott can be unclear and made obscurer by the applicant themselves. Frederick Howell, a 37-year-old farmer, lived in Kingscourt near the Cavan-Meath border and 63 kilometres away from the centre of activity in Arva. Howell claimed to have suffered from boycotting throughout 1923 and put this as part of a much longer-term series of conflicts with the republican population in the area. He had initially suffered a cattle raid in October 1922 before being summoned to a Dáil arbitration court over a dispute over the ownership of a tractor with John Kearney, also of Kingscourt. Being both 'protestant and loyalist'. Kearney informed the Crown authorities of when this court would be sitting. The R.I.C. were then called in to break up the session. Unfortunately for Howell, this just meant the court sat in secret and without his own representation. The only notice he had of their decision was when armed men showed up on his farm in November to seize the tractor.

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<sup>460</sup> Jim Herlihy, 'Records of the D.M.P. and R.I.C.' (Lecture, National Library of Ireland, Dublin, 21 August 2012).

<sup>461</sup> John Huggins claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/160/5).

In response, Howell assembled six of his neighbours and went to Bailieborough, where the vehicle was being held, to demand its return. Again, things did not go to plan for Howell as instead he was arrested by the I.R.A. and held in Dundalk jail for six weeks until bail of £50 was posted. During this time notices were also posted warning people not to engage in any business with Howell's family while he was being held, a loss which amounted to £250.<sup>462</sup>

So, there is ample evidence here for longer term antagonism between Howell and the local community which would explain the wider boycott he claimed to have suffered in 1923. However, Howell instead tied the boycott, and implicitly the earlier troubles, to his own identity as a Protestant loyalist. He curiously focused on the fact that he was a customer at the Northern Bank instead of the Hibernian Bank as one of the primary factors marking him out for boycott in the town.<sup>463</sup>

In other cases, we are presented with the more problematic case of the invisible boycott, one that is not announced or even recognised publicly where our evidence for the action comes entirely from those claiming to suffer from it. These claims may have used boycott as an explanation for generally declining fortunes. In cases of compensation we must be doubly suspicious as there was an obvious financial gain to be had from claiming to have suffered a boycott. In his claim, George William Hill focused on the two I.R.A. raids his shop suffered. However, in support of his claim he mentioned a suspicion that his sales declined in this period because he was the victim of a 'secret boycott', a claim which was enthusiastically backed by the Reverend William McDougall, the local Anglican minister, and William Reid, the local solicitor. He had no other proof. As he continued to do business throughout the Civil War it is not clear what he meant when he spoke of a secret boycott. Rather than a strict policy it seems he meant a distaste among the local community to do business with a loyalist. It could have shown a misuse of the term boycott to refer to any decision among a community to refuse to engage with a person.<sup>464</sup> This was a dynamic also present in the application of James McCabe, a butter and egg merchant who was the main supplier of the British forces in Arva. While he did

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<sup>462</sup> Frederick Howell claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/66/7). Unfortunately, Howell does not specify the number of armed men in this raid.

<sup>463</sup> Ibid. This mirrors the compensation claim of Jennie Elliott, Main Street, Arva, who mentioned that many of the demands made to her before her boycott was instituted was a demand that she stop trading with Ulster Bank due to the Belfast Boycott.

<sup>464</sup> George William Nicholls claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/175/18).

not claim to have been openly boycotted, he was adamant the reason for the lost trade after the withdrawal of the British troops was that he had been somehow marked as unacceptable by his actions in the local community. He believed that by the time of the Truce ‘the district was 95% republican, or at least anti-English’.<sup>465</sup>

We are right to be suspicious about such ‘unprovable’ compensation claims. However, the I.G.C. themselves were equally suspicious of such claims. Simon Hewitt's claim for boycott in Arva was dismissed by the Committee as they did not believe his claim of boycott was verified by his ledgers of accounts, which he had provided.<sup>466</sup> John Cartwright was similarly rejected on the basis that his losses were not due to boycott but his own laziness.<sup>467</sup> It is unhelpful to simply dismiss such claims of silent boycott in this way. Undoubtedly, not every boycott needed to be defined in clear and explicit terms. It is also problematic to assume that a boycott, or perhaps the boycotting impulse, had to be explicitly declared if it was to have existed. Both McCabe and Hill's claims were accepted while Kate Pinkerton and Kate Browne also complained of initial unspoken downturns in trade before a boycott was explicitly declared. Indeed, Browne only realised the extent of her boycott when a number of conacre lettings were put up for auction, including lettings that the family had held. She found her bids were rejected again and again even at higher rates. It was only that the auctioneer was ‘gallant’ enough to tell them that he had been instructed not to accept any bid of any amount that they received confirmation of such a ban against them. Consequently, they were forced to dispose of all their pigs and cattle and horses at low prices, as they had nowhere to support them.<sup>468</sup>

An extended boycott could have great psychological effects on the victims. Ann Cox and her family suffered from ill health due to a sustained campaign of intimidation. Her doctor had advised the family to move to the seaside to recover, but they found themselves trapped in the community. She was afraid that to leave without selling the property would be financial ruin and would allow the boycotters the opportunity to seize the land, while selling up in the manner demanded of the boycotters would be to capitulate. Cox also expressed a fear that the boycotters would follow her to her new

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<sup>465</sup> James McCabe claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/29/13); For further examples of this see Mary S Fletcher (T.N.A.: CO 762/89/3) who could only report a general loss of business in addition to her other troubles with republicanism in the district.

<sup>466</sup> Simon Hewitt claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/196/13).

<sup>467</sup> John Cartwright claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/116/15).

<sup>468</sup> Bernard Browne claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/7/5).

home wherever it might be. The perpetrators were clearly known to her – the raiders before leaving warned her ‘We will come back and shoot you if we ever hear anything about this’ – and she was also therefore known to them.<sup>469</sup>

Even when the boycott did not extend for a significant stretch of time the human cost was significant. Bernard Matthews, the tailor who had refused to stop making uniforms for the R.I.C., was forced to emigrate by the severity of the boycott laid against him. A later letter to the committee from his wife mentioned that ‘the I.R.A. boycotted him and all his Roman Catholic customers withdrew their trade and never returned’.<sup>470</sup> On emigrating, he was forced to leave behind his wife and three young children, who, even at time of the application had yet to join him in America. The application was written in hope of money that would allow him to return and re-establish his business, but his claim was deemed to be ‘out of scope’.<sup>471</sup>

Mary Sheridan was forced to go on poor relief after her son had his workshop closed due to boycott. She and her husband were entirely dependent on their son to support them. He was afterwards denied work in the area and told to quit the country. The family was ‘generally unacceptable’ to the republican community with her husband James having been injured in the Boer War and her son Francis having been declared ‘an enemy of the Republic by the Irish Volunteers’ for his service in the Great War. For the period up until 1919 while Francis was abroad and from the period after January 1921 when he was forced to close his workshop, the entire family was dependent on Mary's income. However, after the R.I.C., her largest customers, withdrew from the town she found herself boycotted by her Catholic neighbours.<sup>472</sup>

## Conclusion

Boycotting can be a difficult phenomenon to examine, particularly when it is not easily tied to a single campaign as happened with the Belfast Boycott. Newspaper reports contain very little of non-Belfast boycotting, while R.I.C. reports display only a passing concern. Most boycotts were small and silent and focused around one or two actions,

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<sup>469</sup> Ann Cox claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/175/5).

<sup>470</sup> Bernard Mathews claim (T.N.A.: CO/762/23/1).

<sup>471</sup> Ibid.

<sup>472</sup> Mary Sheridan claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/51/9).

such as the refusal to buy the victims' land or work for them. They were less dramatic and seemed of lesser importance than the ambushes, burnings and political crises which dominated the Irish Revolution. However, these actions were far more widespread than their treatment in the historiography would suggest. Of the eighty-nine claims made from Cavan to the I.G.C., there were forty-two instances of boycott, more than theft or intimidation. For comparison there were only two instances of murder, fifteen of land occupation and seventeen of damage to property.<sup>473</sup>

Their broad communal nature meant that boycotting was more dangerous to most Protestants than house raids. The low-commitment required to follow a boycott, as well as the single publicly-pronounced cause of the boycott, allowed for communal tensions to play out much more easily and in milder forms than via more well-known revolutionary methods. It was after all, far less personal risk and therefore required far less depth of feeling, to refuse to patronise a Protestant shop than to arm oneself and raid a Protestant house.

However, much as boycotting has failed to gain its due prominence in revolutionary historiography so too did it fail to gain its due prominence in contemporary discourses. While the Belfast Boycott was used as an example of sectarian revolutionary actions, most other forms of revolutionary action were a far greater preoccupation of the Protestant community and informed their opinions on whether they were being targeted far more. Boycotting was used to underline the suffering of the Protestant community without ever being central to defining it. These aspects of the Revolution will be looked at in the next chapter.

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<sup>473</sup> Irish Grants Committee files (T.N.A.: CO 762/2 – 263).



### **Chapter 3: Sectarian? Protestants and revolutionary violence**

This chapter shall take a broad focus on all forms of raiding and revolutionary violence. This includes attacks on person and property as well as the use of threats. Arson as a unique form of raiding shall also be examined. We shall focus as much here on the surrounding culture of raiding: its reasons, performativity and consequences just as much as we shall examine the act itself. The main target of raiding in the Irish Revolution – the R.I.C., Black and Tans, Auxiliaries and other agents dedicated to enforcing British rule in Ireland – shall not be the focus of the section as our aim is to describe a lived non-combatant experience of the Revolution. Raids on barracks or on R.I.C. convoys for example, shall only be examined in the context of how they affected the broader Protestant population.

This chapter will demonstrate that although revolutionary violence was informed by a widerange of factors these same factors were motivated by pre-existing communal tensions which meant that Protestants were more likely to be targeted. This chapter will therefore look at the primary motivations for raids: seizure of arms, agrarianism, suspicions of spying and the role of the Protestant community as a legitimate military threat. It will also examine the case of Dean John Finlay, the brutality and senselessness of whose murder was so egregious compared to our understanding of the rest of the Revolution. We will also look at revolutionary violence committed against members of the Ancient Order of Hibernians. By doing so we will demonstrate that the other example of a wide-spread revolutionary campaign against a large, clearly-defined group of people manifested quite differently to that which was experienced by Protestants.

This chapter argues that although revolutionary violence was not narrowly sectarian in its motivation, it still fell much more heavily on the shoulders of the Protestant community and was informed by communal tensions that were, as we have seen in Chapter 1, complicated by the range of political associations behind them. The chapter also demonstrates that the brutality and consequences of revolutionary violence are underestimated.

### Typical Raiding: Form, Brutality and Consequences

A typical raid for this period can be difficult to examine. Being so common, those we find reported tend to be the ones that deviated from the norm. When we look at the sources, the majority reported lack colour and assume some knowledge on the part of the reader. For example, most of the compensation claims about raids made to the Free State Department of Finance amount to lists of what was taken in the raid, and not what happened in the raid itself. John Eakin in his application to the Free State Ministry of Finance said that a raid on his home of 15 December 1922 was committed by ‘armed men with rifles and revolvers’ and then added that they stole items from the house such as watches, overcoats and money as well as destroying property.<sup>474</sup> However, we still do not know what caused the raid or how the raiders treated Eakin and his family or whether it was part of a larger campaign. For incidents like these we are even more dependent on witness statements and what they can tell us about the victim's experience of being raided.

The general pattern of a raid stayed broadly consistent. A group of men arrived at the victim's home, normally at night, before the house was attacked. The raiders issued demands or provided an explanation of why they were there (this was not always the case, particularly around the border following partition where raids against quasi-military targets required greater stealth). The raid may have involved firing into the house, robbing the house of valuables or simply inspecting it for arms. In the case of resistance or if a greater punishment was required members of the household could be removed and threatened with shooting.

The raid was a traumatic experience for those targeted, involving a group of armed and masked men invading the victim's home. In some accounts these masks are evocatively called ‘false faces’ conveying something of the hostility and fear of the unknown that would accompany such an action.<sup>475</sup> It was a brutal assertion that in such unsettled times nobody was safe.

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<sup>474</sup> John Eakin claim (N.A.I.: FIN/COMP/2/18/41).

<sup>475</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 17 January 1920.

A 'typical' level of violence can be seen in the case of Samuel Woods whose house was raided in 1922. These attackers, upon being refused entry, fired into the house for nearly three hours, shooting Woods' wife in the shoulder. Woods and his wife were then dragged outside. While they were guarded outside, the windows and doors of the house were smashed and the beds and bedding within were destroyed. It is worth noting here too that Woods was not even the direct target of the raid. They learned afterwards that the raiders were searching only for his son.<sup>476</sup>

While the raiding was violent, in only a few cases were individuals deliberately killed. One of the most noteworthy was that of the Ryan family of Killeshandra. Willie Ryan was the son of John Ryan, a small Protestant farmer with twenty-three acres of land in Rockfield.<sup>477</sup> Ryan was murdered on 6 February 1922 during a raid. The family had been noted loyalists. John Ryan receiving a warning in July 1921 to remove the Union Flag he had been flying from their house. Their previous out-offices had also been burned for defying a boycott. There was no obvious incident which provoked the attack or explained its brutality. The minister at the funeral commented:

Never before has there been in this parish church of Killeshandra a funeral such as this. We meet to lay in the ground the body of one who, without warning, was cruelly shot down by wicked men, who, not content with firing at him, beat him on the head with the butts of their rifles<sup>478</sup>

Beyond the personal loss, the death of Willie Ryan also made John Ryan's position untenable. He needed Willie to work and stock the land to pay his mortgage. Ryan lacked the funds to hire someone else to do it.<sup>479</sup>

The Flemings of Carrickdooney, Co. Monaghan provide another tragic example of the effect of a sustained campaign of raiding on its target. Thomas Fleming, along with his wife Mary Jane, son Robert, and servant William John Murphy were all repeatedly

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<sup>476</sup> Samuel Woods claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/137/10).

<sup>477</sup> John Ryan claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/113/1).

<sup>478</sup> *Northern Standard*, 16 February 1923.

<sup>479</sup> John Ryan claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/113/1); Note these cases are meant to capture the brutality and loss that victims of raiding underwent. Not to imply this was an exclusively Protestant phenomenon. For an equally moving Catholic case see that of James Martin of Arva (*Impartial Reporter*, 23 November 1922).

raided and subjected to violence and harassment from July 1922 until early the next year. Thomas Fleming was a farmer recorded as sixty years old in the 1911 census living in a reasonably large second-class house in Carrickdooley. The census recorded his farm as having a stable, a cow house, a calf house, two piggeries, a fowl house, barn, potato-house and shed, marking out his holdings as the most extensive in the district.<sup>480</sup> Fleming also owned another farm at Corhelshinagh in Shantonagh Co. Monaghan. He had bought the Carrickdooley farm under the Land Purchase Act of 1902. The family had loyalist credentials with Robert having been a member of the Ulster Volunteers. In the weeks before the first raids the family had taken a prominent part in the usual July celebrations to commemorate the Battle of the Boyne.<sup>481</sup>

The family was first raided on 29 July 1922 when a body of armed men visited the farm at Carrickdooley and compelled Fleming to sign over possession of his Carrickdooley lands to a Peter Joseph Maguire who claimed that, as a former evicted tenant, he was entitled to the land. Following this, they moved to their second farm in Corhelshinagh. They immediately opened ejectment proceedings in the courts against Maguire.<sup>482</sup>

In this time, they were raided twice, on 4 and 7 August 1922. £50 worth of crops and farming implements were destroyed but no threats to the family were made.<sup>483</sup> On 4 January 1923, armed and masked men followed them to their new location. Fleming was initially asked to withdraw proceedings against Maguire and when he refused Fleming, his son Robert and William Murphy, their servant, were ‘assaulted and struck with rifles and other instruments’. Fleming sustained serious injury when he was thrown onto a fire the raiders had lit. He suffered burns down the left side of his body. He was fully incapacitated for nineteen weeks after the attack and partially incapacitated until his death on 22 May 1926 as a result of his injuries, aged seventy-five. Both Fleming and his wife suffered severe head lacerations while Robert was treated for concussion. Murphy was compelled to walk a number of miles away from Corhelshinagh and said he was ‘threatened with death if I returned to my employer's residence. I was not able to return until early in the morning’. Robert Fleming was also taken as a hostage until his father

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<sup>480</sup> Present in Carson, Dawsongrove, National Archives of Ireland, *Census of Ireland 1901/1911* (<http://www.census.nationalarchives.ie> : accessed 18 July 2018).

<sup>481</sup> Thomas Fleming claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/15/11); Mary Fleming claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/15/12).

<sup>482</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 18 January 1923.

<sup>483</sup> Thomas Fleming claim (N.A.I.: FIN/COMP/2/18/93).

agreed to drop his ejection proceedings.<sup>484</sup> The brutality of the Fleming attack and its longer-term consequences were viewed with shock in the surrounding area. Following the attack, a local I.R.A. member noted that the people of the area ceased to provide them with any information or cooperation.<sup>485</sup>

While this level of brutality was rare it was certainly not unique. In a claim made to the Irish Grants Committee for a raid made on his property in Drumbrown near Kingscourt Co. Cavan, Patrick Duffy reported being beaten so badly that the raiders left him for dead, while his five children were thrown about and abused. One of his sons, aged seventeen, received a bayonet wound, which the attending physician reported could have killed him had it gone slightly higher and pierced the liver. Duffy's land lay unworked for three years. Such claims were perhaps exaggerated, the doctor describing the son's wounds was curiously specific when he said that the stab wound would have been fatal had it been one-eighth of an inch higher. However, these claims had to be backed up by references, doctor's reports and the personal inquiries of the Grants Committee.<sup>486</sup>

Even a raid that was not intended to kill or injure its victims, by its own extreme nature, led to people being inadvertently hurt. This was especially true of elderly victims. Seumus Dobbyn recalled an arms raid on a fisherman in which the man refused to give up his guns and a shot was fired above his head to intimidate him. Unbeknownst to the raiders an elderly woman was in bed upstairs and upon hearing the shouting and the shot died of shock.<sup>487</sup> When John Beresford Madden of Aghafin was raided in September 1920 shots fired into the house to induce a surrender struck his sister in the abdomen. We may even see such an incident as partially intentional as the pressing need to get his sister medical help caused Madden's own resistance to collapse.<sup>488</sup>

While this was frequently accidental, the link between the action and the damage it caused was often so clear that, at best, we must assume recklessness. Most commonly this was seen when houses were set on fire with the occupants asleep within them. Often

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<sup>484</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 30 March 1921; Thomas Fleming claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/15/11); Robert Fleming claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/15/13); House of Commons Debates, 5th series, vol. 141, 28 April 1921, col. 441 - 2.

<sup>485</sup> Account of Tom Carragher (Monaghan County Museum, Marron Papers).

<sup>486</sup> Patrick Duffy claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/34/1).

<sup>487</sup> Seumus Dobbyn interview (C.O.F.L.A, O'Kane Collection, LOK IV.B.27).

<sup>488</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 9 September 1920.

even fastening the door to make escape more difficult as in the case of Francis Murray, an army pensioner of Aghafin, who was saved by his daughter using a hatchet to chop her way out.<sup>489</sup> Matilda Magee was struck in the thigh by a bullet fired blindly through her window as an act of intimidation.<sup>490</sup> James Heaslip's daughter and sixty-year-old wife were forced to spend the night in a field after a raid on 29 July 1921 attempted to drive him out of town. Consequently, Heaslip claimed, his wife caught rheumatic pains, her health never recovered, and it hastened her death.<sup>491</sup> Even if this final part was an exaggeration to secure a larger pay-out from the I.G.C. (he was eventually awarded £425), it is obvious that the extreme nature of a raid lent itself to these sorts of injuries. The earlier case of Thomas Fleming also demonstrated the deleterious effect wounds received during a raid could have on elderly victims.

More seriously, James Livingstone, the postmaster of Belturbet, lost his daughter after a raid on his home. Livingstone's home was one of several raided on the night of 18 June 1922. The raiders took advantage of the withdrawal of Crown forces from the Ballyconnell area to establish a local monopoly on force, with one raider telling an earlier house that 'the Free State party could not protect them now'.<sup>492</sup> Livingstone had previously had trouble with the local republicans, including fighting off a raid on his Post Office in early 1921. Livingstone's own statement to the press afterwards described the hostility of the raiders towards their victims:

They wanted my wife to send me outside. She was pleading with them. They said they wanted guns and ammunition. I told them to wait a minute and that I would go down and get them a gun. They said that they would not wait, as they came a long journey, and to open the door and let them in. I gave them the gun through the window. They said that it was not enough, that they wanted more. I told them that I had an old revolver which I would bring them ... They then moved out on the road. I noticed that two of three of them had revolvers. They then commenced shooting; four shots were fired very rapidly.

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<sup>489</sup> Ibid; See also George Cartwright claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/98/1; N.A.I.: FIN/COMP/2/4/25) and Selina Cowan claim (N.A.I.: FIN/COMP/2/2/192).

<sup>490</sup> Matilda Magee claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/94/6).

<sup>491</sup> James Heaslip claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/139/1).

<sup>492</sup> *Skibbereen Eagle*, 24 June 1922.

My wife shouted, ‘Madge [his daughter] is shot.’ A few more shots were fired, and they went up the road towards Killeshandra<sup>493</sup>

Margaret (Madge) had been looking out of the upstairs window when the volleys hit the house. The reports of her injuries are gruesome, stating that ‘the right side of the skull was practically blown away, the brains were protruding. Some matter was adhering to the walls’.<sup>494</sup> This loss provoked no respite in the hostility towards Livingstone. Posters were put up shortly afterwards declaring a boycott against his family.<sup>495</sup>

Even when the consequences of a raid do not extend so far as permanent injury or death, they had a lasting effect on the lives of those involved. A useful aspect of the I.G.C. claims is that they are not immediate responses to attack but rather date from several years later. As a result, they reveal the long-term consequences of such actions. In the case of the Flemings we see the incident left the family in tightened financial circumstances. After the first raid they had immediately lodged Malicious Injury applications for £300 and £50 but were awarded a minimal amount by the courts. Further claims to the Compensation (Personal Injuries) Committee were disallowed. They had also been forced to sell off most of their cattle at sacrifice prices during the move from Carrickdooley to Corhelshinagh, and after the removal of Robert Fleming to Enniskillen and Thomas’ paralysis, only Murphy, the servant, was able to work the land. The mortgage arrears for this period were only repaid in 1927.<sup>496</sup>

The two Johnston brothers of Corlespratten, Wilson and Thomas, suffered an arms raid on 9 July 1922 during which both were struck on the head with rifles causing significant wounds. This injury left them incapacitated for nearly a year requiring them to hire labourers to work their thirty-acre farm. Outside of physical injuries, their loss of a gun to the raiders led to the destruction of some of their crop by birds they were unable to scare away.<sup>497</sup> John Fleming's daughter, after seeing her father being told he was to be executed on three separate occasions in one night, suffered a breakdown and needed to

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<sup>493</sup> Ibid.

<sup>494</sup> *Irish Independent*, 20 June 1922.

<sup>495</sup> James Livingstone claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/21/4).

<sup>496</sup> Thomas Fleming claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/15/11).

<sup>497</sup> Thomas Johnston claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/169/6); Wilson Johnston claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/173/15). Similar cases include Edward Henderson (T.N.A.: CO 762/32/10).

undergo three years of therapy before she felt well again.<sup>498</sup> The Jackson family of Losset, claimed their mother, Sarah, never recovered after their house was attacked. Martha Jackson also claimed to have had such trouble with her eyes and nerves after the attack that she had been unable to serve as anything but a housekeeper since the raid. This required the family to spend their income hiring labourers to pick up her tasks.<sup>499</sup>

Less brutal attacks also had longer-term consequences. Robert Brady of Crossdoney, reported a raid on his house that stole his chequebook and warning him and his family to clear out. The shock of the attack caused his daughter to suffer ‘from nerves’ and led to her missing two years of schooling. Brady also estimated the cost of resettling his family, including the loss of a regular job as a land steward to Colonel Story, to be over £160 a year.<sup>500</sup>

In terms of consequential suffering, years after the attack, no form of revolutionary violence is as relevant as arson. The burning of a house carried with it the implied threat to clear out; the destruction of a home represented the ultimate uprooting of a person. Especially for those whose burning came after a threat to clear out was ignored – the attempt to resettle and the hardships that resulted were as much a part of the experience of arson as the fire. In cases like these community connections were especially important. George Cartwright of Bruce Hall’s home was burned on March 1922 and he was taken in by the Jacksons and for a time was supported by them. Martha Jackson had also run cross-country on the night of the initial raid to warn another neighbour, William Carleton.<sup>501</sup> At the time of his death at age 73 (in 1926) he was still residing in the area at Losset Post Office near Dromrockedy. From 2 May 1922 to 4 May 1924 he was unable to use of his land, and so lost the rents due to him as well as most of his furniture and other possessions in the fire.<sup>502</sup> His stock was also driven off, and he could not return them to their lands on pain of death. He had to sell them for half their value and survived on that

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<sup>498</sup> John Fleming claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/164/14).

<sup>499</sup> Martha Jackson (T.N.A.: CO 762/175/11). Matthew McKeever (T.N.A.: CO 762/6/7) also claimed that the stress of being targeted and raided adversely affected his wife's health and held it as the primary reason for her death.

<sup>500</sup> Robert Brady case (P.R.O.N.I., S.I.L.R.A. files, D989/B/2/11).

<sup>501</sup> George Cartwright claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/175/11).

<sup>502</sup> William Carleton claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/60/5).



money for the rest of his life. After his death the I.G.C. awarded his wife Mary £1,550 in compensation.<sup>503</sup>

Other aspects of raiding behaviours included the exposure of the victim to the full cold of the night. Andrew Murphy was forced to undress outdoors by his raiders while William Murphy of Carrickdooley had to march in his nightshirt for fifteen kilometres before being released. The discharging of firearms close to the face of the target of intimidation was also common. This happened to James Johnstone who in the course of an arms raid in Drumliff had guns fired directly above him in an attempt to cow him.<sup>504</sup>

As with boycotting, raids were rarely employed on their own and formed part of a general revolutionary response whose components varied from case to case. Christopher Brennan of Arva experienced a campaign of smashed windows and public boycott before being told to leave Arva in November 1924.<sup>505</sup> Robert Graham, also of Arva, suffered boycott, announced by and accompanied with, a series of threatening letters telling him to clear out.<sup>506</sup> The Jackson family of Losset had seen their own night-time raid presaged by a downturn in business at fairs and markets, and smaller raids to the house which were repelled.<sup>507</sup> George Hill only came around to the idea of a boycott being perpetrated against him after his shop was twice raided by men he identified as 'Irregulars'.<sup>508</sup> Lt Col. John Madden of Clones, had his series of raids complemented by threatening letters left for himself and his servants and robberies of his employees on the road.<sup>509</sup>

Intimidation and threat as a feature of raiding is both important and deceptively complex. As we shall see with arson later, the relationship between threat and action, between intimidation and punishment is not necessarily one to one. A threat was not just an unrealised action but an action with its own purpose. Threats of raiding did not exist in isolation but were issued and understood in the broader context of revolutionary

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<sup>503</sup> Conversion rate obtained from the National Archives' conversion calculator at <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/currency> ; modern currency was kept in British Pounds to avoid issues with exchange rate fluctuations.

<sup>504</sup> William Murphy claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/65/11); *Impartial Reporter*, 17 January 1920.

<sup>505</sup> Christopher Brennan claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/184/5).

<sup>506</sup> Robert Graham claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/164/11).

<sup>507</sup> Martha Jackson claim, George Jackson claim, William Jackson claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/175/11 – 3); We may also note here the similarity between the case of Kate Browne from the boycotting section and the case of the Jacksons. In both cases the revolutionary action was preceded by a decline in economic fortunes – a growing unacceptability expressed commercially.

<sup>508</sup> George Hill claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/156/3).

<sup>509</sup> Lt-Col. John CW Madden claim (N.A.I.: FIN/COMP/2/18/60).

violence elsewhere. So even smaller, non-verbal actions like a raider standing conspicuously with a gun took on much more meaning.<sup>510</sup> By looking at the role of raiding as intimidation and of threats of raiding, we can see a much wider and subtler raiding culture that is not initially reflected in the sources.

The raid was used to undermine a victim's sense of security in their neighbourhood and to assert the power of the raiders as an active force in local life. Robert Graham was raided for the second time in early January 1922, following the signing of the Anglo-Irish treaty on 6 December 1921. He was taken into the yard with his brother Henry as the raiders searched the house for weapons. While outside, he challenged the men by asking 'didn't you already search us for arms?'. To which he was given the reply 'yes, but now that the Treaty has been signed you Orangemen thought you were safe, but we'll show you now, you'll suffer for your supporting that rotten English Government'.<sup>511</sup>

The excuses for a raid designed to intimidate were not terribly elaborate. Christopher Brennan reported a raid in August 1921 which seized the regimental journal of the Loyal North Lancashire Regiment, a relic from his brother-in-law in Poonah, India, before declaring: 'this ... confirms the reports we got and shows he is favourable to the British enemy – we shall let him live by them'.<sup>512</sup>

Of relevance when discussing the raid as a threat is arson. When examining arson, Gemma Clark has written, the actual act of burning is only one part of its impact on a community. It is important to view the threat of arson as an instrument of social manipulation. With burning believed to be an ever-present threat in those unsettled times, it was understood by all sides as an effective tool of coercion and formed part of the accepted vocabulary of intimidation and violence aimed against those unacceptable elements in the community.<sup>513</sup>

These threats were used on two levels. They were firstly used as part of a generic threat of violence against the victim, being used alongside other vague threats of assault or shooting. These played into commonly understood tropes of revolutionary violence. The acts which were threatened were chosen because they were known to have happened

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<sup>510</sup> For example, see raid on house of Mary Boylan of Kilnaleck: *Irish Post and Weekly Telegraph*, 27 March 1920.

<sup>511</sup> Robert Graham claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/164/11).

<sup>512</sup> Christopher Brennan claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/184/5).

<sup>513</sup> Clark, *Everyday Violence* pp. 55 – 6.

elsewhere in the country during the war and so seemed more plausible. The second form of threat of arson was more performative. It involved the same play-acting of raids when victims were told they are being marched out into a field to be shot only to then be let go. In these incidents, raiders arrived at a house equipped with petrol and torches and appeared ready to burn down the house of the victim. At the last minute the victim was granted a reprieve and an opportunity to comply with the demands of the raiders.

The compensation application of Thomas Johnston, a 35-year-old Arva farmer, demonstrates both of these elements. Johnston owned a farm in the townland of Corlespratten, four kilometres out from the town. He was never directly boycotted but did experience some of the harassment associated with the campaign. As with many in the area, his friendship with British forces brought him to the attention of the republican community. As Johnston himself said ‘I was frequently threatened with burning out and became very unpopular among the locals’.<sup>514</sup> The intimidation Johnston specifically recorded in his application to the I.G.C. were threats of arson with no other forms of violence suggested as his final punishment. This is odd, as most claims attempt to tie their initial intimidation (which served as evidence of their loyalism) to whatever loss they later suffered and, ultimately, Johnston was not burned out. This was not, however, because the threats never came to anything. On 9 July 1922, he was raided one of the raiders put him against a wall and told him he would be shot. He was instead struck on the head with a rifle leaving a major wound which left him bedridden for a year.<sup>515</sup>

Threats of fire did not necessarily imply that any follow up raid would actually involve arson. John Scott, another Arva farmer previously seen as being one of the foci of the Arva boycott, noted that the threats he received before and during his boycott related almost entirely to house burning. Scott would have been a prime target for such a burning with a moderate-sized farm of 100 acres and five houses in the village of Arva itself. However, he openly defied these threats. He publicly handed them over to R.I.C. Sergeant Hanks and continued supplying Crown Forces until they retreated. These actions never brought more punishment than him becoming a target of a boycott.<sup>516</sup>

The performative element of the raid as threat should be emphasised here. In house raids the false execution was a common and traumatic tool employed to get across the

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<sup>514</sup> Thomas Johnston claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/169/6).

<sup>515</sup> Thomas Johnston claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/169/6).

<sup>516</sup> John Scott claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/175/17).

raiders' objectives without shedding blood. John Fleming of Aghamaker, Castleblayney, during a raid in September 1921, was dragged outside in his nightclothes and told to make a will and bid his family goodbye. Men stood either side of him aiming rifles at his chest before one of them blindfolded him. After a time, he was told he could return to his house, but was taken out twice again before the raid was over.<sup>517</sup> John Markey, a farmer, was also pulled out of his house in Lisduff, Co. Cavan by five armed men and told to say his prayers and prepare to be shot. Like Fleming, it was only after several hours that he was told his life would be spared and to quit the country.<sup>518</sup> In another case a man named McCaul, who had previously shot dead a raider defending his home, was kidnapped, blindfolded and driven around for several hours before being dropped off at a random location.<sup>519</sup>

The raid against the Protestants of Gorteen in March 1922 examined earlier also demonstrates how elaborate the more performative type of burning could be. One of the families raided, the Jacksons, were neither threatened with burning nor told to clear out of the district. This is odd when we consider that it is only the Jacksons who appear to have had longer-term troubles with republicans in the area, having been boycotted and harassed since providing shelter and refreshments to an R.I.C. patrol after an I.R.A. ambush in 1921.<sup>520</sup> The Jacksons were all assaulted on the night of the raid but no threat was made against their home, despite it being easily the largest, recorded as a 1<sup>st</sup> class dwelling in the 1911 census.<sup>521</sup> The Cartwrights and Carleton meanwhile lived in 2<sup>nd</sup> class houses.<sup>522</sup>

The raiders who pulled Carleton out of bed carried with them cans of petrol which they sprayed on the house, saying they were going to burn it down. It was only after several minutes had passed that Carleton was told he had eight days to clear the area or he would be burned out. They acted out the same charade with Cartwright, but with more gusto, shooting through the windows and placing Mrs Cartwright in an outhouse before declaring they were going to burn the house down and dousing it with petrol. Cartwright

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<sup>517</sup> John Fleming claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/164/14).

<sup>518</sup> John Markey claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/9/1).

<sup>519</sup> Account of Harry Martin (Monaghan County Museum, Marron Papers).

<sup>520</sup> Martha Jackson claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/175/11).

<sup>521</sup> Present in Gorteen, Bruce Hall, National Archives of Ireland, *Census of Ireland 1901/1911* (<http://www.census.nationalarchives.ie> : accessed 18 July 2018).

<sup>522</sup> Present in Gorteen, Bruce Hall, National Archives of Ireland, *Census of Ireland 1901/1911* (<http://www.census.nationalarchives.ie> : accessed 18 July 2018).

was given roughly the same amount of time to leave the district. He reported it merely as a fortnight, but then notes the raiders returned to burn the house down on the night of 12/13 – the same eight days Carleton received. The fire was lit while Cartwright and his wife were asleep in the house, and they barely woke up in time to escape. He and his wife escaped while being shot at. It is not clear here if the intention was to kill Cartwright and he made no assertion that it was. However, he continued to live in the district until he died and there is no further report of an attack being made against him.<sup>523</sup>

Although the aim may not be to kill the occupants of the house, we again see a degree of apathy or recklessness in committing the act. In Cormeen, Co. Monaghan Mary Anne Martin reported to the Free State Government that the roof of her house and shop had been set on fire at half one in the morning while she and her child were asleep.<sup>524</sup> This case was more serious as the life of a child was placed in danger and there was some taboo on physically endangering the life of a child.<sup>525</sup> Importantly, it was only the roof of a stone house that was set alight so the threat was not as severe as the dousing of an entire house in petrol and lighting it ablaze.<sup>526</sup>

The degree of harassment this was intended to cause varied from case to case ranging from the intensely personal to the public and symbolic. The burning of crops and outbuildings not only represented a simple means of destroying them but doubled as effective and attention-grabbing intimidation. William Graham had his Legacurry mill set on fire while he sat only a hundred yards away having dinner with his assistants.<sup>527</sup> John Urey reported a large crowd of armed men gathering exclusively to burn his turf as a punishment.<sup>528</sup> Arson in this form was not the act of furtive individuals under the cover of night.

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<sup>523</sup> George W Cartwright (T.N.A.: CO 762/60/5); See also the case of James Magee of Arva (T.N.A.: CO 762/173/16). On 9 June 1922 he was raided and told to leave the country. Magee was raided by between 40 and 100 'banditts [sic]' and was taken outside while being told his house was to be burned down with his neighbour as a witness. Magee had, like Cartwright, been given a warning with a specified period of time before his burning. In Magee's case this was three months and turned out to actually be another case where the actual burning never came.

<sup>524</sup> Mary Anne Martin claim (N.A.I.: FIN/COMP/2/18/267).

<sup>525</sup> This is seen in the case of James Livingstone (T.N.A.: CO 762/21/4) where a raid was broken up after a stray shot accidentally killed his daughter. However, non-violent abuse of children, such as intimidation and name-calling during a boycott, suffered no such prohibition.

<sup>526</sup> See also James Clarke claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/105/5).

<sup>527</sup> William Graham claim (N.A.I.: FIN/COMP/2/18/40).

<sup>528</sup> John Urey claim (N.A.I.: FIN/COMP/2/18/179).

These acts could also reach a far greater number of people than raids on individual farms. Between them, the burning of two Legacurry mills in 1922, William Steen's on 18 February and William Graham's on 21 March, resulted in twelve separate claims for compensation against the Free State.<sup>529</sup> As the primary crop grown in Monaghan was flax, these centres of processing presented logical targets.

Threats of burning and the burning itself were primarily used to force their victims to clear out and had long term consequences. For many the effort to clear out led to an exile of a few years and a return to an untended and over-run farm. William Storey was raided on 4 April 1921 and threatened with death if he returned to his farm at Drumroe. Unable to return to his farm, he spent the years he was dispossessed still in the area, applying to the I.G.C. through Ardra Post Office in the adjoining townland.<sup>530</sup> Robert Fleming was compelled to reside in Enniskillen as a labourer for 'a considerable time ... and was later reinstated in the lands by the Garda officers of the Saorstát Government.'<sup>531</sup>

For Protestants, the border offered a chance to escape. Numerous I.G.C. applications came from those who had resettled in the North. James Gordon attempted to remain in Cordevlis when his land started being raided in July 1921, but by May 1923, he was too scared to remain in the district and sold the farm to move North.<sup>532</sup> Samuel Woods' son, knowing that the I.R.A. were searching for him in the South, escaped to the North and gained employment as a B Special.<sup>533</sup> Robert Parks saved an R.I.C. patrol from an ambush and was threatened with death. He also fled to the North and served in the Special Constabulary until he was disbanded a year later. Parks and many others were welcomed and accommodated in Northern Ireland. Parks' poor service in the Specials was overlooked on four occasions due to his circumstances.<sup>534</sup>

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<sup>529</sup> Cases affected include William Graham (N.A.I.: FIN/COMP/2/18/40); William Steen (N.A.I.: FIN/COMP/2/18/220); Richard Pepper (N.A.I.: FIN/COMP/2/18/138); Bernard Duffy (N.A.I.: FIN/COMP/2/18/136); Michael McEntee (N.A.I.: FIN/COMP/2/18/132); Patrick Markey (N.A.I.: FIN/COMP/2/18/148); Thomas McCabe (N.A.I.: FIN/COMP/2/18/150); James McGuirk (N.A.I.: FIN/COMP/2/18/151); James McArdle (N.A.I.: FIN/COMP/2/18/128); Mary Lennon (N.A.I.: FIN/COMP/2/18/133); Arthur McAdams (N.A.I.: FIN/COMP/2/18/136); Mary and James Kearns (N.A.I.: FIN/COMP/2/18/146); William Stewart (N.A.I.: FIN/COMP/2/18/131); Patrick Flanagan (N.A.I.: FIN/COMP/2/18/278).

<sup>530</sup> William Storey claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/78/6).

<sup>531</sup> Thomas Fleming claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/15/11); Robert Fleming claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/15/13).

<sup>532</sup> James Gordon claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/177/7).

<sup>533</sup> Samuel Woods claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/137/10).

<sup>534</sup> Petition from Robert Parks (P.R.O.N.I., Home Office files, HA/5/1044).

The idea of a Protestant-dominated state offered many Protestants a security they lacked. Groups like the Ulster Relief Association made concerted efforts to portray Ulster as a 'refuge' against the chaos of the south.<sup>535</sup> James Clarke, a Methodist and a blacksmith, was driven out of Ballybay in Monaghan after his house was destroyed on 28 April 1921 at the end of a campaign of threats and intimidation. Clarke had been sleeping in his house at the time of the fire and was sufficiently scared that he moved his business to Killyman Street in Moy, Co. Tyrone. At the time of application in 1926 he still lived there and claimed to be too intimidated to return.<sup>536</sup> In his statement to the Boundary Commission, Drummully-native Louis de Montfort, vehemently opposed the return of any portion of Fermanagh to the Free State citing his own harassment living in Monaghan and the peace and prosperity that instead prevailed in Fermanagh claiming 'I would dare not return to the Free State at all'.<sup>537</sup> Others, like Matthew McKeever who left his wife and children behind to move to London, felt that clearing out was the only way they could find work in a community that was hostile to them.<sup>538</sup>

Leaving was not without its own problems in such an unsettled country. People under threat did not have the luxury of planning their move or waiting for the most opportune time to leave. The economic cost of starting a new life elsewhere was significant. John Markey, who had been something of an itinerant since his house in Ballyhaise was raided, was warned three times by the I.R.A. to quit the country or be shot. In his application, Markey stated that the cost of his emigration left him unable to buy a car and earn a living (having previously been a driver).<sup>539</sup> Maxwell Boyle had left the country the week before a raid on his house (20 February 1922) to move into his new home in Katesbridge, Co. Down. He had left most of his possessions behind to follow him by van but on the same night the house was broken into and his possessions stolen.<sup>540</sup>

Travers Blackley, a land agent for Lord Farnham, was informed by the police that his remaining in Ireland would be unsafe after a raid on his home in Drumbar. Blackley

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<sup>535</sup> Ulster Loyalist Relief Fund Files (P.R.O.N.I., PM/6/2).

<sup>536</sup> James Clarke claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/105/5); Clarke claimed this campaign was born from his providing medical aid to the Black and Tans after an ambush and taking in one of their wounded as a lodger while I.R.A. accounts suggest it was because of his responsibility in attacking the local curate's house.

<sup>537</sup> Louis de Montfort Statement, Fermanagh County Council Evidence (T.N.A., Boundary Commission Files, CAB 61/64).

<sup>538</sup> Matthew McKeever claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/6/7).

<sup>539</sup> John Markey claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/9/1).

<sup>540</sup> Maxwell J. Boyle claim (N.A.I.: FIN/COMP/2/18/76).

was forced to sell half his possessions at knock-down prices while attempting to transport the remainder to England. Blackley escaped Ireland but his remaining possessions were stolen in Cavan railway station en route to Belfast. Even after the war Blackley was reluctant to return. He had served as a county undersheriff before his expulsion and had continued to receive this salary even while in England (albeit at half rate). After fifteen months of exile he was informed that the Free State would only continue to pay him if he returned to work as it was now safe to do so. Blackley refused to believe them and forfeited his payment.<sup>541</sup> In light of these difficulties many chose to live with what family they already had in Northern Ireland, normally in Fermanagh and not necessarily far away. Samuel Martin moved from Clones to Roslea – a distance of roughly five miles.<sup>542</sup>

Other families tried particularly hard to return to their home. The Leslies of Rockcorry engaged in protracted negotiations with the Compensation (Personal Injuries) Committee over the rebuilding of their home. In their compensation application to the Irish Ministry of Finance, their solicitor William Martin described the family as having been left: ‘without either a home or a stick of furniture or even wearing apparel’. The losses suffered extended to most of their property in the house. The Free State government awarded Leslie's wife and daughters a total of £407 just to cover their possessions. Leslie himself claimed a loss of £6,000 on the property and was awarded £1,802 (£1,200 in cash and an additional £600 in stock). Leslie had also been a collector of antique furniture for which he was unable to secure remuneration due to his inability to provide a complete schedule of what he owned.<sup>543</sup>

The compensation claim had initially been processed on the assumption that the Leslies did not wish to return to the area but when this idea was brought up in court it was strongly rebuked. The Leslies asserted in no uncertain terms that they intended to rebuild their home and return to Rockcorry.

Sean Ó Lúideáin, the secretary to the Minister of Finance and the civil servant in charge of the case, was unwilling to fund the rebuilding of the entire house due to the prohibitive cost and the limited value the building would add to the area. Instead he proposed a number of alternate solutions that the Leslies could choose from; primarily rebuilding the premises as a suitable agent's house and as estate offices or paying the

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<sup>541</sup> Travers Blackley claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/37/6); Travers Blackley claim (N.A.I.: FIN/1/1036).

<sup>542</sup> Samuel Martin correspondence (P.R.O.N.I., Files of Department of Prime Minister, PM/2/13/105).

<sup>543</sup> George William Finch claim (N.A.I.: FIN/COMP/2/18/63).



Leslies the balance of compensation in cash. Of these the Leslies pushed strongly for the rebuilding of the agent's house to allow them to return home, a decree which was finally granted by the judge in January 1925.<sup>544</sup>

These cases should remind us not only of the varieties of revolutionary action that existed but also the variety of ways they could affect their victims in the years following. This section should serve as a reminder of the brutality and human cost of many acts of violence which will be described in more sterile terms later on. It should remind also of the chaotic nature of such violence, the end result of a raid was not always intended and similarly the difference between a raid that did and did not happen was often very small.

### Who was targeted and why?

If raiding was such a crucial element of the revolutionary experience, then what triggered 'raids' and were the Protestant-Unionist community more likely to suffer from them than others? This section of the chapter examines the primary reasons behind raids and through doing so shall examine whether any of those reasons could be characterised as specifically or disproportionately targeting Protestants. We shall also investigate whether these different types of raids manifested differently for Protestants. There is a mismatch here between sources. Protestant compensation claims emphasised a simpler identity-based targeting system while republican witness statements and official documents dealt more with strategic concerns and so we must take a critical eye to any such division.

When examining raiding we can identify a few key triggers: association with British rule (including aiding and abetting British forces), possessing arms desired by the I.R.A., and agrarianism. Of these the first two are the most important and the two which can be best characterised as disproportionately affecting Protestants.

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<sup>544</sup> Elizabeth J.R. Leslie claim (N.A.I.: FIN/COMP/2/18/45); Nancy Leslie claim (N.A.I.: FIN/COMP/2/18/46); Margaret Leslie claim (N.A.I.: FIN/COMP/2/18/47); George William Finch claim (N.A.I.: FIN/COMP/2/18/63).

The reasons behind raiding can be complicated with even the same raid being interpreted differently by those involved. This was demonstrated clearly in a case we have already examined: the raid on the Jacksons of Losset and their neighbours. The Jacksons identified the cause of their attack as their association with Crown forces in the district. Martha traced their trouble back to an attack on Crown forces in mid-1921 in which a republican was seriously injured and after which she took in the R.I.C. patrol and fed them. Certainly, this association marked out the family for the I.R.A. as during the raid in April 1922, both George and Martha stated they were accused of having passed on information to the British forces about the whereabouts of prominent republicans, which they denied.<sup>545</sup> William Jackson places less emphasis on the accusations of informing than his brother and sister and instead emphasises how he (as eldest brother and owner of the farm) had supplied the Crown Forces. The two brothers also emphasised that this raid was simply the most severe, and that due to their association with British rule they had also suffered through several smaller raids.<sup>546</sup>

This is a useful case when talking about the reasons behind the targeting of Protestants as it emphasises the overlap of identities (Protestant, Unionist) and actions (aiding British forces, informing). We cannot assume only one cause for each raid or to tie a raid to an immediate cause when that cause was motivated by so many interrelated identities behind it. This is why we talk about triggers. When we look for causes behind these actions, we are looking for partial motivations not complete ones.

*Protestant as Enemy: Association with British rule and Protestant identity as a trigger for raids and violence*

In the most obvious of cases a raid came as a response or reprisal for some direct act of violence or defiance committed against the raiders. These responses also yielded the most vicious responses. As we shall see later in the chapter when we discuss Protestant resistance to raiders, Cavan and Monaghan Protestants, by virtue of their greater numbers, were in a unique position to fight back against the I.R.A. and

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<sup>545</sup> Martha Jackson claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/175/11); George Jackson (T.N.A.: CO 762/175/12).

<sup>546</sup> William Jackson (T.N.A.: CO 762/175/12).

consequently predisposed to be targeted this way. One of the reasons the Flemings were shot was their own shooting of a man named McKenna while defending their home. Hugh Duffy, a ‘non-Catholic’ of Rockcorry was also shot in 1921.<sup>547</sup> This was supposedly as he had fired on a Flying Column passing through the district.<sup>548</sup> He was specifically targeted. Duffy had been drawn out of his home by the sending of a bogus telegram which he, as an auxiliary postman, would have had to deliver.<sup>549</sup>

Duffy’s case bears looking at further. As we shall see later, in most cases of Protestant resistance those who resisted were not hurt afterwards. In the Duffy case, he was one of the very few individuals ever named as being part of a group firing on I.R.A. companies. In most cases they remained stubbornly anonymous and there were few mentions of any specific retribution being sought against them. Nor was Duffy’s case unusual in any other way. Dawsongrove D.E.D. (which contains Rockcorry) was largely Protestant in common with other areas in which I.R.A. patrols were fired upon.<sup>550</sup> As a prominent Unionist, it is likely that he was simply unlucky to be easily identifiable. Another prominent Unionist, Clarke of Ballybay, had his house burned on the assumption that he was the leader of the attack on the parochial house in the town.<sup>551</sup> Duffy had been a soldier in the Boer and Zulu wars and this set him apart in the local community as an active and aggressive Unionist.<sup>552</sup>

Rockcorry was, however, a particularly contentious area due to the level of organisation of local Unionism. John McGahey, a local I.R.A. man, reported having been held up a number of times by ‘B Specials’ in the area in 1920.<sup>553</sup> McGahey also reported a systematic process of retaliatory hold ups and raids specifically inspired by the Unionist character of the area:

In mixed districts with a ‘B’ Special [sic] organisation the presence of I.R.A. men stopping people in broad daylight had a disconcerting and a demoralising

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<sup>547</sup> Statement for 4th Battalion information supplied by Johnny McGahey, Owen McGahey, Paddy Treanor, Joe Duffy, Mick McCabe, Tommy Sherry (Monaghan County Museum, Marron Papers).

<sup>548</sup> B.M.H. Ws. 518 (James Sullivan).

<sup>549</sup> House of Commons Debates, 5th series, vol. 140, 14 April 1921, col. 1265.

<sup>550</sup> Dawsongrove is 64% Non-Catholic in the 1911 census (non-rounded).

<sup>551</sup> Statement for 4th Battalion information supplied by Johnny McGahey, Owen McGahey, Paddy Treanor, Joe Duffy, Mick McCabe, Tommy Sherry (Monaghan County Museum, Marron Papers).

<sup>552</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 2 June 1921.

<sup>553</sup> B.M.H. Ws. 740 (John McGahey).

effect on the local ‘B’ men, and it kept the Nationalist population in such areas who were not republican from taking any chances to fraternise or curry favour from local Unionists.<sup>554</sup>

A Northern Division circular from July 1921 reinforced this idea referring to the need to meet enemy activity with increased activity on their own part as part of a ‘taming process’. The circular noted that failure to act in this way was giving encouragement to the same enemies.<sup>555</sup> This idea is important as it demonstrates a key complication we must be aware of when examining these incidents – that a person could be targeted simultaneously as an individual, and as a representative of their community.

While McDowell asserted that in most of these cases Protestants were ‘singled out for harassment because religion was the easiest way of identifying a person’s politics’, this is overly simplistic and there were few cases where religion was on its own sufficient to draw enough suspicion to merit a raid.<sup>556</sup> In addition to this passive identity there were a range of oppositional acts which could draw suspicion on an individual. Brian Hughes has identified that not paying an I.R.A. levy, for example, drew attention upon an individual but this would only erupt into violence ‘amid the right (or wrong) circumstances’.<sup>557</sup>

Opposition normally existed in much milder forms. As we have seen with boycotting the existence of a social association with the R.I.C. was enough to spark suspicions.<sup>558</sup> Additionally, the Protestant community was viewed with suspicion as having a ‘duty to assist the R.I.C. when they could safely do so’.<sup>559</sup> Duncan Scarlett recalled that his father, who had been involved in the Clones Army band, was assumed to be informing by virtue of these visits to the barracks for rehearsals. Were it not for the presence of a Catholic friend at a meeting where his name was put forward as a ‘Protestant’ to be suspicious of, he would have been ‘dealt with’.<sup>560</sup>

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<sup>554</sup> B.M.H. Ws. 740 (John McGahey).

<sup>555</sup> 5th Northern Division Memorandum Cir. No. 1. 08 July 1921 (Monaghan County Museum, Brennan Papers, 2016.190.21).

<sup>556</sup> McDowell, *Crisis and Decline*, p. 129.

<sup>557</sup> Hughes, *Defying the IRA*, p. 119.

<sup>558</sup> Statement of Joseph McKenna (Monaghan County Museum, Marron Papers).

<sup>559</sup> B.M.H. Ws. 654 (Francis O’Duffy).

<sup>560</sup> Interview of Duncan Scarlett by Daniel Purcell on 25 November 2016.

The Protestant and loyalist communities were closely associated with the forces of the British government. In Carrickmacross in May 1921, proclamations were posted by the Black and Tans challenging the Carrickmacross Brigade to an open fight. The proclamation had been prompted by the mailing of threats to Protestant women and children in the district.<sup>561</sup> The I.R.A. even used this to their advantage. In Lisdoonan the flax of a family named Monaghan was burned on the understanding that the Monaghans would report the attack to the Black and Tans and draw them unwittingly into an ambush.<sup>562</sup> Following the general raid for arms in August 1920 Ballybay and Cootehill Unionists flooded into the towns seeking police protection.<sup>563</sup>

To demonstrate the variety of actions that qualified as aid to British government forces we need look no further than the justifications provided to the Irish Grants Committee. Almost identical causes of victimisation to the Jacksons exist in the case of Christopher Brennan of Arva who was boycotted and raided repeatedly after giving two R.I.C. officers under attack refuge in his house until reinforcements arrived.<sup>564</sup> John Fleming's daughter had informed the R.I.C. after the local landlord was kidnapped.<sup>565</sup> Patrick Duffy of Kingscourt framed his his friendship with local R.I.C. officers as bringing him into the displeasure of the I.R.A.<sup>566</sup> In correspondence with S.I.L.R.A., William Condron simply said 'I am a British ex-soldier.'<sup>567</sup>

We should be suspicious of these self-reported reasons when a successful application to the Committee required proof of the applicant's loyalty. James Clarke, who was previously mentioned as being burned out of Ballybay for firing into the curate's house, said in his claim form that the reason for his expulsion was allowing a member of the Black and Tans to convalesce in his home.<sup>568</sup> This is not to suggest Clarke was lying, rather choosing to omit some of the story, or perhaps telling only that part of the story he knew. His own version of events regarding the firing at the parochial house was that the weapon in question was merely being fired as a test to make sure it worked.<sup>569</sup> Clarke

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<sup>561</sup> B.M.H. Ws. 530 (P.V. Hoey).

<sup>562</sup> Account of Tom Carragher (Monaghan County Museum, Marron Papers).

<sup>563</sup> B.M.H. Ws. 740 (John McGahey).

<sup>564</sup> Christopher Brennan claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/184/5).

<sup>565</sup> John Fleming claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/164/14).

<sup>566</sup> Patrick Duffy claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/34/1).

<sup>567</sup> William Condron case (P.R.O.N.I, S.I.L.R.A. files, D989/B/2/11).

<sup>568</sup> James Clarke claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/105/5).

<sup>569</sup> House of Commons Debates, 5th series, vol. 140, 7 April 1921, col. 419 - 02.

was expelled from Ballybay because of his assumed guilt as a prominent and aggressive Unionist, as opposed to concrete evidence. Allowing a member of the Black and Tans into his home would have marked him as such a Unionist and therefore draw suspicion on him to begin with. To choose one reason over another is misguided.

The accusation of spying and informing has become a particularly salient one in recent historiography.<sup>570</sup> Those targeted for raiding or execution by virtue of their collaboration with government forces were more active in and culpable for their misfortune than those targeted for less egregious offences. The label of spy is a difficult to prove despite the efforts of the I.R.A. to put on a trial and conviction.<sup>571</sup> Hugh Duffy was found with a note warning against ‘spies and informers’ despite the fact that no republican sources refer to this being the reason for his execution.<sup>572</sup>

It was both an ad-hoc justification to a raid based on more complex causes and the crystallisation of unspoken, communal suspicions of hostile out-groups. We have already seen this with the Jacksons who were accused of spying despite their denials. Michael Culley who was raided and dispossessed of his land from late 1921 to early 1923 had, on 27 September 1920, been arrested as a spy and imprisoned for two days before escaping. The cause of his arrest, however, was held to be his attempts to get help for the Arva barracks which, at the time, had been set on fire.<sup>573</sup>

That the Protestant population should have been suspected of being informers is unsurprising. The logic for local I.R.A. groups was clear – these were individuals opposed to the goals of Irish republicanism and sympathetic to the targets of I.R.A. activity. William Latimer, near the Cavan-Leitrim border, was killed because he had warned the R.I.C. of an imminent I.R.A. ambush.<sup>574</sup> In most areas, this community was assumed to be hostile and passing on information.<sup>575</sup>

In many cases the I.R.A. reached an unspoken accommodation with those they suspected of being likely to inform. It was easier to pre-emptively prevent informing than

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<sup>570</sup> Anne Dolan, ‘Spies and informers beware ...’, in Diarmaid Ferriter and Susannah Riordan (eds.), *Years of Turbulence: the Irish Revolution and its Aftermath, in honour of Michael Laffan* (Dublin, 2015); Clark, *Everyday Violence* p. 173; Hart, *IRA at War*, p. 156; Murphy, *The Year of Disappearances*, p. xii.

<sup>571</sup> Irish Volunteers General Order 20. 20 April 1921 (Monaghan County Museum, Brennan Papers, 2016.190.7).

<sup>572</sup> House of Commons Debates, 5th series, vol. 140, 14 April 1921, col. 1265 – 6.

<sup>573</sup> Michael Culley claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/171/12).

<sup>574</sup> Isabella Latimer case (P.R.O.N.I, S.I.L.R.A. files, D989/B/2/11).

<sup>575</sup> Statement of Peter Woods (Monaghan County Museum, Marron Papers).

to punish it later. When searching for a Dr Kenny to treat a wounded comrade, John McKenna was silenced by the doctor as he began explaining the case. He was quietly informed that a neighbour of his called Duffy was not a Catholic and not to speak so loudly around him. Later, when the time came to rescue the same comrade (Matt Fitzpatrick) from captivity a car was stolen from a man named McAllen and a guard placed on his house to prevent him informing.<sup>576</sup> The monthly reports of the I.R.A. brigades and battalions to Richard Mulcahy frequently refer to the issues with their position being given away by the local Protestant population; however they record no efforts to punish the community for doing so.<sup>577</sup>

However, informing remained a marginal position. It was a form of collaboration that was active and dangerous enough to fall outside of the halls of normal activity for Protestants no matter their political convictions. For the majority it was a risk not worth taking. While on the run Tom Carragher noted that even local Protestants knew where he was hiding but that he never had any fear of being informed on.<sup>578</sup> The Cavan District Inspector noted in June 1921 that ‘a very close watch is kept all over the County, on people who are known to be on friendly terms with the Police... the slightest suspicion is sufficient... to justify the murder of suspected persons.’<sup>579</sup> Duncan Scarlett recalled his father commenting on Clones between 1916 and 1923 that ‘the close and obvious watching of Protestants was why they kept their heads down and tongues very guarded’.<sup>580</sup>

Most republican accounts of the Revolution in Cavan and Monaghan focus on the murders of informers who were Catholic and these form the bulk of such instances in the county. This makes sense as the most prominent cases are those of individuals like Larmour of Rockcorry company (first name omitted in all sources) who were in the I.R.A. and divulged information after capture. In Larmour’s case he handed himself in intentionally and confessed what he had done, refusing the option of leaving for America

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<sup>576</sup> John McKenna Interview (C.O.F.L.A, O’Kane Collection, LOK IV\_A\_77 -01).

<sup>577</sup> Monthly Report of Monaghan Brigade, February 1921 (U.C.D.A., Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/39).

<sup>578</sup> Account of Tom Carragher (Monaghan County Museum, Marron Papers).

<sup>579</sup> County Inspector’s Returns Cavan, June 1921 (T.N.A.: CO 904/115).

<sup>580</sup> Interview of Duncan Scarlett by Daniel Purcell on 25 November 2016.

instead.<sup>581</sup> Despite reluctance on the part of his executioners due to his youth and honesty, Larmour was still shot along with another alleged Catholic informer named McPhilips.<sup>582</sup>

To be targeted on the basis of an opposition to mainstream republicanism was not uniquely Protestant. Catholics too, as members of the A.O.H., represented legitimate targets as far as the I.R.A. was concerned. Arthur Treanor, a local Hibernian leader, was executed as an informer in Monaghan.<sup>583</sup> We shall examine Treanor and the Hibernians in greater details later in this chapter. Here we can note that he was a particularly loud and prominent opponent of Sinn Féin and the I.R.A. from among the Catholic element of the county.<sup>584</sup> Treanor was shot on the road on his way home from a fair in Shercock. He was with his Protestant neighbours while he was shot.<sup>585</sup> Seamus McPhilips notes only three Hibernians in total being killed in Monaghan in the same period.<sup>586</sup>

At least five Cavan and Monaghan Protestants were shot for informing. Unfortunately, in most cases the sources are republican and are short on details. Accounts of raids were heavily focused on informers yet rarely give insight into what that implied. They included Wallace, a train ticket collector shot in Lattone for ‘doing enemy work’.<sup>587</sup> Henry Carr of Tullycorbett who was discovered informing after a mail raid and who was warned several times but persisted.<sup>588</sup> Hugh Duffy, who had previously been seen shooting at I.R.A. patrols near Rockcorry, was also targeted for his passing on of information to the R.I.C. He successfully evaded capture as he was out on patrol with his neighbours at the time and escaped into the darkness of the night upon coming across the I.R.A.<sup>589</sup> Lattimer, a Protestant farmer over the Leitrim border, had given information that had led to the death of an I.R.A. man named Connolly at Selton Hill. Lattimer was

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<sup>581</sup> John McKenna Interview (C.O.F.L.A, O’Kane Collection, LOK IV\_A\_77 -01).

<sup>582</sup> B.M.H. Ws. 518 (James Sullivan); John McKenna also notes another man shot named McQuillan: John McKenna Interview (C.O.F.L.A, O’Kane Collection, LOK IV\_A\_77 -01); See also Account by Charlie Duffy (Monaghan County Museum, Marron Papers) for a similar case to Bessie Kavanagh.

<sup>583</sup> Mr. James McKenna Memoirs (Pre-Truce) (C.O.F.L.A, O’Kane Collection, LOK IV.D.04 0003 05 Ee.4.5).

<sup>584</sup> B.M.H. Ws. 654 (Francis O’Duffy).

<sup>585</sup> Francis McPhilips, ‘The Ancient Order of Hibernians in County Monaghan with particular reference to the parish of Aghabo’ (M.A. thesis, National University of Ireland, Maynooth, 1999), p. 112.

<sup>586</sup> McPhilips, ‘Hibernians in Monaghan’, p. 106.

<sup>587</sup> Statement of Johnny McKenna (Monaghan County Museum, Marron Papers).

<sup>588</sup> Statement for 4th Battalion information supplied by Johnny McGahey, Owen McGahey, Paddy Treanor, Joe Duffy, Mick McCabe, Tommy Sherry (Monaghan County Museum, Marron Papers).

<sup>589</sup> B.M.H. Ws. 740 (John McGahey).



raided after having barricaded himself up, resisted heavily and only gave himself up after grenades were thrown into the house. He was taken a distance from the house and shot.<sup>590</sup>

When he was executed Arthur Treanor was only home because his wife had been informed he had been reprieved, in an effort to draw him out of hiding.<sup>591</sup> These sorts of tactics would doom many Protestant informers, particularly as a common ploy was for the raiders to dress as R.I.C. officers to trick the target. This proved particularly problematic for Protestants for whom trust and cooperation with crown forces came more readily. Over the Cavan border in Cloone, Leitrim an informer was suspected somewhere in the population. With no evidence to go on suspicion fell instinctively on the Protestant population and the local I.R.A. group decided to 'test them out'. This involved approaching houses in an R.I.C. uniform and asking for information to see who would divulge any. Ultimately, they were directed to the house of a Protestant girl who in turn directed them to another Protestant house who referred them to another. All of these houses were willing to share information. All involved were ordered to be executed and were only saved by the Brigade O/C changing his mind. It was noted that many of those informers must have realised they had been tricked as they left the locality soon afterwards.<sup>592</sup>

This was also how Kitty Carroll, a spinster near Scotstown, was discovered. Although Carroll was a Catholic her case is instructive in how the I.R.A. identified and tried to draw out informers. A letter of hers to Sergeant Faulkner of Scotstown R.I.C. Barracks was discovered in which she named young men from the district she suspected of being in the I.R.A. She entertained two I.R.A. men dressed as R.I.C. officers happily repeating the information she had contained in the letter. Despite her age and gender, it was decided to execute her as a deterrent.<sup>593</sup> This would prove to be an error and the execution outraged public opinion to the degree that it was discussed in the House of Commons.<sup>594</sup>

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<sup>590</sup> B.M.H. Ws. 1195 (Patrick Doherty).

<sup>591</sup> Notebook on Arthur Treanor (Monaghan County Museum, Marron Papers).

<sup>592</sup> B.M.H. Ws. 1195 (Patrick Doherty); This technique was not specific to rooting out informers and was also used to trick victims of a raid into letting the raiders in without a fight. For an example see: B.M.H. Ws. 1516 (P.H. Doherty).

<sup>593</sup> Mr. James McKenna Memoirs (Pre-Truce) (C.O.F.L.A, O'Kane Collection, LOK IV.D.04 0003 05 Ee.4.5).

<sup>594</sup> House of Commons Debates, 5th series, vol. 140, 19 April 1921, col. 1692 – 3; In his speech to the House on her murder the Attorney General for Ireland Denis Henry intimated that Carroll had been informing on illegal distilling going on the district and not on revolutionary movements but this is

Kitty Carroll's execution was not a usual brutality and such an elderly target would normally have been left alone. It is a mistake to try and see any particular uniqueness to Carroll's own situation that brought this retribution upon her. Rather she was a victim of circumstance – of the need for an example at that particular moment. Two Knockatallon men, in the same area, were caught informing in the same period and were simply told to leave the country as they were both 'single and youngish.'<sup>595</sup>

The case of these unnamed men is also noteworthy as the men were not informing in Scotstown Barracks within four miles of their home, but rather were cycling to Lisnaskea Barracks sixteen miles away in Fermanagh. Much like the long chain of informers in Cloone these examples demonstrate that for those Protestants who did decide to inform there could be some caution behind their methods. Informing was dangerous, but it did not need to be reckless.

Thus far the instances of raiding we have looked at have had at their root some actual provocation on the part of the person being raided; however the very fact of a Unionist and Protestant identity could serve to mark out an individual as a potential spy, rather than any actual 'traitorous' activity. William Murphy was dragged from his house with his daughter, fired at and beaten before being warned against communicating any further information to British officers.<sup>596</sup> Similarly, his brother Andrew was raided several times for arms in the autumn of 1921 and was given three separate cautions against supplying information to the British Government.<sup>597</sup> However neither brother in their compensation claims to the British Government mention having actually supplied any such information. Both brothers were members of the local Orange Lodge and Ulster Volunteers and had prominently marched in the celebrations of August and July. Andrew was even Treasurer and Secretary of Loughmourne Orange Lodge (585). They represented a element perceived as hostile in the community and one it was worth scaring off becoming an informer. In Monaghan town a Protestant named Riddle was raided by men pretending to be Black and Tans who left after no evidence was found to incriminate him.<sup>598</sup>

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contradicted by other sources and is unlikely as her letters were read by the I.R.A. when they decided to risk the public opprobrium and execute her.

<sup>595</sup> James McKenna Memoirs (Pre-Truce) (C.O.F.L.A, O'Kane Collection, LOK IV.D.04 0003 05 Ee.4.5).

<sup>596</sup> William Murphy claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/65/11).

<sup>597</sup> Andrew Murphy claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/65/12).

<sup>598</sup> Statement of Patrick Woods (Monaghan County Museum, Marron Papers).

We have noted in the previous section, the efforts three-county Protestants had to go to in order to disassociate themselves from being connected to incidents like the Belfast riots. Regardless of their actual intentions, three-county Protestants who organised to defend themselves were strongly associated with other more well-known Unionist organisations. This can be seen by the use of pan-Ulster terms ‘Specials’ and ‘Ulster Volunteers’ to describe Unionist organisation in the three counties by the local I.R.A. The Corracrin and Coragha Company was later said to have been established ‘partly to defend Catholic Families from the attack of B Specials’.<sup>599</sup> While incursions of the Special Constabulary (from A to C class) into Monaghan were recorded, they were described as larger military operations and not the semi-informal sniping and raiding we have described above.<sup>600</sup>

Robert Fleming framed his own attack in passive political terms. Rather than any action of his which drew attention upon him he reported that the raiders had informed him they ‘did not want any supporters of the government in Corhelshanagh [sic]’.<sup>601</sup> Samuel Woods of Rockcorry equally provided no specific reason for his own attack in his compensation claim but suggested that being a prominent member of the U.V.F. could have incurred the wrath of his raiders.<sup>602</sup>

As with James Clarke, however, such explanations given should not be read as definitive single reasons but as forming part of a larger web of justifications. We have republican sources which tell us the Flemings were partially targeted for their killing of a raider while defending their home while Thomas Fleming’s claim implies the original motivation was a desire to force through a change in land ownership.<sup>603</sup> With Woods it is possible that he was targeted simply for this prominence, but that in turns beg the question of how such prominence was earned. Rockcorry was an area in which we know there was some degree of Protestant organisation and resistance, and a consequent push-

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<sup>599</sup> Statement of Paddy Mohan (Monaghan County Museum, Marron Papers).

<sup>600</sup> Monthly Report of Monaghan Brigade, May 1921 (U.C.D.A., Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/19).

<sup>601</sup> Robert Fleming claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/15/13); The phrase ‘supporters of the Government of the United Kingdom’ is reiterated in William John Murphy’s claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/15/14) to the I.G.C. He was the servant of the Flemings.

<sup>602</sup> Samuel Woods claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/137/10).

<sup>603</sup> Statement for 4th Battalion information supplied by Johnny McGahey, Owen McGahey, Paddy Treanor, Joe Duffy, Mick McCabe, Tommy Sherry (Monaghan County Museum, Marron Papers); Thomas Fleming claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/15/11).

back by the I.R.A. to cow it. If Woods was as prominent as he made out it is certainly possible that he was a member of this resistance.

The relative passivity of a position varied between communities. Travers Blackley was targeted in his own estimation because of his roles as a prominent Orangeman, his position as sub-sheriff for County Cavan and his job as Lord Farnham's land agent.<sup>604</sup> While these were in his mind reasonably passive, natural parts of being a prominent Protestant and Unionist, to the raiders these would have marked him as an collaborator in both British government and landlordism, as well as a potential threat due to his Orangeism. Thomas Meikle's holding of a commission of the peace was taken to be the reason he was raided in Crossdoney in May 1922.<sup>605</sup> In July 1920 the District Inspector for Cavan noted that fifteen magistrates in the county had been obliged to stand down due to intimidation.<sup>606</sup>

While applications to the I.G.C. were more likely to play up a simple anti-loyalist motivation behind a raid, this also hints at a deeper process through which the reason for an attack was determined. Those being raided were not privy to the exact machinations behind their targeting and were forced to fill in the gaps themselves. This often led to an assumption of an identity-based hostility. George Cartwright claimed that he was targeted as his family 'belonged to a class that had always been loyal to the British Government'. However, the pattern of harassment (deprivation of land, breaking of fences, driving of cattle) more closely fits a pattern of land agitation. The truth as it appeared to Cartwright is not necessarily the truth as it appeared to his harassers.<sup>607</sup> After Johnston Clarke's house near the Fermanagh border was robbed, he assumed it was because of his Protestantism as all other individuals robbed on the night had been Protestants too.<sup>608</sup> This echoes Henry Patterson's discussion of violence against border Protestants during the Troubles. Patterson notes that while the campaign taken against the community was incredibly severe (and internalised by the community itself as a campaign of 'ethnic-

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<sup>604</sup> Travers Blackley claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/37/6).

<sup>605</sup> Thomas Meikle (T.N.A.: CO 762/82/7).

<sup>606</sup> County Inspector's Returns Cavan, July 1920, (T.N.A.: CO 904/112).

<sup>607</sup> For similar cases to Cartwright's see Mary Fletcher (T.N.A.: CO 762/89/3), Joseph Gordon (T.N.A.: CO 762/78/9) and William Henry Carleton (T.N.A.: CO 762/78/6).

<sup>608</sup> Johnston Clarke case (P.R.O.N.I, S.I.L.R.A. files, D989/B/2/11). For an almost identical line of reasoning see David Long claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/124/12).

cleansing’) the I.R.A. themselves were keen to assert that victims were targeted solely on the basis of their membership of, or sympathy for, security forces.<sup>609</sup>

We have seen in Chapter 1 that the general campaign of violence in Ireland was assumed to have a sectarian character by many Protestants. This line of thinking encouraged such simplistic interpretations of raids. A list of outrages committed in Monaghan in the final quarter of 1920 recorded a general raid for arms as ‘one hundred Protestant houses raided near Monaghan’.<sup>610</sup> Even the District Inspector for Monaghan provided no explanation for the burning of five houses in the county in March 1921 other than that they were ‘belonging to loyalists.’<sup>611</sup>

Former soldiers were held in some suspicion and subject to general harassment. Matthew McKeever reported ‘general annoyance and attacks’ following his discharge in 1920 until his house was raided in June 1921.<sup>612</sup> Orders to clear out and threatening letters were common, particularly as such men were seen as more likely to join anti-republican organisations or cooperate with the R.I.C.<sup>613</sup> John Fleming of Castleblayney was explicitly told that he had ‘helped them [British Govt] in war and was still helping them’.<sup>614</sup> For Bernard Browne joining the army simply was the action which had turned popular opinion against him.<sup>615</sup> These were not forms of targeting unique to Protestantism and indeed army and police recruitment were two of the easiest ways for Catholics to become identified with British rule.<sup>616</sup> However, it represented a particular strain of anti-British feeling that fell heavily on Protestants.

Identification of an enemy in this manner is particularly relevant to Orangemen. Orangemen were viewed with suspicion and as potential informers locally.<sup>617</sup> Reports to Richard Mulcahy from the Cavan battalions emphasised the difficulty in operating in

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<sup>609</sup> Henry Patterson, *Ireland’s Violent Frontier: The Border and Anglo-Irish Relations during the Troubles* (London, 2013) p 174 – 9.

<sup>610</sup> Treasury correspondence discussing Trade Boycott in Monaghan (P.R.O.N.I., Ministry of Finance Files, FIN18/1/103).

<sup>611</sup> County Inspector’s Returns Monaghan, March 1921 (T.N.A.: CO 904/114).

<sup>612</sup> Matthew McKeever claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/6/7).

<sup>613</sup> Bernard Brown claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/7/5); John George Donaghy claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/55/9).

<sup>614</sup> John Fleming claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/164/14); See also Robert H Johnstone claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/8/6) and William Henry Carleton claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/78/6).

<sup>615</sup> Bernard Browne claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/7/5).

<sup>616</sup> Statement of Patrick Woods; Statement of James McKenna; Tommy Donnelly (Monaghan County Museum, Marron Papers).

<sup>617</sup> Statement of Matthew Smith (Monaghan County Museum, Marron Papers).

areas with a strong ‘Orange element’.<sup>618</sup> Edward O’Reilly O/C of the Belturbet Battalion complained that men hiding in the area were ‘known to the enemy within two days’.<sup>619</sup> James Gordon had his status as an Orangeman and Covenanter explicitly equated to that of informer during a raid. The raiders removed all Orange sashes from the house and demanded that his family and ‘all supporters of the British Government’ pay them a subscription of £10.<sup>620</sup>

Orange Halls were a common target for republicans. Such raids, particularly near the border, had a clear strategic value. Such halls often stored equipment for local Ulster Volunteer and Special Constabulary units or had been a site of drilling for the Ulster Volunteers in 1914.<sup>621</sup> Matthew Smith of Monaghan Town noted that ‘in North and Mid Monaghan all Orange lodges and indeed the residences of Orangemen were potential British Posts.’<sup>622</sup>

However, attacking Orange Halls also had a symbolic element. Republican Halls were a common target for Black and Tan attacks and due to the social connections between the Orange Order and the Black and Tans, the nearest equivalent were the Orange Halls. Halls were not simply attacked, and weapons and equipment taken. Drumhillery Hall had its pictures shot off the walls and their uniforms taken.<sup>623</sup> When Richard Dunbar’s house in Corrhagan was raided in June 1922, ostensibly for arms, the raiders also removed two Orange flags and a number of sashes.<sup>624</sup> Scotstown and Knocktallon I.R.A. not only burned Mullahara Orange Hall but took all its furnishings ‘down to Killylough Hall so the Orangeman’s lamps showed us light to hold our meetings’.<sup>625</sup> This attack was directly stated to be a reprisal for an attack on Magherarney

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<sup>618</sup> Report of Belturbet Battalion to Richard Mulcahy, 22 February 1921 (U.C.D.A., Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/16); see also Monthly Report of Monaghan Brigade, May 1921 (U.C.D.A., Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/19).

<sup>619</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>620</sup> James Gordon claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/177/7).

<sup>621</sup> B.M.H. Ws. 576 (Eugene Sherry); Statement of Peter Woods (Monaghan County Museum, Marron Papers); Statement of Mopher Magee (Monaghan County Museum, Marron Papers).

<sup>622</sup> Statement of Matthew Smith (Monaghan County Museum, Marron Papers).

<sup>623</sup> Letter of Patrick Woods to Rev. P. Livingstone, 01 January 1966 (Monaghan County Museum, Marron Papers).

<sup>624</sup> Richard Dunbar claim (N.A.I.: FIN/COMP/2/18/182).

<sup>625</sup> James Mulligan Copybook (Monaghan County Museum, Marron Papers).

Sinn Féin Hall.<sup>626</sup> Graddum Orange Hall in Cavan was burned on Christmas morning 1922.<sup>627</sup>

An attack against an Orange Hall did not have to extend to arson. In 1921, Glaslough Orange Hall was commandeered along with various other Protestant-identified buildings like Mullen's Mills to accommodate some five hundred I.R.A. men active along the Monaghan-Tyrone border.<sup>628</sup>

It is a mistake to assume that such attacks came exclusively from a strategic standpoint as might be inferred from reading only republican sources. Braddox Orange Hall was burned in April 1922 after which the trustees applied for compensation to the Free State government. Such a claim was initially treated with scepticism by the Free State, perhaps reflecting a certain reluctance on their part to be seen aiding Orangemen. The claim was rejected as malice could not be proven and an investigator was sent into the area. His conclusion was that the burning was most likely malicious and a consequence of the unpopularity of the Order and its members in a heavily Catholic area.<sup>629</sup>

A theme which emerges from these accounts is the idea of the Protestant and Unionist community being targeted both specifically and non-specifically. Non-specifically as raids and attacks were framed and motivated by goals that existed independently of the Protestant community: the need to combat informers, disrupt British government or neutralise potential armed resistance. Specifically, in the sense that these concerns were informed by a distrust and suspicion of the Protestant community due to their known political opposition to the goals of nationalism and their commitment to resisting such goals. While there were few, if any cases, where a victims Protestantism was given as the explicit reason for their targeting, there were numerous cases when the attacks were motivated by actions (such as friendship with the police) which, for the community, functioned just as much as a sign of their communal identity as their religion. Targeting could appear as a religious or ethnically-motivated campaign in which that umbrella identity of Protestant-Unionist serves as the easiest explanation for an individual's victimisation. Certainly, sources from that community such as their claims

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<sup>626</sup> Monthly Report of Monaghan Brigade, February 1921 (U.C.D.A., Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/39).

<sup>627</sup> John McGovern claim (N.A.I.: FIN/COMP/2/4/21).

<sup>628</sup> Dooley, *Monaghan Protestants*, p. 45.

<sup>629</sup> Stewart Boyd claim (N.A.I.: FIN/COMP/2/18/10).

to the Irish Grants Committee emphasise these more passive identity-based motivations for their targeting and, given the nature of claims to the I.G.C., link that to their loyalty. Actions such as informing or refusing to attend Dáil courts, are not presented as deliberate acts of provocative defiance but as unconscious expressions of identity as fundamental as religion.

*'Hostile Houses': Arms Raiding and Protestant Targeting*

The most common justification given for “raiding” in republican sources was to search for arms to use in the national struggle. At first glance this is a motivation free of sectarian or ethnic targeting. However yet again the complex mesh of cultural associations and obligations that came with being a Cavan-Monaghan Protestant ensured that arms raids focused most heavily on that community. The raiders in question often characterised the targets of these raids as ‘Unionist houses’ or houses ‘of Orangemen’.<sup>630</sup> In certain cases the raiders identified the raided group explicitly as Protestants.<sup>631</sup> Another term used was ‘hostile houses’ which did not refer exclusively to Unionist houses but of which they would have comprised the largest part following the decline of the A.O.H.<sup>632</sup> Other times, it was not individual homes but hunting parties that were raided – another group more likely to contain Protestants but not necessarily defined by this Protestantism.<sup>633</sup>

Of crucial importance here was the role of the U.V.F. and U.V.F. membership in Cavan and Monaghan. Membership of the organisation was high in both counties with 56% of eligible Cavan male Protestants as members and 34% in Monaghan.<sup>634</sup> Rates of U.V.F. arms held in these counties were also higher than their population would suggest, perhaps a consequence of their position on the Ulster frontier. In March 1914, the R.I.C. estimated that Cavan held 2,676 arms, this came to roughly a tenth of all arms held in

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<sup>630</sup> B.M.H. Ws. 518 (James Sullivan); B.M.H. Ws. 1516 (P.H. Doherty).

<sup>631</sup> Statement of Matthew Smith (Monaghan County Museum, Marron Papers); James Mulligan Copybook (Monaghan County Museum, Marron Papers).

<sup>632</sup> B.M.H. Ws. 530 (P.V. Hoey).

<sup>633</sup> Monthly Report of Monaghan Brigade, February 1921 (U.C.D.A., Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/39).

<sup>634</sup> Mc Giolla Choille, *Intelligence Notes*, p. 37; Figures also in Fitzpatrick, *Descendancy*, p. 244.



Ulster and included a quarter of all Martini-Enfield rifles. Monaghan held significantly less, only 561 at the same time.<sup>635</sup>

So, there had been plenty of ‘Protestant’ arms present in Cavan and Monaghan prior to the Great War. Some of the rifles and the majority of the ammunition were transferred to the British to help with the war effort. Following partition, the great bulk of the remainder in the six counties would be used to help arm the Specials. There existed a suspicion among republican forces that a hoard of arms was present in the counties. At a meeting of Volunteers in Letterkenny in 1918 the speaker, a Dr McGinley, declared ‘there is only one way [to resist conscription], that is, the Unionists and Ulster Volunteers are all well-armed; go out and collect these arms and we shall resist this threat at the point of the rifle’.<sup>636</sup>

The wider context of the quote is included here as it is a useful reminder of the utilitarian nature of arms raids. In most cases those being raided were almost incidental to the incident. Just as McGinley referred to conscription as the threat and Unionists as a sort of arms depot, so too in later cases were arms raids less about defanging a potential threat and more about arming oneself. Only in certain cases, such as the raiding of the houses of B Specials south of the border following partition or the raiding of houses in areas with a history of Unionist agitation such as Rockcorry, could the target of the raid be identified as an ‘enemy’ in the military sense.<sup>637</sup>

The ‘Ulster Volunteer Rifle’ was a sought-after prize in such raids.<sup>638</sup> They were also referred to as the rifles of ‘Sir Edward Carson’s Army’.<sup>639</sup> In the majority of cases, rural farming houses could only produce shotguns or revolvers which, while useful in close quarters, were not suited for the longer range fighting and ambushes that was the strategy being followed elsewhere in the country.<sup>640</sup> Later accounts such as those of James McKenna and Jim McGonnell still convey the disappointment of an arms raid failing to turn up a U.V.F. Rifle.<sup>641</sup> McGonnell lamented in his B.M.H. statement that a

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<sup>635</sup> Mc Giolla Choille, *Intelligence Notes*, pp 33 – 4.

<sup>636</sup> B.M.H. Ws. 1516 (P.H. Doherty).

<sup>637</sup> Testimony of James McKenna (Monaghan County Museum, Marron Papers); Petition from Robert Parks (P.R.O.N.I., Home Office files, HA 5/1044).

<sup>638</sup> James Mulligan Copybook (Monaghan County Museum, Marron Papers); B.M.H. Ws. 576 (Eugene Sherry); B.M.H. Ws. 518 (James Sullivan).

<sup>639</sup> Andrew Murphy claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/65/12).

<sup>640</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 11 December 1919; B.M.H. Ws. 1626 (Bernard Brady).

<sup>641</sup> Statement of James Sheehin (Monaghan County Museum, Marron Papers).

general raid for arms ‘only got two shotguns, one revolver and an old rook rifle’.<sup>642</sup> John McKenna of Newbliss would later complain that ‘we got no arms’.<sup>643</sup>

The I.R.A. in Monaghan and Cavan functioned under very reduced circumstances for much of the Revolution. The O/C of Belturbet Battalion, Edward O’Reilly, complained to Richard Mulcahy in February 1921 that activities in the battalion area had ground to a ‘standstill’ due to a lack of ammunition.<sup>644</sup> Michael O’Hanlon complained to Ernie O’Malley that while his battalion in Ballinagh had six rifles they were never used.<sup>645</sup> The Monaghan Volunteers did not possess a single rifle until Seumus Dobbyn brought one with him from Tyrone.<sup>646</sup> U.V.F. Rifles were also relatively rare. A massive raid in neighbouring Keady in Armagh in 1920 returned twenty to thirty shotguns and a number of revolvers but only three U.V.F. Rifles.<sup>647</sup> Charlie McGlennan, over the border in Armagh, noted similarly ‘we raided a lot of houses locally anything we got was shot guns we got no rifles.’<sup>648</sup>

The passive opposition of Protestant and Unionist houses to the I.R.A. marked them out as targets. Tom Carragher of the Annyalla Company of Volunteers noted that the houses raided were almost exclusively Unionist as ‘the Nationalists handed up their guns to the Volunteers willingly’.<sup>649</sup> Donnelly of Newbliss Company also noted that when raiding for arms it was almost exclusively Unionist houses that were targeted and that the only Catholics faced were those where the owner had specifically refused to previously hand over their guns.<sup>650</sup> Eugene Sherry referred to a ‘canvass amongst all friendly houses’ for weapons prior to a larger arms raid.<sup>651</sup>

We can read the use of the word friendly either as a label given to those houses who cooperated in the canvas or as a predetermined designation based on local assumptions of their sympathies. A household that may have consented to giving up their arms may

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<sup>642</sup> B.M.H. Ws. 574 (Jim McGonnell).

<sup>643</sup> John McKenna Interview (C.O.F.L.A, O’Kane Collection, LOK IV\_A\_77 -01).

<sup>644</sup> Report of Belturbet Battalion to Richard Mulcahy, 22 February 1921 (U.C.D.A., Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/16);

<sup>645</sup> Michael O’Hanlon interview, (U.C.D.A., Ernie O’Malley notebooks, UCDA/P17b/106/74R).

<sup>646</sup> Liam Gaynor Interview Synopsis (C.O.F.L.A, O’Kane Collection, LOK IV.B.32 0003 01 Ee.4.5).

<sup>647</sup> B.M.H. Ws. 576 (Eugene Sherry).

<sup>648</sup> Transcript of interview with C. McGleenan (Ballytrodden) (C.O.F.L.A, O’Kane Collection, LOK IV.B.33 0003 02 Ee.4.5).

<sup>649</sup> B.M.H. Ws. 681 (Tom Carragher).

<sup>650</sup> B.M.H. Ws. 519 (Thomas Donnelly).

<sup>651</sup> B.M.H. Ws. 576 (Eugene Sherry).

not have been offered the opportunity. Certainly, personal local knowledge was important. John Ned Quinn of South Armagh noted that everyone in the locality who owned a gun was known and marked. Quinn was being interviewed at a remove of forty years and was still able to recall many of the families who were raided for their arms.<sup>652</sup> Another account of the arms raids referred to those targeted as ‘Unionists and anyone else that was supposed to have them’.<sup>653</sup>

In many cases these raids were not needlessly violent and could even approach the transactional with receipts offered for the arms taken and a promise given that such items would be returned after the war.<sup>654</sup> In many areas, such as Ballyconnell, this is exactly what happened following the signing of the Treaty.<sup>655</sup> I.R.A. accounts noted that some houses, on realising the attack was an arms raid and not a robbery immediately dropped their resistance and became quite cooperative.<sup>656</sup> This should not be surprising as the arms raid often had clear and simple goals instead of more amorphous aims such as punishment or intimidation. Families too realised that maintaining a gun desired by the raiders was more dangerous than giving it away.<sup>657</sup> The majority of reports of raids in Monaghan, captured in the Marron Collection in Monaghan County Museum, note the lack of resistance.<sup>658</sup>

However even in these circumstances, violence was a persistent threat and again fell more heavily on the Protestant population – largely down to their own resistance to handing over arms. Patrick Doherty of Cloone recalled that some ‘Protestant and Unionist elements had to be persuaded to do so by rougher elements’.<sup>659</sup> Nor did the lack of immediate violence reported in many of the republican witness statements imply a lack of threat. The *Irish Post and Weekly Telegraph* reported in 1919 that the refrain of ‘your arms or your life’ while not common was becoming a feature of raiding.<sup>660</sup>

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<sup>652</sup> Interview with John Ned Quinn of South Armagh (C.O.F.L.A, O’Kane Collection, LOK Box 3 0003.01).

<sup>653</sup> Statement of Mopher Magee (Monaghan County Museum, Marron Papers).

<sup>654</sup> B.M.H. Ws. 1516 (P.H. Doherty); James Mulligan Copybook (Monaghan County Museum, Marron Papers).

<sup>655</sup> *Northern Standard*, 10 February 1922.

<sup>656</sup> Statement of Mopher Magee (Monaghan County Museum, Marron Papers).

<sup>657</sup> B.M.H. Ws. 1613 (Sean Sheridan).

<sup>658</sup> As an example: Letter of Patrick Woods to Rev. P. Livingstone 01 January 1966 (Monaghan County Museum, Marron Papers); Statement of Peter Woods (Monaghan County Museum, Marron Papers).

<sup>659</sup> B.M.H. Ws. 1195 (Patrick Doherty).

<sup>660</sup> *Irish Post and Weekly Telegraph*, 21 June 1919.

We must be careful not to remove arms raiding too much from its context: arms raids presented many unique characteristics but they were not a distinct or purer form of revolutionary activity. Much like the label of ‘spy’ served as an ad hoc justification of an execution so too did arms work as a perfunctory excuse for a raid. Raids can hide and justify a much more complex dynamic. These sources rarely record individuals who were raided multiple times such as Johnston Clarke or William Condron who had the weapons in their house confiscated on the first raid.<sup>661</sup>

In these cases, the justification of raiding for arms is less convincing, as is the case when the raid resembled more a robbery in which weapons happened to also be stolen. Thomas Gordon, postmaster of Corrinshigo Monaghan recorded three such raids in 1922 – 3 on his shop. The first two on 24 June and 29 June saw two armed men admitted to the premises, after which they removed several items (primarily tobacco and bicycles) before leaving. When they were refused entry on the third raid on 4 March 1923 they turned violent, firing guns and throwing rocks into the house until Gordon relented.<sup>662</sup> Robert Byers recorded a raid for cash and arms on his house in Drumaghan, Co. Monaghan where the only damage actually done to his property was the raiders breaking down the door to gain entry. Following this they removed the cash from the house and left with no further damage or threats.<sup>663</sup>

John Ross and Joseph Wallace, two Presbyterian farmers from Braddox both recorded the same raid on a shop in which property damage was minimal even in quite ill-tempered circumstances. Wallace recorded two men entering the premises while leaving three more armed outside. One of the men fired a shot into the air telling the two men to ‘put their hands up’ before removing two bicycles, a watch and £66 in cash from Wallace. They were then threatened with murder unless they lowered the lights and remained in the shop until nearly two o’clock in the morning.<sup>664</sup>

The I.G.C. compensation claims bring up the more negative elements of an arms raid and complicate our understanding of an arms raid even further. John Graham was

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<sup>661</sup> Johnston Clarke case (P.R.O.N.I, S.I.L.R.A. files, D989/B/2/11); William Condron case (P.R.O.N.I, S.I.L.R.A. files, D989/B/2/11). For further examples see Somerset Saunderson claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/91/9); William Jackson claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/175/13); Thomas McGovern claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/109/7); Andrew Murphy claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/65/12).

<sup>662</sup> Thomas Gordon claim (N.A.I.: FIN/COMP/2/18/64).

<sup>663</sup> Robert Byers claim (N.A.I.: FIN/COMP/2/18/106).

<sup>664</sup> Joseph Wallace claim (N.A.I.: FIN/COMP/2/18/112); John Ross claim (N.A.I.: FIN/COMP/2/18/120).

raided in June 1919 in Carrickatee ostensibly for arms. However, while being raided he was also declared a spy and warned he would be put out of the country. Graham admits that he was a member of the U.V.F. and a signatory of the Covenant but denies being an informer. Intimidated, he fled the district.<sup>665</sup> In another case William Murphy was raided for arms in November 1920 with few complications. However, two years later in November 1922 he was raided again and accused of being an informant and threatened with death. As with Graham nothing came of this threat.<sup>666</sup>

Arms raids demonstrate to us that even the tactical considerations behind revolutionary violence were born of their social context and cannot be labelled entirely non-sectarian as such raids fell far more harshly and frequently on the shoulders of the Protestant population. Possessing arms functioned in a similar way to other factors which provoked raids and revolutionary violence in the period – seemingly sound non-sectarian concerns which were shaped by the inter-communal tension in which they arose. While arms were not an expression of Protestant cultural identity, the specific circumstances of the period (such the rise of the Ulster Volunteers) meant that the community was far more likely to hold arms. The fact that they were perceived to hold such quantities of arms was further reinforced by mutual suspicion. Protestant antipathy to the I.R.A. meant that the unsolicited, peaceful transfers of arms that took place with Catholic houses were less likely and Protestants holding arms spoke to a broader fear about the community's capacity to organise and resist. Cavan and Monaghan Unionists were unfortunate enough to have been sufficiently a part of Ulster that they were able to join the Ulster Volunteers and be given weapons but were otherwise too dispersed and peripheral for this to protect them.

### *Protestant as Landholder: Agrarian Agitation and Protestantism in the Revolution*

The agrarian aspect of house raids cannot be ignored. Gemma Clark has correctly characterised a great deal of violence in the Revolution as an effort to force changes in land ownership based on perceived wrongs from the past, taking advantage of the

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<sup>665</sup> Robert Graham claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/65/10).

<sup>666</sup> William Murphy claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/65/11).

breakdown in law and order brought about by the Revolution.<sup>667</sup> The breakdown of law enforcement over the course of the revolutionary period allowed for petty, local interests to assert and resolve themselves outside of the courts. Sometimes this was done in the name of revolutionary actions and sometimes was explicitly opportunistic. This section of the chapter will cover both forms of agrarian activity as they both contributed to the Protestant experience of the Revolution and were both bound together in the mesh of popular expectations of what the Revolution and independence itself would entail.<sup>668</sup>

Clark identified a number of key aspects to such agitation in Limerick, Tipperary and Waterford. Animal driving, crop burning, the mailing of intimidatory letters and illegally harvesting peat were common tools used against the victim of this agitation.<sup>669</sup> While these are also present in Cavan and Monaghan, the night-time raid was more frequently used to intimidate a target into immediately signing over ownership of the land or attending a republican arbitration court to settle the matter. Cavan, in particular, had a strong tradition of Dáil courts from an early date.<sup>670</sup> In Kilcolgy on the Longford-Cavan border, James Tomaskey was raided in 1922 and had shots fired over his head until he agreed to attend such a court where he was ordered to pay £60, with his friend Joseph Hunter paying an additional £20, to a John Reilly, whose father James had been evicted thirty-three years earlier.<sup>671</sup>

This pretence at legality was found in other cases as well, in most cases backed up by a portfolio of potential punishments, such as boycotting, threatening with shooting and arson, that had already been doled out to those who had already refused arbitration.<sup>672</sup> Arthur McClean of Aughaterera was turned out of his farm in April 1922 after being told by members of the I.R.A. that he had to attend an arbitration meeting in Kilnaleck to resolve the claim of a Bernard Kiernan, whose father had held the land 36 years previously. When McClean arrived at Kilnaleck he found nobody present and returned home. Afterwards, two men arrived at his house, claiming to have been appointed by the Dáil to resolve land disputes. McClean was told to return to Kilnaleck where court was now in session. This time he refused and was told he had half an hour to change his mind,

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<sup>667</sup> Clark, *Everyday Violence*, pp 125 – 8.

<sup>668</sup> *Idem*, p. 132.

<sup>669</sup> *Idem*, pp. 123 – 4.

<sup>670</sup> Dermot McMonagle, 'Cavan's Forgotten Contribution to the War of Independence' in *History Ireland*, Vol. 15, No. 6 (2007), pp 12 – 3.

<sup>671</sup> James Tomaskey claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/177/6).

<sup>672</sup> Fitzpatrick, *Politics and Irish Life*, pp. 145–6; Hughes, *Defying the IRA*, p. 84.

which he did. At the meeting he was simply informed to sign a document giving Kiernan ownership of the land. When he refused the men put their hands in their pockets as if to draw guns. An intimidated McClean then acquiesced and lost the use of his land for a year.<sup>673</sup> Other farmers, such as George Nicholls, had no such chance. At a Dáil court he was instead forced immediately sign away his farm in Wateraughy, although he would recover the use of it after three years.<sup>674</sup>

This is not to imply that these courts existed solely for the purpose for separating victims from their land. Fitzpatrick has highlighted the success many loyalists had in these courts and their praise for the system, although he has also emphasised that litigants were more likely to go to these courts if they felt they were likely to be heard favourably.<sup>675</sup>

If the attempt at intimidation failed other methods were brought into play. The Lord family of Crossdoney in April 1922 were woken by a knocking at the door by armed men. They were ordered to come and open the door but, before they had the chance, it was broken down. Once in the house the raiders did not touch or break anything but simply told the Lords to come to Rathbracken in three days to sign over 15 acres of land to a man called Rudden who asserted that his grandfather had been evicted from that land. After they failed to do so another raider came in May and demanded the whole farm. From this point the Lords were frustrated in their attempts to separately sell the land and subjected to frequent drives of their cattle, peaking in September. The farm was unworked after the death of James Lord in 1923 and Mary, his widow, was unable to prevent people cutting down timber or putting their own animals on the land for the duration of the period.<sup>676</sup>

In other cases, the raiders were more direct, with no pretension of legality. Thomas Meikle, an elderly farmer from Belville had 22.5 acres of his 238-acre farm given away to a Timothy Connolly Jr without his knowledge. Connolly then held the land for seven months until he was driven off by the British Army.<sup>677</sup> Harriet Johnston simply received a letter from republican forces telling her not to work the stretch of bog she had been contesting as hers for the past ten years. In the years 1922 to 1925 the bog was

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<sup>673</sup> Arthur McClean claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/183/2).

<sup>674</sup> George William Nicholls claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/175/18).

<sup>675</sup> Fitzpatrick, *Politics and Irish life*, p. 145; 151.

<sup>676</sup> M.E. Lord claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/142/3).

<sup>677</sup> Thomas Meikle claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/82/7).

consistently denied to her use by armed men. This case demonstrates that agrarian raiding needed not be an 'all or nothing' affair, but could enforce smaller prerogatives, and take small but noticeable tolls on people's lives – Johnston, for example, had to spend £15 every year until 1926 buying peat to heat her home.<sup>678</sup>

In Cavan and Monaghan, agrarian raiding had a greater focus on the destruction on farming implements rather than on the house of the victim. In most cases the aim of the agrarian raid was not to drive out its victim. The majority of raids only involved the driving of cattle, the burning of crops or the destruction of the infrastructure of the farm (like fences or ploughs). Most compensation claims to the Free State's Irish Compensation (Personal Injuries) Committee over property damage in Monaghan refer to these sorts of attacks. One fifth (60) refer to the destruction of crops either by scattering or burning while the next most frequent are the destruction of farm equipment or infrastructure (14 claims) and cattle driving (six claims). The most commonly reported tools destroyed were potato diggers and leys. The levelling of fences either allowed cattle to wander free or get into and eat the crops, accomplishing two tasks at once.<sup>679</sup>

These cases were generally even across religious groupings with 78% of Cavan and Monaghan applicants for any claim regarding the scattering or burning of crops, turf or wood; the driving or killing of cattle; or the destruction of farm property other than the farmhouse being Catholic. The remaining 22% was evenly split between Presbyterians and Anglicans. The motivation behind these types of attacks was primarily agrarian, tying into perceived wrongs done by the landholder. We have seen earlier cases where this wrong was the contested possession of land determined by the community to belong to another, but other forms of infraction also existed. A Thomas Brennan claimed for £77.00.00 to compensate his loss of several stacks of flax and fences on his farm, the reason for this attack determined to be his attempts to evict a former tenant who had taken forcible possession of a house owned by Brennan in Kingorry, Co. Monaghan.<sup>680</sup>

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<sup>678</sup> Harriet Johnston claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/103/2); Another example of this is William Cowan (T.N.A.: CO 762/175/3) having half of his land in Coolnacarrig in the spring of 1922 before a boycott was instituted to drive him out of the rest of it; Archibald Moore's (N.A.I.: FIN/COMP/2/18/271) second farm in Annakelly being forcefully taken over by a previous tenant and William Storey (T.N.A.: CO 762/161/15) being driven off his Drumroe farm for occupying the land of a tenant evicted forty years previously.

<sup>679</sup> For cases like this made to the British Government see M E Lord (T.N.A.: CO 762/142/3); Robert H Johnstone (T.N.A.: CO 762/8/6); George W Cartwright (T.N.A.: CO 762/60/5). Claims made to the Irish government are far more numerous.

<sup>680</sup> Thomas Brennan claim (N.A.I.: FIN/COMP/2/18/91.).



These raids operated on the same opportunistic logic as household attacks. They took advantage of absentee tenants, something to which farmers with numerous diffuse holdings were especially vulnerable. On 21 March, Joseph Gordon, resident in Graddum, Co. Cavan, was told to clear out of his farm in Kilnacreeva, approximately fifteen kilometres away. When he refused the cattle grazing on the land were driven off it. When he was clearing them up, he was met by armed men who told him not to put them back or 'if any of them were put back he would never see them again'. Consequently, Gordon was forced to bring his herd to Graddum and abandon Kilnacreeva for two years while his farm was occupied by twelve different individuals.<sup>681</sup> William Steen, the aforementioned Legacurry mill-owner, only had to leave his farm to attend Ballybay Fair, four kilometres away, for his mill to be attacked.<sup>682</sup>

James Johnstone's Mullaghboy farm was seized during the lull between the treaty and the Free State moving into the area. As such the incident went unreported at first, leaving Johnston with a lengthy legal fight to prove it was originally his and reclaim it, after which he immediately sold it in April 1923.<sup>683</sup> An attack made on dwellinghouses on Robert Parks's property in Tullyhanny, Co. Monaghan on 1 November 1921 was not reported for several days as Park lived in Co. Down at the time. Indeed, it was not even reported by locals to the R.I.C., rather it was Park's brother-in-law, a James Sinclair, who lived nearby who had chanced across the damage and informed Park.<sup>684</sup>

Raiding an empty house could just as likely be for occupation (and indeed this probably served greater tactical purpose). The roughly 25 kilometres between Lurganboys and Corvoy was far enough to allow for the occupation of a dwellinghouse owned by James Steele for the period running from May to July.<sup>685</sup>

A form of land occupation that was particularly relevant to the Protestant community (or more accurately a subset of the Protestant community) were raids on the homes of absentee Anglo-Irish landlords. Between 19 May 1922 and 29 August 1922, the Castleshane Desmesne in Monaghan, traditional seat of the Lucas-Scudamores, was occupied by anti-Treaty forces. Castleshane Castle itself had been destroyed by fire in

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<sup>681</sup> Joseph Gordon claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/78/9).

<sup>682</sup> William John Steen claim (N.A.I.: FIN/COMP/2/18/220).

<sup>683</sup> James Johnston claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/41/4).

<sup>684</sup> Robert Park claim (N.A.I.: FIN/COMP/2/18/96).

<sup>685</sup> James Steele claim (N.A.I.: FIN/COMP/2/18/236).

1920 which had led to the relocation of the resident Sybil Lucas-Scudamore to London. The anti-Treaty forces used the still-intact servants' quarters of the mansion house as well as the yard and farm adjoining as a barracks. The property was damaged in this time, with the men cutting down multiple trees on the estate and burning a number of estate and library rental books.<sup>686</sup>

Joseph Benison even lived in Ireland when his property was raided, being the occupant of the Slieve Russell House in Ballyconnell. Houses on the edge of his land were broken into by two brothers, John and Edward Donohue, on 5 May 1922. The houses had been vacant at the time as it was intended for one of Benison's workmen. Other properties on his land had been occupied as early as 11 July 1921, taking advantage of the particular lawlessness of the Ballyconnell area, and the fact that there was no occupant to provide even the slightest resistance.<sup>687</sup>

This is not to say that the actions of the Anglo-Irish gentry did not draw attention upon themselves. Somerset Saunderson, son of noted Unionist leader Colonel Edward Saunderson, reported that the family seat of Castle Saunderson had been occupied by anti-Treaty forces during the Civil War, during which time they did considerable damage to the fittings and exterior of the house in their fire-fights with the Ulster Special Constabulary. Saunderson saw this happening for two reasons; firstly the previous use of the castle as a barracks by the Black and Tans, and secondly, his own absence from the house, having relocated to England pre-1921, at the time rendering it a relatively victimless target.<sup>688</sup> Although Saunderson skips over the first point it is crucial that by donating his property to the Auxiliaries, he had marked it as a legitimate target.<sup>689</sup>

Historiography has emphasised the religious element of agrarian tension. Protestants as the beneficiaries of centuries of official and institutional favour were more likely to hold larger farms and be targeted by campaigns aiming to break them up. Leigh-Ann Coffey, for example, has identified the importance of small-scale, intensely local land issues to a campaign of intimidation undertaken against the farmers of Luggacurran

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<sup>686</sup> Thomas F. Crozier claim (N.A.I.: FIN/COMP/2/18/23); *Northern Standard*, 31 August 1922.

<sup>687</sup> Arthur Benison (T.N.A.: CO 762/14/3). This also occurred in the claim of William Black (N.A.I.: FIN/COMP/2/18/62) regarding a cottage he owned in Ballyleck. County Monaghan which was occupied from July 1922 by a man named Fallon for a number of months rent-free.

<sup>688</sup> Somerset Saunderson claim, (T.N.A.: CO 762/91/9).

<sup>689</sup> This is also seen in the case of David Maguire (T.N.A.: CO 762/57/6) who leased Denn Glebe to the U.V.F. while in America and returned to find the building ruined.

in Queen's County in 1922.<sup>690</sup> For Peter Hart, land envy was a 'connecting thread' between the victims of the Dunmanway killings.<sup>691</sup> Gemma Clark has identified the process of land agitation in the Civil War period as an intensification of pre-existing campaigns of intimidation and as part of a broader web of local resentments and suspicions.<sup>692</sup> In Cavan and Monaghan the pattern which emerges is closest to that which Clark describes. Land was a means by which broader tensions were articulated and which functioned as an excuse for other revolutionary activities. However, of all the motivations for revolutionary violence in this chapter it is the hardest to characterise as sectarian or as overly heavily affecting Protestant as the only unique Protestant element to such incidents was their proportionally greater presence as significant landholders.

### Protestant Resistance

As with boycotting; raiding and intimidation were not met with passivity and resignation by the Protestant community. An examination of republican accounts of the Revolution in the area reveals an unexpectedly strong level of resistance. Equally surprising were the range of forms this resistance took, ranging from organised quasi-military ambushes to individual households opening fire on raiders. It also ranged from explicit challenges to the power of republicans in Cavan-Monaghan to more implicit resistance embodied in the unspoken and hostile Protestantism of an area. They included local Protestant movements and those undertaken in conjunction with government forces.

The intention here is not to return to those incidents of resistance and loyalty which we have previously examined as inciting raids against their perpetrators. Rather our interest here is in those incidents when direct opposition was shown to the authority of the raiders, when they were militarily challenged or when the goal of the raiders was not achieved. These acts of resistance change our understanding of the 'fate of the Southern Unionists' in much the same way as the swift adaptation of the Protestant community we

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<sup>690</sup> Leigh-Ann Coffey, *The Planters of Luggacurran, County Laois: A Protestant Community, 1879 – 1927* (Dublin, 2006) pp. 40 – 3.

<sup>691</sup> Hart, *The IRA and its Enemies*, p. 286.

<sup>692</sup> Clark, *Everyday Violence*, p 136.

saw in Chapter 1 does.<sup>693</sup> This complicates McDowell's 'Crisis and Decline'. It is not a story of reluctant, passive victimhood but one of adaptation and resistance.

The Protestant community had long been a threat in the eyes of local republicans. This was particularly true in Monaghan where the group had a larger and more concentrated population but in Cavan too, republican witness statements identified areas avoided on the basis of their strong Protestant population.<sup>694</sup> The idea that an area could be Protestant and therefore hostile in its own right was well established.<sup>695</sup> The District Inspector for Monaghan noted in July 1920: 'in those districts where Unionists are strong there is danger of serious reprisals.'<sup>696</sup> Even in cases when raiding went ahead, the raiders acknowledged the strength of opposition in Protestant areas. Such accommodations included switching raiding parties out of their native areas to reduce the likelihood of recognition, avoiding raiding in such an area entirely or declining to collect subscriptions in the locality.<sup>697</sup>

In many cases it must have seemed as if the area itself was opposed to them with a dispersed and impersonal resistance, particularly as a great deal of Protestant opposition manifested simply as firing at patrols passing through the area.<sup>698</sup> An I.R.A. patrol through Castleshane in 1920 was fired on from the surrounding hills until it had to withdraw.<sup>699</sup> Protestants in the Loughall area were reported to be firing at cars at night when they failed to dim their lights.<sup>700</sup> An ambush was planned against Coracrin Company by a group of 'Orangemen' and only failed after the company took a different route home.<sup>701</sup> These events were small scale but they were not uncommon. A report from Eoin O'Duffy to Richard Mulcahy while reporting an ambush by 'Unionists' noted that 'this is only an isolated case out of many'.<sup>702</sup>

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<sup>693</sup> McDowell, *Crisis and Decline* p. ii.

<sup>694</sup> B.M.H. Ws. 1663 (Francis Carroll).

<sup>695</sup> Statement of Francis O'Duffy (Monaghan County Museum, Marron Papers); B.M.H. Ws. 365 (Thomas Fox).

<sup>696</sup> County Inspector's Returns Monaghan, July 1920, (T.N.A.: CO 904/112).

<sup>697</sup> B.M.H. Ws. 575 (Joseph McKenna); B.M.H. Ws. 681 (Tom Carragher); Statement of Owey Coyle (Monaghan County Museum, Marron Papers).

<sup>698</sup> Diary of Thomas Brennan (Monaghan County Museum, Brennan Papers 2016.190.25).

<sup>699</sup> Statement of Tommy Donnelly (Monaghan County Museum, Marron Papers).

<sup>700</sup> B.M.H. Ws. 654 (Francis O'Duffy).

<sup>701</sup> Account of Paddy Mohan, Paddy McCluskey, Harry Lavery and Francis McKenna (Monaghan County Museum, Marron Papers).

<sup>702</sup> Monthly Report of Monaghan Brigade, February 1921 (U.C.D.A., Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/39).

These incidents were relatively minor but they had very real consequences. Michael Kelly of Monaghan Town was shot dead while driving home after having dropped home Father Murray, the parish priest of Tydavnet.<sup>703</sup> It was believed among Sinn Féin circles that the attack was an attempt to kill Murray who was a prominent local Sinn Féiner.<sup>704</sup> A co-operative store in Monaghan was burned the same month doing damage estimated as £20,000.<sup>705</sup>

Which Protestants and Unionists were most likely to commit to such violent actions was unclear. This was reflected in the nationalist sources and the degree of political engagement implied by the word they use to describe those firing. In most cases it was a passive ‘Protestant’ or the slightly more active ‘Unionist’. In only a few cases do we see other terms being used. Tommy Donnelly described the firing in Castleshane as committed by ‘Orangemen’ while Francis McKenna says that Mick Kelly was killed by ‘The B-Men’, all other accounts in the Marron Collection refer to Orangemen.<sup>706</sup> The burning of the Monaghan co-operative store could only have been attempted with the aid of ‘a few Black and Tans’.<sup>707</sup>

We should naturally be suspicious of accepting such terms unquestioningly by outsiders to the community. To a republican it was possible, as Tim Wilson has suggested, that any armed Protestant is an Orangeman or ‘B man’.<sup>708</sup> In some cases the logic behind which term was used was clear. Such as when it was assumed that Orangemen were responsible for the defensive patrols that took place around Monaghan’s Orange Halls.<sup>709</sup> The Monaghan Grand Orange Lodge passed a resolution in October 1920 stating that all those attempting to raid their houses were doing so ‘at their own peril’.<sup>710</sup> ‘B man’ was more frequently used to describe specific individuals who could be definitively ascribed a strong Unionist sympathies. More often than not, this was self-reinforcing. Incidents, such as the firing in the window of the Ballybay curate’s house,

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<sup>703</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 21 October 1920.

<sup>704</sup> Account of Paddy Mohan, Paddy McCluskey, Harry Lavery and Francis McKenna (Monaghan County Museum, Marron Papers); Statement of Matthew Smith (Monaghan County Museum, Marron Papers); James Mulligan Copybook (Monaghan County Museum, Marron Papers).

<sup>705</sup> Monthly Report of Monaghan Brigade, February 1921 (U.C.D.A., Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/39).

<sup>706</sup> *Ibid*; Statement of Tommy Donnelly (Monaghan County Museum, Marron Papers).

<sup>707</sup> Monthly Report of Monaghan Brigade, February 1921 (U.C.D.A., Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/39).

<sup>708</sup> Wilson, ‘Strange Death’, p. 185.

<sup>709</sup> Statement of Matthew Smith (Monaghan County Museum, Marron Papers).

<sup>710</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 21 October 1920.

with no proven perpetrator were assumed to be the work of the most active Unionist in the area, in that case, James Clarke.<sup>711</sup>

That B Specials were present in Cavan and Monaghan is interesting as it provides a clearer reason for conflict with the I.R.A. B Specials living south of the border existed between being an awkward native minority and external invading force. Certainly, men from the southern counties did join the Specials, one estimate placing it at around 620 for Monaghan.<sup>712</sup> This was an extremely high number for a county whose eligible Protestant males in the 1911 census numbered approximately 6,500.<sup>713</sup>

Such cases where they existed were strongly localised around the border. Fifty years later, James Mulligan of northern Monaghan noted the areas in and around the county that contained the most ‘Orangemen and B-men’: Glaslough, Tydavnet, Ballinode, Smithboro, Roslea, Mullaghfad and Clogher. All areas located along or over the border.<sup>714</sup> In June 1922 two Specials in Killeshandra were kidnapped on a visit home.<sup>715</sup> Even though they were not living in the county and had not undertaken any violent resistance in the county their presence as Specials was sufficient to draw attention on them. Robert Parks, a Monaghanman who had been disbanded from the Specials in 1922, received a threat from the I.R.A. that ‘they will get [him] should it take them ten years.’ He was forced to flee to the North.<sup>716</sup>

Raids were undertaken also against the families of individuals who had joined the ‘Ulster Specials’.<sup>717</sup> Accounts of these raids clarified that the targets were ‘both Protestant and Catholic’ but it seems unlikely there were many Catholics joining. During the reprisal against Specials in Roslea in 1921 across the Fermanagh-Monaghan border one retributive party crossed the border in Monaghan to attack the McClean household in

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<sup>711</sup> Statement for 4th Battalion information supplied by Johnny McGahey, Owen McGahey, Paddy Treanor, Joe Duffy, Mick McCabe, Tommy Sherry (Monaghan County Museum, Marron Papers).

<sup>712</sup> Wilson, ‘Strange Death’, p. 183.

<sup>713</sup> Eligibility is here defined simply as non-Catholic men who would be between 18 and 40 in 1920 (so between 9 and 31 in the 1911 census) who were resident in Monaghan in 1911. This is a rough measure and should only be taken as illustrative of the higher than expected Monaghan membership of the organisation. In actuality this would be a lower figure due to natural mortality, emigration and loss of life in the same age-bracket in the war.

<sup>714</sup> James Mulligan Copy Book (Monaghan County Museum, Marron Papers).

<sup>715</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 1 June 1922.

<sup>716</sup> Petition from Robert Parks (P.R.O.N.I., Ministry of Home Affairs ‘H’ Files, HA 5/1044).

<sup>717</sup> B.M.H. Ws. 1663 (Francis Carroll).

Smithboro. This incident shall be described in detail in a later chapter, but it was triggered at the time by the participation of Monaghan Protestants in an attack on Roslea town.<sup>718</sup>

Organisations dedicated to the physical defence of Protestants were not present elsewhere in the Free State. It is difficult to accurately measure this movement as few groups announced themselves publicly, preferring to quietly defend their property. Drum, an area with a Protestant majority and a history of religious tension, had established a town guard by September 1920.<sup>719</sup> At the same time, the Co. Monaghan Protestant Defence Association was founded through the effort of Michael Knight.<sup>720</sup> It was initially conceived simply as an umbrella organisation of Protestant interests and would later achieve prominence as a lobbying body.<sup>721</sup> However at the time of its foundation it served as a more literal defence association, an entity under whose aegis Protestants could organise for their own safety. On 20 October the Rockcorry branch of the association passed a motion declaring the need for a nightly guard to be set in their area.<sup>722</sup> Smithboro established a local branch the same month.<sup>723</sup>

Their republican opponents were happy to refer to them as B Specials or, more commonly, the Ulster Volunteers. Peter Woods saw the Unionists of Annyalla, Castleblayney as having no relations with the Special Constabulary but relying on the remnants of the Ulster Volunteers.<sup>724</sup> They were noted drilling in Rockcorry in the autumn of 1920.<sup>725</sup> James McKenna of Glaslough saw similar patrols following the announcement of the Treaty.<sup>726</sup> Indeed the fact that most other sources only incidentally referred to them or tied them into broader movements should suggest to us they were not a significant presence in the worldview of the average Cavan or Monaghan republican

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<sup>718</sup> This incident is perhaps controversial as it is not exactly certain who carried out the attack. Initial accounts refer to Orangemen, B Specials or Ulster Volunteers. However, the subsequent reprisals targeted exclusively B Specials.

<sup>719</sup> *Northern Standard*, 24 September 1920; For Drum's history of tension see Wilson 'Strange Death', p. 182.

<sup>720</sup> Fitzpatrick, *Descendancy*, p. 56.

<sup>721</sup> Wilson, 'Strange Death', p. 181 – 2.

<sup>722</sup> Treasury correspondence discussing Trade Boycott in Monaghan (P.R.O.N.I., Minister of Finance Files, FIN18/1/103).

<sup>723</sup> Terence Dooley, *The Plight of the Monaghan Protestants: 1912 – 1926* (Maynooth, 2000) p. 43.

<sup>724</sup> Statement of Peter Woods (Monaghan County Museum, Marron Papers).

<sup>725</sup> B.M.H. Ws. 740 (John McGahey).

<sup>726</sup> Letter from James McKenna to Fr Marron, 24 January 1966 (Monaghan County Museum, Marron Papers).

and remind us not to overstate their prevalence. Their real importance is in that fact they existed and the forms they took not in their scale.

This organised Protestant defence spoke its own distinct dialect of revolutionary violence, combining whichever idioms of I.R.A. raiding tactics and south Ulster loyalist vigilante groups they could.<sup>727</sup> Tim Wilson has described how the general system of lookouts, warning signs and patrols that characterised Fermanagh organised loyalism existed in a more limited form in Monaghan.<sup>728</sup> This characterisation can be extended to Cavan but in a reduced infrequent form. Wilson has also suggested a deliberate campaign of targeting Catholic priests or parochial houses was present in the county (two examples of which have already been discussed in the cases of Clarke in Ballybay and Fr Murray in Tydavnet).<sup>729</sup> This would match the raiding of targeted quasi-symbolic buildings by the I.R.A. such as Orange Halls.

Organised Protestant resistance involved a contesting of the public space that was otherwise rare in Cavan and Monaghan. Following the death of Terence McSwiney in October 1920, an order was issued by G.H.Q. ordering the closure of all business premises as a mark of respect. In Bailieborough this order was contested by the local Protestant population (identified as ‘the Ulster Volunteers’) who forced the reopening of some shops.<sup>730</sup> Crucially, this reopening was undertaken only to the Protestant section of the population again reinforcing the defensive, internal nature of such organisation. It had no goals to spread beyond its own community. This same public resistance has already been seen when we looked at those who broke the Belfast Boycott.

There was also another form of resistance, however. Less organised, less far-reaching in its implications for how we understand the period but no less important to the lived Revolution of Protestants in Cavan and Monaghan. This was the unplanned resistance – the fighting off of raiders at the door. This was the desperate last stand instead of the pre-emptive strike. This was also a more stressful and a more involuntary situation to be in.

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<sup>727</sup> These Fermanagh groups are examined in Chapter 4.

<sup>728</sup> Wilson, ‘Strange Death’, p. 181.

<sup>729</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>730</sup> House of Commons Debates, 5th series, vol. 134, 9 November 1920, col. 990.; B.M.H. Ws. 1663 (Francis Carroll).



In September 1922, John Mansergh Sloan was told he would be burned out of his house within six weeks. This came at the end of a long campaign of harassment by local republicans and although the attack never came it prompted Sloan to garrison six men in his home for the six weeks the threat was active and caused him to contract ‘neurasthenia’ (essentially anxiety).<sup>731</sup> To arm oneself in this manner was an incredibly risky endeavour, as any engagement with a raiding party could result in the loss of more than just a house. This was a lesson paid grisly testimony by the Dunmanway murderers in Cork. Another Cavan Protestant, Travers Blackley, was forced out of the country and fled to England after killing three of the raiders attacking his own home and wounding a further three.<sup>732</sup> To defend your house even at the risk of your own life shows a certain degree of desperation brought about by constant harassment and the threat of forced homelessness. An I.U.A. memo of 1920 declared ‘from dusk to dawn law-abiding people scarcely dare to sleep.’<sup>733</sup> Basil Brooke also noted in Fermanagh that a similar anxiety motivated the formation of the Protection Committees which would transition into the Special Constabulary.<sup>734</sup> In a later statement to the Boundary Commission, James Johnston of Bawnboy claimed that his family had been so worried by threats of violence that they had slept ‘in a drain in a field convenient to the house’.<sup>735</sup> Regardless of whether this actually occurred or not, as with many of the compensation claims, to seem believable they had to play into a common understanding of how revolutionary violence operated.

We should not view such resistance as ineffective even if they failed to hold off the raiders in the majority of cases. Raiders in Monaghan were surprised at the strength of Protestant resistance and the casualties suffered during such activities.<sup>736</sup> In Corcaghan a raider, Owen Keenan, was mortally wounded in August 1920 while raiding a Unionist house while in Drum another raider Peter O’Reilly was seriously wounded.<sup>737</sup> So

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<sup>731</sup> John Mansergh Sloan claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/114/1).

<sup>732</sup> Travers Blackley claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/37/6).

<sup>733</sup> Letters and Memos of Irish Unionist Alliance (P.R.O.N.I., I.U.A. Files, D989/A/8/2/41).

<sup>734</sup> Correspondence on Fermanagh Vigilance Force (P.R.O.N.I., Sir Ernest Clark Papers, D1022/2/3).

<sup>735</sup> James Johnston Statement, Fermanagh County Council Evidence (T.N.A., Boundary Commission files, CAB 61/64).

<sup>736</sup> Statement of Mopher Magee (Monaghan County Museum, Marron Papers); B.M.H. Ws. 654 (Francis O’Duffy); O’Duffy also used the term Protestant here to refer to the community and the general resistance not Unionist nor Ulster Volunteer or anything that implies a deeper level of political commitment or organisation.

<sup>737</sup> Statement of James Sheehin (Monaghan County Museum, Marron Papers); B.M.H. Ws. 519 (Thomas Donnelly); B.M.H. Ws. 740 (John McGahey).

effective was this resistance that raiding parties began to take deliberate counter measures such as the taking of hostages elsewhere to use as collateral or human shields.<sup>738</sup>

Nor was such resistance doomed. The same anxiety that drove Blackley and Sloan to fear for their lives, led them to strongly garrison their houses. Blackley's house was never taken by raiders. The isolated farmstead, with its strong walls and large living capacity, could easily become a fortress of sorts. The McCleans of Smithboro were one of the few targeted houses post-Roslea to escape entirely.<sup>739</sup> Joseph McKenna, first officer of the Castleblayney company, recorded a raid against John Wright of Killybressal in which Wright's two sons successfully held off the raiders long enough that they decided to retreat.<sup>740</sup> Eighteen men from Rockcorry company were unable to take a house held by six members of the Millar family.<sup>741</sup>

Traditional logic of reprisal would suggest that meeting a raid with hostility of one's own would escalate the situation and make one's own death much more likely. However, in most cases the resistance of a raid seemed to be understood as an accepted risk and such reprisal killings were not common. There is no record of Owen Keenan's death being avenged. William McAdam who greeted a party at his door with anger and threats of murder was similarly unpunished.<sup>742</sup> Camp Captain Patrick McCluskey was severely wounded raiding the house of a Mrs Hazlett who also escaped retribution following disarming.<sup>743</sup> This had a certain logic to it. Cavan and Monaghan, had a substantial and well-armed Protestant population that the I.R.A. would want to avoid inciting and opening up another front for itself to fight. James Mulligan and John Brennan, raiding an Orange House on the Roslea border refused to return fire when the occupant of the house fired on them. Instead they tackled and disarmed the man and asserted nothing would be done to harm him.<sup>744</sup>

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<sup>738</sup> Statement of Patrick Woods (Monaghan County Museum, Marron Papers); Statement of Peter Woods (Monaghan County Museum, Marron Papers).

<sup>739</sup> B.M.H. Ws. 520 (Patrick McMeel).

<sup>740</sup> B.M.H. Ws. 575 (Joseph McKenna).

<sup>741</sup> B.M.H. Ws. 740 (John McGahey).

<sup>742</sup> B.M.H. Ws. 1663 (Francis Carroll).

<sup>743</sup> B.M.H. Ws. 1663 (Francis Carroll).

<sup>744</sup> James Mulligan Copybook (Monaghan County Museum, Marron Papers); See also B.M.H. Ws. 576 (Eugene Sherry) in which a 1920 raid on the Raddock family of Tyrone was foiled by the young son of the family who persistently fired at them until they retreated reluctant to endanger the lives of the father and mother.

This is not to suggest that no defenders were ever killed or wounded on such attacks – only that instances of resistance escalating responses were limited. Part of the reason the Flemings were shot was due to their shooting dead of a raider named McKenna.<sup>745</sup> The Hazlitts of Kilnadrain were similarly injured only after opening fire on their raider.<sup>746</sup> Travers Blackley was forced over the border.<sup>747</sup> The act of resisting militarily was inherently risky and even non-combatants could be hurt. In a raid on a Newbliss Unionist named Crawford the only injuries sustained were by Crawford's wife who had spent the entire event upstairs in her bed.<sup>748</sup>

This resistance sits somewhat at odds with the relatively meek Protestant community we characterised in Chapter 1. However, these two portrayals do not contradict one another but rather demonstrate the sense of desperation felt by the Cavan and Monaghan Unionists as a result both of their abandonment by their more numerous brethren to the North and the ongoing stress of the Revolution. Most resistance is more easily understood when we remember the portrayal of revolutionary violence as being heavily anti-Protestant among three-county Protestants. Resistance, both organised and unorganised, represented a response to this stress and in most cases can be characterised as an act of either desperation or anger. Nowhere was such organised resistance common enough that we can assume it represented a logical course of action, in all cases it was dangerous and counterintuitive and can only be understood as the action of a community in crisis.

### The Murder of Dean John Finlay

When examining violence against Protestants in Cavan and Monaghan during the Revolution there is one significant case which stands out and challenges our understanding of the dynamics of revolutionary violence in Cavan and Monaghan. The

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<sup>745</sup> Statement for 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion information supplied by Johnny McGahey, Owen McGahey, Paddy Treanor, Joe Duffy, Mick McCabe, Tommy Sherry (Monaghan County Museum, Marron Papers).

<sup>746</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 9 September 1920.

<sup>747</sup> Travers Blackley (T.N.A.: CO 762/37/6).

<sup>748</sup> Statement of Joe McCarville (Monaghan County Museum, Marron Papers).

case of Dean John Finlay gained significant attention at the time and still shocks to this day. It remains difficult to articulate why such a brutal attack happened.

On the morning of 12 June 1921 about fifty armed and disguised men (although other reports suggested twenty) raided Brackley House, the home of the former Dean of Leighlin, John Finlay. He was 80 years old. They broke the windows of the house with iron bars before rounding together the household, excluding the Dean, and taking them barefoot to a house a mile off. Before leaving, Isabella Finlay, his wife, asked about the Dean who she could not see. She was assured he was alright and taken away but upon returning, after an hour, the household found the body of the Dean had been placed on the lawn the house burned down.<sup>749</sup>

His death was greeted with shock in the community across all confessions. It was denounced by Hamar Greenwood as a ‘diabolical outrage’.<sup>750</sup> The standing committee of the General Synod of the Church of Ireland passed a motion lamenting his death and describing Finlay’s aloofness ‘from all political and sectarian controversies’.<sup>751</sup> The Catholic parish priests of neighbouring Templeport, Kinawley and Corlough sent a letter to the *Northern Standard* expressing their ‘horror and indignation at the crime’.<sup>752</sup> The judge in charge of his probate case described it as ‘the saddest of recent times’.<sup>753</sup>

For Unionists the attack provided further evidence of the lawless and sectarian south. Even before the inquest had revealed his cause of death the *Impartial Reporter* felt confident declaring the raiders had ‘shot him and then battered his head almost to a pulp’.<sup>754</sup> Edward Carson raised the issue in the House of Lords in May 1922 ostensibly to ask about the prosecution of those responsible and the granting of compensation to Finlay’s widow, claiming: ‘[Finlay] was raided by gunmen, not for any political reason so far as one can make out, not at a time when the Provisional Government had been set up, but when the country was under the control of His Majesty’s Government.’<sup>755</sup>

Why and how Finlay was killed would remain a contentious issue, and the removal of any potential witnesses to another house robs us of much potential testimony. Local

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<sup>749</sup> County Inspector’s Returns Cavan, June 1921 (T.N.A.: CO 904/115).

<sup>750</sup> House of Commons Debates, 5th series, vol. 143, 16 June 1921, col. 571 – 4.

<sup>751</sup> *Irish Times*, 17 June 1921.

<sup>752</sup> *Northern Standard*, 17 June 1921.

<sup>753</sup> *Northern Standard*, 15 July 1921.

<sup>754</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 16 June 1921.

<sup>755</sup> House of Lords Debates, 5th series, vol. 50, 25 May 1922, col. 787.

historian T.C. Maguire later reported that he had interviewed a member of the party who had been present at the raid. In this account his death was an accident and not a murder. The shot that killed Finlay had gone off accidentally from a gun.<sup>756</sup> This is initially plausible, and we have accounts elsewhere of similar occurrences. Two B Specials in Fermanagh were killed due to their guns accidentally going off.<sup>757</sup>

This half reference is also one of the only accounts we have of the attack that comes from the republican side. It is noticeably absent from testimony to the Bureau of Military History which focused on the more easily justifiable cases of spies and informers. Part of the issue is that other revolutionary sources we can use such as the O’Kane and Marron collections focus more on Monaghan than Cavan. Republican accounts from Cavan were reluctant to discuss other controversial killings such as those of Kitty Carroll, Arthur Treanor or Patrick Larmour. Local republican traditions claimed vaguely that Finlay had been killed in a struggle after he resisted the initial raid on his house.<sup>758</sup>

These accounts are suspect as the police report following his killing returned that Finlay had been bludgeoned over the head with an iron bar, not shot.<sup>759</sup> None of the witnesses reported hearing shots and both the maid, Mabel Brown, and the cook’s son, Herbert King, implied Finlay may have been killed in the house before his wife and servants were forced to leave as they passed a large pool of blood flowing towards the drawing room.<sup>760</sup> Both Finlay’s death certificate and the military inquiry into his death both recorded his cause of death as ‘shock and haemorrhage caused by a punctured wound of base of skull’ but ruled out a shooting.<sup>761</sup>

A medical enquiry noted a large skin abrasion on the left of his face and smaller abrasion on his body. The wound itself was about 2½ inches deep and was described as ‘remarkable’. The medical examiner came to the conclusion that the injury was caused ‘by a blunt narrow instrument being driven into the skull with considerable force... if a

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<sup>756</sup> T.C. Maguire, ‘Templeport Cemetery Inscriptions’ in *Journal of Cumann Seánchais Bhreifne* (Breifne Historical Society) Vol. IV, No. 14 (1971).

<sup>757</sup> See Chapter 4.

<sup>758</sup> Pearse Lawlor, ‘Tit for Tat: The War of Independence in the Northern Counties’ in *History Ireland* Vol. 20, No. 1 (January/February 2012), pp. 38-41.

<sup>759</sup> County Inspector’s Returns Cavan, June 1921 (T.N.A.: CO 904/115).

<sup>760</sup> Statement of Mabel Brown and Statement of Herbert King to the Court of Inquiry into Death of Reverend Dean John Finlay, 12 June 1921; Brackley, County Cavan (T.N.A. WO 35/149B/13); *Impartial Reporter*, June 23 1921.

<sup>761</sup> Death Certificate of John Finlay, Registered Bawnboy, 07 July 1921; Death of Reverend Dean John Finlay, (T.N.A.: WO 35/149B/13).

man fell from a height from a window on a spike it could have caused the wound'.<sup>762</sup> That Finlay's body had only minor abrasions suggested such a fall never took place, as does the fact that Finlay was seemingly killed indoors.

The brutality and savagery of his wound also problematises how we view the attack. Such an act required significant force. This along with the unnatural stabbing movement required to inflict the wound tell us that the fatal blow was unlikely to have been accidental or a stray blow. At some point, either before the raid began or at a point during it, one of the raiders had decided to kill or seriously wound an 80-year-old man.

It is very likely that the decision to kill Finlay was not premeditated. There was little strategic value in executing an elderly clergyman, nor is it feasible that a frail old man could have offered much threat to a large party of raiders. While we cannot know the exact reasons or circumstances that led to the decision to do this, it nonetheless provides us with an insight into the attitude taken by these raiders to those they raided, into the potential for recklessness or callousness that the raids enabled. Indeed, the attack was later used both as proof of the seriousness of purpose of the I.R.A. and as a threat that could be leveraged against a victim of a raid. James Johnston, a neighbour and victim of a longer-term campaign of harassment, later reported that he was told that, unless he cleared out of the area responsibility for the attack would be laid on him.<sup>763</sup>

The specific reasoning behind the attack is obscure as the raiders did not announce it to any of the inhabitants of the house. As an octogenarian who had only come into the district in 1913 it seems unlikely that Finlay posed a serious risk to the I.R.A. or that he would have held residual U.V.F. weapons. He was reported as having 'a kindly disposition and he was on good terms with all his neighbours and... had no enemies'.<sup>764</sup> The local R.I.C. sergeant William McDonnell, asserted that not only had Finlay never attended any political meeting of any sort in the area but 'I have never known him to make any public statement regarding any political organisation.'<sup>765</sup>

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<sup>762</sup> *Irish Independent*, 16 June 1921.

<sup>763</sup> James Johnston Statement, Fermanagh County Council Evidence (T.N.A., Boundary Commission files, CAB 61/64).

<sup>764</sup> County Inspector's Returns for Cavan, June 1921 (T.N.A: CO 904/115)

<sup>765</sup> Statement of Sgt. William McDonnell to Court of Inquiry into Death of Reverend Dean John Finlay, 12 June 1921; Brackley, County Cavan (T.N.A.: WO 35/149B/13).

Witnesses at the court of inquiry into his death suggested the raid was a pre-emptive attack against the use of the house as a barracks. Finlay had some social connections with the British forces and in his court of inquiry it was reported that the Auxiliaries of nearby Castlesaunderson had visited his house before his attack.<sup>766</sup> Joseph Robinson, Finlay's footman, and William McDonnell, the local R.I.C. sergeant, testified that a rumour had circulated following the visit that the house was to be occupied by crown forces.<sup>767</sup> The burning of the house does not seem to have been impulsive as the raiders brought with them large containers of petrol and made little effort to use it in the intimidatory way we have seen previously.<sup>768</sup>

Those arrested for his murder did not come from a single area or a single group who might have had a grievance with the Dean. Police reported arresting two farmers' sons, two labourers', two carpenter's sons and a mechanic.<sup>769</sup> Herbert King, the son of Finlay's cook, recognised a number of the raiders including a James McSoldier who lived nearby, and who had worked for Finlay as a gardener three years previously. King estimated that Finlay would have known and recognised McSoldier as he had lived nearby.<sup>770</sup> We may consider another cause therefore for Finlay's killing was McSoldier trying to avoid Finlay reporting his identity to the R.I.C. However, the fact that neither Mrs Finlay nor King himself were killed places doubt on this theory.

It seems most likely therefore that Finlay's death was simply an extreme manifestation of the trends we have examined earlier. The rumour that his house was to be used as a barracks was plausible and likely gained such traction because of his status as a Protestant who was assumed in favour of British forces in the country. The fact that other noteworthy larger houses nearby such as Castlesaunderson had been similarly used would have lent weight to this belief.

While the reason for Finlay's murder during the raid will likely never be fully uncovered the fact that he was killed and so gruesomely, demonstrates the callousness,

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<sup>766</sup> Court of Inquiry into Death of Reverend Dean John Finlay, 12 June 1921; Brackley, County Cavan (T.N.A.: WO 35/149B/13).

<sup>767</sup> Statement of Joseph Robinson and Statement of Sgt. William McDonnell to Court of Inquiry into Death of Reverend Dean John Finlay, 12 June 1921; Brackley, County Cavan, (T.N.A.: WO 35/149B/13).

<sup>768</sup> 'Statement of Herbert King' to Court of Inquiry into Death of Reverend Dean John Finlay, 12 June 1921; Brackley, County Cavan (T.N.A. WO 35/149B/13).

<sup>769</sup> *IT*, 21 June 1921.

<sup>770</sup> 'Statement of Herbert King', Court of Inquiry into Death of Reverend Dean John Finlay, 12 June 1921; Brackley, County Cavan (T.N.A. WO 35/149B/13).

recklessness and potential for violence that underpinned so much revolutionary activity in the period – both in cases where circumstances led to this violence being expressed and in those cases where they did not.

### Distinct? How unique was violence against Hibernians?

The question remains as to whether the cases we have described represented a unique form of revolutionary violence or whether they were part of a general pattern applied across all groups. It is possible that such violence that merely took on superficially separate characteristics based on the local context it was enacted in. To investigate this proposition, we can examine another group which broadly matched the position of Protestants in Cavan and Monaghan. That is to say a group that was politically opposed to the goals of the I.R.A. and Sinn Féin and which was large enough both to represent a legitimate threat to them and to be present in all districts throughout the county.

With this question in mind we can identify one group which is best suited for such a comparison: members of the Ancient Order of Hibernians. We will take a loose definition of the term Hibernian. We will use it as it was used at the time: as a broad term for active constitutional nationalists who opposed Sinn Féin (in much the same way that Protestant groups were frequently mischaracterised as Orangemen, B Specials and Ulster Volunteers). What this means is that we will not focus overly much on whether individuals referred to as ‘Hibs’ were actually members of lodges.

What we find is that violence perpetrated against Hibernians was fundamentally different from violence perpetrated against Protestants. It took place earlier in the revolution, spiking during the 1918 elections. In addition, the greater numbers and traditional dominance of the A.O.H. allowed them to contest more forcefully the public space and resist the rise of Sinn Féin, even meting out some violence of their own. Hibernian violence was more public and more intense but also faded away more quickly.



The division of support and members between Hibernians and republicans was not as fundamental as that between Catholic and Protestant, Nationalist and Unionist and was therefore far more permeable.

Before 1918 the A.O.H. was ‘the only nationalist organisation that mattered’.<sup>771</sup> They were strong in Ulster and Cavan in particular had a strong Hibernian organisation in the early decades of the twentieth century.<sup>772</sup> In August 1917 a large demonstration of Hibernians and supporters of the Irish Parliamentary Party met in Ballybay to hear John Muldoon, M.P. for East Cork, speak before signing a resolution pledging their loyalty to John Redmond. The *Irish Post and Weekly Telegraph*, a Unionist Cavan newspaper, was impressed by the ‘more than usually large numbers of the order’ while Muldoon declared they would ‘have to go back to the days of the Land League to find a parallel for that magnificent gathering.’<sup>773</sup> These demonstrations were not uncommon in Cavan and Monaghan before the 1918 election and the electoral eclipse of the I.P.P.<sup>774</sup> Even at the height of the partition crisis of 1916 and the fears that some or all of Cavan or Monaghan would be subsumed into a northern state, Hibernians in the counties were strong in their support of Redmond and his party.<sup>775</sup>

Even post-1918, Hibernianism and constitutional nationalism maintained relatively strong presences. A meeting of A.O.H. members in July 1919 marched through the town of Bailieborough ‘with bands playing and a display of beautiful banners’.<sup>776</sup> In August 1920, the *Northern Standard* reported on an A.O.H. Reunion in Tamlat attended by over 100 couples and marvelled at their tenacity: ‘Although as a political power they are a spent force, they silently cling to their meetings social and political, waiting for the old constitutional policy to reassert itself.’<sup>777</sup> To underline this point the same month an A.O.H. sports day in Emyvale was reported to be the largest sports day in the history of North Monaghan.<sup>778</sup>

Violence committed on or by Hibernians was inherently shaped by their position of strength before 1918. Much as the dynamics of violence between Catholics and

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<sup>771</sup> B.M.H. Ws. 681 (Tom Carragher).

<sup>772</sup> *Hibernian Journal*, September 1917; *Hibernian Journal*, September 1919.

<sup>773</sup> *Irish Post and Weekly Telegraph*, 18 August 1917.

<sup>774</sup> *Irish Post and Weekly Telegraph*, 20 September 1918.

<sup>775</sup> *Northern Standard*, 20 May 1916; *Northern Standard*, 27 May 1916.

<sup>776</sup> *Irish Post and Weekly Telegraph*, 2 August 1919.

<sup>777</sup> *Northern Standard*, 14 August 1920.

<sup>778</sup> *Northern Standard*, 14 August 1920.

Protestants were characterised by the sense of insecurity and isolation brought about by the minority position of the Protestants. Rallies for the Irish Parliamentary Party candidates in 1918 were preceded by marches through the town, the wielding of banners and the banging of drums.<sup>779</sup> In spite of the electoral pact these actions were designed to antagonise and actively contest dominance of the public space. In this way they invited a response from their opponents.

Newspaper reports of proceedings of courts and local government demonstrate a tension that was far more articulate and pronounced than anything we see between Catholic and Protestant. As a former Donegal Sinn Féiner noted: ‘The A.O.H. organisation was very antagonistic towards us at that period. In fact, its members were more hostile than the Unionists.’<sup>780</sup> This was echoed by Brian McMahon of Carrickmacross who claimed Hibernians ‘were distrusted by the I.R.A. more than were the Unionists’.<sup>781</sup> This tension manifested itself through a wide-range of actions of varying intensity. Belturbet Urban Council in January 1917 devolved into a shouting match between a Mr Sullivan (I.P.P.) and Mr Small (Sinn Féin) in which Small declared Sullivan ‘a Hibernian and a traitor’.<sup>782</sup> Castleblayney Quarter Sessions of October 1919 reported a brawl in the town the previous August in which victims were heard to shout ‘don’t murder me’ and ‘sure I’m not a Hib’.<sup>783</sup> Patrick Croarkin, a Sinn Féiner of Rockcorry, claimed his neighbour Michael O’Brien, a Hibernian, had thrown stones at his dog on the day of the East Cavan by-election.<sup>784</sup> On one occasion the R.I.C. in Latton were instructed to line the streets of the town after mass to prevent any fights between the two groups from erupting.<sup>785</sup>

This violence was often spontaneous, a consequence of drunkenness or heightened tensions due to particular occasions. Shouts like ‘Up Dublin’, ‘To Hell With De Valera’ were used to mark out either side’s loyalty, as were ribbons in party colours. These incidents were less coordinated and planned than the raids we have examined.<sup>786</sup> However there was a logic behind their application. On 29 January 1918, Thomas

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<sup>779</sup> *Northern Standard*, 14 December 1918.

<sup>780</sup> B.M.H. Ws. 1583 (Michael Doherty).

<sup>781</sup> Brian MacMahon Testimony (Monaghan County Museum).

<sup>782</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 18 January 1917.

<sup>783</sup> *Northern Standard*, October 11 1919.

<sup>784</sup> *Northern Standard*, 24 August 1918.

<sup>785</sup> *Northern Standard*, 2 March 1918.

<sup>786</sup> For a useful example see *Northern Standard*, 20 July 1918.

McEntee, a Hibernian, was assaulted in Castleblayney town by a James McAree in which it was recounted that before being attacked McEntee was asked ‘if he was as good a man as when he threw mud on the Countess’ face’ in reference to a confrontation some weeks previously between the men.<sup>787</sup> In all cases the violence was a direct consequence of the open, active and public nature of Hibernian activity in the county. This in contrast to the less assertive Unionism of the counties where even in North Monaghan they were barely willing to run a candidate in 1918.

Elections and the visits of controversial political figures were a particular flashpoint. Indeed, Monaghan Sinn Féin had exploited pre-existing divisions in the county between Redmondites and anti-Redmondites to grow its organisation and this contributed to tension between the Redmondite I.P.P. that contested the 1918 election and Sinn Féin.<sup>788</sup> In the same election the A.O.H. had campaigned for the Redmondites and had rioted when they lost.<sup>789</sup> Thomas Briody, whose father was active in the Cavan A.O.H., recalled a Sinn Féin victory march from the 1918 by-election being planned to go through a number of A.O.H. strongholds such as Callanagh Middle. The march involved the loud shouting of ‘Up Griffith’ and a tricolour held between two guns.<sup>790</sup>

Francis O’Duffy later recalled being met with shouts, stones and sticks in two successive speeches during the 1918 election campaign at Truagh and Carrickroe.<sup>791</sup> John Farmer, a Sinn Féin organiser, later recalled ‘it was impossible to carry on without physical force against the organised mobs of the A.O.H.’<sup>792</sup> Count Plunkett, on visiting Monaghan in April 1920, was greeted by crowds of women singing pro-Dillon chants and snatching Sinn Féin badges from their republican counterparts. Ultimately, they had to be separated by the R.I.C.<sup>793</sup> A mass confrontation nearly broke out in Castlefinn during the 1918 election between massed Sinn Féiners who had come to see de Valera speak, and massed Hibernians there to disrupt him. So significant were the respective gatherings that after a nominal effort the R.I.C. withdrew. Violence was only avoided

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<sup>787</sup> *Northern Standard*, 30 March 1918.

<sup>788</sup> Livingstone, *Monaghan Story* p 363; For an account of the tensions with the I.P.P. in Monaghan see B.M.H. Ws. 518 (James Sullivan). In summary the popular sitting MP for South Monaghan John McKean was replaced as the candidate for the January 1910 general election by the Redmondite Charles Laverty. In response to which McKean ran as an Independent Nationalist and won.

<sup>789</sup> McPhilips, ‘Hibernians in Monaghan’ p 83. *Northern Standard*, 25 January 1910.

<sup>790</sup> Thomas Briody, *The Road to Avondale*, pp. 13 – 14.

<sup>791</sup> B.M.H. Ws. 654 (Francis O’Duffy).

<sup>792</sup> John Farmer Statement (Monaghan County Museum, Miscellaneous Papers, MS 86-5H).

<sup>793</sup> *Northern Standard*, 13 April 1918.

after de Valera ordered his followers to form a defensive ring but to engage in no antagonism.<sup>794</sup> Following a clash in November 1917 the *Hibernian Journal* noted with satisfaction that ‘the members, however, of Cavan, Tyrone, Sligo and Roscommon have quite recently given the would-be attackers “sound advice”’.<sup>795</sup> Local Nationalist councillors were raided in the night by men with blackened faces in Monaghan and warned against voting to confirm members of their own party in official positions.<sup>796</sup>

Republican accounts of their dealings with Hibernians also share another theme – they frequently accused Hibernians of collaborating with the Unionist community to oppose the republican movement. In his account of the massed Hibernians meeting to challenge de Valera in Castlefinn, Michael Doherty, claimed the crowd as also contained many Unionists.<sup>797</sup> James Cahill, a member of the IRB in Cavan, bemoaned the constant attacks by Hibernians ‘assisted by the Orangemen’.<sup>798</sup> Francis Carroll, commandant of the Bailieborough battalion, also later complained ‘Not only were we up against the open enemy, but we had to deal with the Ulster Volunteers, the Unionists, Hibernians and even our own friends.’<sup>799</sup>

However, these accounts do not appear across other sources and it was not uncommon for republican accounts of the revolution to conflate hostile groups together. We should be suspicious of the veracity of the claim particularly in a county where Unionism in general was not assertive enough to run a candidate in the East Cavan by-election. It was also a view that saw Unionists in Cavan and Monaghan solely through the lens of being an opponent to Sinn Féin. In actual fact relations between the A.O.H. and local Unionism were frequently strained due to the history of conflict over Home Rule between the parties. Hibernians were referred to by the Protestant community as ‘Mollie Maguires’.<sup>800</sup>

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<sup>794</sup> B.M.H. Ws. 1583 (Michael Doherty).

<sup>795</sup> *Hibernian Journal*, November 1917.

<sup>796</sup> House of Commons Debates, 5th series, vol. 130, 15 June 1920, col. 1200 – 1201.

<sup>797</sup> B.M.H. Ws. 1583 (Michael Doherty).

<sup>798</sup> B.M.H. Ws. 503 (James Cahill).

<sup>799</sup> B.M.H. Ws. 1663 (Francis Carroll).

<sup>800</sup> McPhillips, ‘Hibernians in Monaghan’, p 95.

Following 1918 and the decline of the I.P.P. the A.O.H. too reduced in importance with many of its members switching their support to Sinn Féin.<sup>801</sup> In March 1919, the Doohamley Pipers' Band, a Hibernian organisation, sued former members who had changed their allegiances to Sinn Féin and who had refused to return their equipment.<sup>802</sup> As early as June 1919 the *Hibernian Journal* was testily asserting that reports of its death had been greatly exaggerated, noting that declines in all Irish counties were very minor while membership in Cavan had not declined at all.<sup>803</sup> However these figures were misleading as they were comparing 1916 membership with 1918 pre-election membership.

For those that remained their continued existence as an enemy of republicanism would serve to mark them out for targeting in the same way that Protestant Unionists were. In January 1920 the *Hibernian Journal* complained of the 'gross intimidation practised by the adherents of Sinn Féin against members of the Order in rural districts'.<sup>804</sup> Hibernians did not suffer any significant boycotting or targeting for their association with British forces and the majority of them were not suspected of offering any real opposition to the republican movement. Additionally, their Hibernianism was far more easily discarded than the Unionist's Protestantism. As Tim Wilson has argued 'the extend to which boundaries between the grass-roots Hibernian and IRA members remained highly permeable and shifting, therefore, needs restating'<sup>805</sup> Indeed, in his study of Hibernianism in Monaghan Seamus McPhilips described the response of Monaghan Hibernians to this period of intimidation as simply keeping 'a low profile' and not drawing attention to themselves.<sup>806</sup>

While these sorts of incidents extended to activities that were characteristic of Protestant revolutionary experiences – particularly arms raids for rifles left over from the Irish Volunteer days – the scale of these was far smaller. The *Hibernian Journal* recorded few assaults or personal attacks against their members, rather it was their halls that were

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<sup>801</sup> Idem, p. 121; In addition, following partition the numbers in the organisation further diminished as the perceived impotence of constitutional nationalism to solve the new crisis of partition was despaired of.

<sup>802</sup> *Hibernian Journal*, March 1919.

<sup>803</sup> *Hibernian Journal*, June 1919.

<sup>804</sup> *Hibernian Journal*, January 1920.

<sup>805</sup> Wilson, *Frontiers of Violence Conflict and Identity in Ulster and Upper Silesia 1918-1922* (Oxford, 2010) p. 131.

<sup>806</sup> McPhilips, 'Hibernians in Monaghan', p. 22.

targeted.<sup>807</sup> These attacks were similar to attacks on Orange Halls with the focus on humiliation and symbolic damage as much as strategic worth. Such burnings were more common in Cavan than Monaghan.<sup>808</sup> Castletarra Hall in Cavan was tarred, and the walls covered with a drawing of a skeleton and numerous Sinn Féin slogans on the night of 30 November 1918. Earlier in the year a dance in the hall had been impeded when the path outside the hall had been covered in tar.<sup>809</sup> Corcaghan A.O.H. Hall was similarly tarred on 20 July 1919.<sup>810</sup> Clinagor Hall was burned down in October 1920.<sup>811</sup> In other cases the private houses of members were raided to take away only the lodge property that was stored there. In September 1921, Patrick Sherry and Patrick McKenna of Derryrelland were raided and their banners and drums taken away.<sup>812</sup> So extensive were these attacks that in June 1920 the governing body of the Hibernians the Board of Erin declared ‘it was not advisable to expend any more money on halls’.<sup>813</sup>

In Monaghan three Hibernians were shot and accused of informing. Of these, Seamus McPhilips concludes that only Francis McPhilips was actually informing, passing information through a Presbyterian neighbour. Michael O’Brien was allegedly shot when he recognised armed men lying in ambush and called out their name.<sup>814</sup> McPhilips for his part was tied to the gates of Aghabog Catholic church as a warning before being discovered informing again through a mail raid.<sup>815</sup>

Arthur Treanor was a figure who had been at the centre of much of the political violence of the earlier period; he led the throwing of stones and barracking of Sinn Féin speakers at events all across Cavan and Monaghan. He himself was the leader of the Errigal Truagh A.O.H. lodge which had demonstrated the most violence against Sinn Féin in the local election. Here we do see a great deal of similarity to cases of Protestants who were attacked in that it appears that Treanor was attacked on the basis of this prominence and his record of anti-republican activity.<sup>816</sup> Hugh McArdle, president of the

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<sup>807</sup> *Idem*, p. 104.

<sup>808</sup> For examples see *Hibernian Journal*, June 1920; *Hibernian Journal*, May 1920.

<sup>809</sup> *Irish Post and Weekly Telegraph*, 18 January 1919.

<sup>810</sup> *Hibernian Journal*, October 1919; *Northern Standard*, October 11 1919.

<sup>811</sup> *Northern Standard*, 8 October 1920.

<sup>812</sup> Patrick Sherry claim (N.A.I.: FIN/COMP/2/18/244).

<sup>813</sup> Board of Erin Minutes June 1920, (N.A.I.: LOU 13/1/1).

<sup>814</sup> McPhilips, ‘Hibernians in Monaghan’, p. 106.

<sup>815</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>816</sup> B.M.H. Ws. 654 (Francis O’Duffy).

Monaghan A.O.H., declared his belief Treanor was shot ‘because they were Hibernians in an attempt to scare the rest of the organisation’.<sup>817</sup>

Violence against Hibernians was different in a number of ways to violence against Protestants. Besides peaking earlier in the timeline, it clustered more strongly around elections. Hibernians were also more complicit in their own targeting. While Cavan and Monaghan Protestants had marched in the U.V.F. a decade earlier, Hibernians had been involved in full riots against Sinn Féin as recently as a year or two before. The intensity of the Hibernian-Sinn Féin conflict is perhaps surprising given their broadly shared goals however, as we will see when we look at elections in Fermanagh as well, internecine disputes were often much more intense as they were couched in terms of betrayal. Protestants were greeted with a longer and deeper suspicion that informed violence against in a multitude of ways as we have demonstrated in this chapter. Protestants were also targeted in the broader negative context between partition and their understanding of a campaign being perpetrated against them, Protestants understood revolutionary violence committed against them in far more apocalyptic terms.

## Conclusion

This chapter has brought together a number of crucial issues to do with revolutionary violence and how it related to Protestants. In doing this type of investigation it is easy to narrow focus and imply that the Protestant community was suffering the entirety or even the majority of such revolutionary actions when in actual fact they were a minority, albeit an overrepresented one. This chapter does not seek to overemphasise these attacks or try to imply they were the majority revolutionary experience of Cavan and Monaghan. Rather, it correctly characterises a type of revolutionary violence that was extremely significant to those suffering through it and which has been unhelpfully politicised in recent years.<sup>818</sup> It is tempting in an Ireland

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<sup>817</sup> *Northern Standard*, 6 October 1933.

<sup>818</sup> For examples of this politicisation see Robin Bury, *Buried Lives: The Protestants of Southern Ireland* (Dublin, 2017), Eoghan Harris, ‘Letter to the Editor’, 10 October 2009, *Irish Times*; Niall Meehan, *Troubled history: a tenth anniversary critique of Peter Hart’s The IRA and its Enemies* (Dublin, 2008).

seeking definition beyond the national struggle to seize on past wrongs in an effort to complicate our past and invalidate previous myths. However, the attacks suffered by the Protestant community do not represent a fundamental sectarianism to Irish nationalism. Rather, they demonstrate a wider lesson about how the breaking down of a pre-existing social order based on a communal divide generates significant passive points of conflict across that divide. It argues that unless these attacks are placed in the social and communal context we established in Chapter 1 they are not properly understandable.

This chapter contributes to the body of work that has complicated the picture of revolutionary violence as a clean military action.<sup>819</sup> We have emphasised the casual and confused motivations behind many raids and other acts of violence, and their brutality. Recklessness or apathy could be as deadly as hatred in times of war. This was demonstrated again in the section on the most senseless and brutal of all revolutionary actions in the county – the murder of Dean John Finlay. This murder, likely the result of an impulse in the heat of the moment, does not appear to have been an accident but nor was it representative of a more general callousness in the I.R.A. in the Cavan area. However, it does demonstrate the same recklessness we have already seen that such an act could happen even accidentally.

We have examined the key causes for revolutionary violence. This chapter does not seek to argue that Protestant victims of revolutionary violence have been unjustly ignored or that the motivations for such attacks were uniformly sectarian. These attacks were motivated by a range of causes, but most of these were informed by a general suspicion of the Protestant community and that numerous actions, ‘acceptable’ to a Protestant (such as friendship with the R.I.C. or membership of the U.V.F.), were not acceptable to the I.R.A. This meant that revolutionary violence fell far more heavily on the Protestant community than the Catholic.

However even if these attacks were in a minority and more people were affected by boycotting than all the raids in the county combined, they still played into the Protestant sense of social and political precariousness that we established in Chapter 1. This isolation and sense of desperation was most strikingly manifested in the strength of Protestant resistance, especially in Monaghan, despite their strong minority.

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<sup>819</sup> See Hart, *The IRA at War*; Hughes, *Defying the IRA*; Clark, *Everyday Violence*; David Fitzpatrick (ed.), *Terror in Ireland* (Dublin, 2012).



## **Chapter 4: Fermanagh Unionism: Identity and the public sphere**

Our examination of Fermanagh will provide a cross-border counterexample to our studies of Cavan and Monaghan. Here we will look at the issues of Ulster Unionist identity previously examined in Cavan and Monaghan. We shall see how an Ulster Protestant community functioned in a contested public space and how their greater numbers and political security affected their communal relationships. We will also examine how the three-county claim to abandonment was greeted in Fermanagh, their neighbours and the county with the closest connections to Cavan and Monaghan, and the differences in whose relationship with the concept of Ulster. To do this, this chapter will focus on two key areas. First, it will look at how Fermanagh Protestants reacted to partition. This refers both to how they viewed their relationship with the three-county Protestants and how they dealt with the argument that Fermanagh itself should have been included in the South. Second, it examines the issue of local politics and how both debates in local councils and general election campaigns served to alienate the communities from each other in a way that doesn't happen in Cavan or Monaghan.

This chapter draws heavily on two newspapers *The Impartial Reporter* and the *Fermanagh Times*. These papers are used both to provide their own commentary on events but also as the best record of events in local government bodies and on the campaign trail. The view of Fermanagh's Protestantism presented in these papers is important in other ways too as it was, for many in the county, the primary way in which they were informed and engaged in public dialogues about Fermanagh's identity and ultimate political fate. When asked by the Boundary Commission how much knowledge he had of events throughout the county, prominent Pettigo Unionist the Rev Thomas Walmsley, replied 'only what I read in the newspapers'<sup>820</sup> Using these papers as primary sources throughout allows us to see how the political struggles over Fermanagh were framed while using rival papers ensures that it is not one idiosyncratic viewpoint that emerges but one uncontested by both.

Fermanagh Unionism in the revolutionary period was defined by two factors: its boisterous self-confidence in the public sphere and its precariousness as in a Catholic-

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<sup>820</sup> Statement of Rev Thomas Walmsley, Fermanagh County Council Evidence (T.N.A., Boundary Commission files, CAB/61/65).

majority county at a time of partition. While Cavan and Monaghan Protestants understood their fate was largely out of their hands, in Fermanagh there was a greater belief that an active and assertive Unionism was crucial to secure the county's future. These conflicting elements produced a unique Protestant-Unionist culture in Fermanagh that required a more sophisticated and fully-engaged articulation of their identity than was present either in the three counties or elsewhere in Northern Ireland.

### Fermanagh Unionism: Representations of County Unionism, the Border and Partition

This section will engage with how Fermanagh Unionists dealt with two key issues, both related to their precarious position at the time of partition. First, it will discuss how, in the minds of its proponents, Fermanagh could be accorded a Protestant nature in spite of its Catholic majority and implicitly should be included on the northern side of any settlement. Second, we shall look at how partition and the decision to leave behind Cavan, Monaghan and Donegal were greeted in the county.

Fermanagh Unionists existed in an awkward position at the time of partition. Although Fermanagh was markedly more Protestant than its three-county neighbours, it still harboured 34,740 Catholics compared to 27,096 Protestants.<sup>821</sup> If national determination was to be applied on a county by county basis then Fermanagh was at serious risk of failing to qualify. In 1914, Major Frederick Crawford in a letter to Carson referred to the cumulative abandonment of 'the Protestants of Cavan, Donegal, Fermanagh and Monaghan'.<sup>822</sup> Additionally, Protestant control of local bodies in the face of an opposing popular majority was most evident in Fermanagh and required some justification.<sup>823</sup> The Earl of Belmore, testifying to the Boundary Commission in 1925 conflated electoral success in the county with control over its identity: 'The County

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<sup>821</sup> National Archives of Ireland, *Census of Ireland 1901/1911* (<http://www.census.nationalarchives.ie> : accessed 18 July 2018).

<sup>822</sup> Letter of Major Frederick Crawford to Carson, 13 March 1914 (P.R.O.N.I., Carson Papers, D1700/5/17/1/11).

<sup>823</sup> Eamon Phoenix, *Northern Nationalism: Nationalist Politics, Partition and the Catholic Minority in Northern Ireland, 1890-1940* (Belfast, 1994) p. 85.

Councils have been very equally divided. Sometimes one side has the majority and sometimes, the other. Fermanagh is sometimes one side and sometimes the other.<sup>824</sup>

While Paul Bew has rightly emphasised the commitment of the Ulster Unionist party to retaining Fermanagh and Tyrone at all costs, this downplays the contemporary fears over what path negotiations over a final settlement might take and how stable that settlement might be.<sup>825</sup> In particular the future coming of the Boundary Commission, as Laffan as shown, was a terrifying unknown for Protestants close to the border.<sup>826</sup> As the *Fermanagh Times* exhorted its readers to vote in the 1918 general election, it expressed a very real fear of being left behind: ‘this is no mere academic question for us, it is a question of our whole future’ before posing the question ‘will Fermanagh come within the definition of Ulster when the time comes?’<sup>827</sup> In the House of Lords in 1920 Lord Killanin even formally proposed a four county Ulster only to be rebuffed.<sup>828</sup> In the Commons meanwhile Joseph Kenworthy, the Liberal M.P., decried the ‘coercion of Tyrone and Fermanagh’ using the Catholic dominance of the local councils as his evidence that they had ‘declared against partition’.<sup>829</sup> Even within the glow of six-county Ulster, Fermanagh was not, as James Loughlin has shown, portrayed in Unionist ideology as part of the Ulster heartland of Antrim, Down and Belfast.<sup>830</sup>

Fermanagh Unionists propounded a theory of their identity that tied themselves very explicitly with the county itself. Monaghan and especially Cavan Unionists rarely situated their experience solely in their county but rather as part of a broader Ulster movement. For them there was no benefit to emphasising the uniqueness of their situation as this would only draw attention to their minority. Fermanagh Unionism, despite also being a minority, went to great lengths to add this local element to their identity. Nor was there any room for nuance or ancillary political causes in such a precarious world. The Earl of Belmore who had served on Fermanagh County Council and Enniskillen Rural Council since their foundation noted that since the re-emergence of the Home Rule crisis

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<sup>824</sup> Earl of Belmore evidence (T.N.A., Boundary Commission files, CAB 61/30).

<sup>825</sup> Paul Bew, *Ideology and the Irish Question: Ulster Unionism and Irish Nationalism 1912 – 1916* (Oxford, 1994), p. 115.

<sup>826</sup> Michael Laffan, *The Partition of Ireland 1911 – 1925* (Dublin, 1983), p. 92.

<sup>827</sup> *Fermanagh Times*, 28 November 1918.

<sup>828</sup> *Fermanagh Times*, 27 January 1921.

<sup>829</sup> House of Commons Debates, 5th series, vol. 133, 22 October 1920, col. 1270.

<sup>830</sup> James Loughlin, ‘Creating ‘A Social and Geographical Fact’: Regional Identity and the Ulster Question 1880s – 1920s’ in *Past and Present* No. 195 (May, 2007) pp 178 – 160.

in the early 1910s no other political cause had held sway. The county was entirely dominated by Unionist against Nationalist, and Protestant against Catholic.<sup>831</sup>

This theory was articulated most clearly by the editor of the *Impartial Reporter* and prominent local Unionist, William Copeland Trimble. Trimble set out his theory in an editorial at the height of the partition crisis in December 1920. The editorial was titled ‘Fermanagh, a Protestant County: Notwithstanding the Population’. Trimble’s claim was that ‘in a matter of this sort heads do not count.’ In Trimble’s mind the bulk of the Catholic population was made up of two overlapping groups: servants and outsiders – people who are ‘not of the soil’. He identified key communities as being majority Protestant – ‘the landowning, land-occupying, professional, commercial, farming and industrial communities.’<sup>832</sup> Unionists contributed more towards the upkeep of the county and were therefore entitled to a larger part of it. To this group he attributed the features of Fermanagh that made it distinctively so. These were the sort of qualities an Ulster Unionist would value and added a recursive element to his logic:

Its record of peace and order, the maintenance of the law, its sentiments of loyalty and attachment to the constitution, its administration of public business, its ideas of public morality, its code of ethics, its views of honour, its methods of advance, its enforcement of sanitation and cleanliness, its manners traditions and customs<sup>833</sup>

These statements were echoed in the evidence provided by Fermanagh County Council to the Boundary Commission which provide a series of short but consistent statements making various arguments as to why Fermanagh should remain in Northern Ireland. Unusually for evidence provided to the Commission these statements are as frequently based on questions of preference and identity as on economic considerations. Uniformly, these statements professed this regard for similar elements of Fermanagh under Unionism: particularly its efficient administration and record of law and order.<sup>834</sup>

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<sup>831</sup> Earl of Belmore evidence (T.N.A., Boundary Commission files, CAB 61/30).

<sup>832</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 9 December 1920.

<sup>833</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>834</sup> See for example George Lester Statement, Fermanagh County Council Evidence (T.N.A., Boundary Commission files, CAB/61/65).

A representation of Fermanagh Unionists to the U.U.C. in 1925 made similar arguments and complained about the use of a census that was nearly fifteen years out of date at the time. This report demonstrated Unionist dominance of all key professions in the county and well as their prominence on the lists of jurors and ratepayers. It also demonstrated how all the key families of the county were Protestant (such as the Earls of Belmore and Enniskillen).<sup>835</sup>

What this represented was a non-negotiable Fermanagh identity that was defined in very traditional Protestant terms. History and the control of it were crucial to Trimble's view of the county. Fermanagh, before the planters came, did not exist, it was rather a loose collection of farms that were loyal to The Maguire and which were subject to constant raids. It was only Protestant rule and Protestant law which brought peace and allowed the emergence of the modern county. This was an argument echoed by the *Fermanagh Times* in a letter they published by 'Descendant of a Planter' who made the case for a chaotic pre-Protestant Fermanagh even more forcefully: 'The followers of these less or more warlike chiefs lived in wattle and mud huts much like what modern travellers find in Central Africa.'<sup>836</sup>

Trimble's argument contrasted the experience of the 'Catholic' counties with Fermanagh. He referred to Fermanagh's broadly peaceful revolution. This was akin to the experiences of Down and Antrim – counties that were a shorthand for Protestantism and Ulsterism. Against this peaceful Protestant Ulster, Trimble referred to counties dominated by Catholics, which were 'deluged with blood'.<sup>837</sup> If Fermanagh were so Catholic, his argument went, why was its record so much closer to Antrim than to Cork? Violent incidents in the south such as mail raids or arson were characterised in the *Times* as 'typical Irish crime'.<sup>838</sup>

Allusions to these ideas were common on the campaign trail and in local government. In a debate in Enniskillen Guardians on the payment of workhouse officials, a frustrated William Elliott exclaimed 'we are the ratepayers. These are the men who pay the rates. I am a heavy ratepayer and you [Edmund Corrigan, Sinn Féin]

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<sup>835</sup> Bundle of correspondence regarding the boundary of Fermanagh County Council. (P.R.O.N.I., U.U.C. Files, D1327/24/1).

<sup>836</sup> *Fermanagh Times*, 8 September 1921.

<sup>837</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 2 February 3 1922.

<sup>838</sup> *Fermanagh Times*, 2 December 1920.

are not'.<sup>839</sup> In Fermanagh County Council in June 1920, Unionist councillors argued that although they had lost the election, as the largest ratepayers in the county they were entitled to, at least, the vice-chairmanship.<sup>840</sup> Many of the testimonies given by Fermanagh Protestants to the Boundary Commission, such as that by Rev W.B. Naylor of Belcoo, also reference the preponderance of Protestants on the ratebooks as a reason that their vote should be given greater weight.<sup>841</sup> Major Charles Falls, Fermanagh County Council's solicitor, contested the Free State's claim to control of Lough Erne on the basis that Fermanagh County Council had financed the drainage of the lake and that, while the Council was itself evenly split at the time, the project had been funded by the ratepayers and that therefore the Fermanagh Unionist claim to the lake was strongest.<sup>842</sup>

A meeting of Fermanagh County Council in November 1921 degenerated into a shouting match between the two sides. Cahir Healy said of the Unionists present that 'there is not a member on the other side of the table that has not been imported.' This was in response to the Unionist councillor Robinson repeating Trimble's figures about Voter Lists. Specifically, it was in response to a jibe made by Robinson over a supposed Catholic majority of 8,000: 'Mr Healy's majority was merely made up of servant boys and hands from other counties who came up to work on the farm of Unionists. They were not Fermanagh men but came from Donegal and Leitrim. They could not speak for Fermanagh.'<sup>843</sup> The argument was echoed by the Donegal Protestant Association in their representations to the North Eastern Boundary Bureau, noting that the removal of the property requirement from the franchise in the Free State had unfairly undermined their influence.<sup>844</sup> For Robinson the foreign element of the Catholic vote came close to treachery. 'These servant boys are earning their living from Protestants and are trying to betray them'.<sup>845</sup>

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<sup>839</sup> Minutes of Enniskillen Guardians, July 1919 (P.R.O.N.I., Board of Guardians Records, BG/14/A/128). *Impartial Reporter*, 4 July 1919.

<sup>840</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 24 June 1920.

<sup>841</sup> Statement of W.B. Naylor, Fermanagh County Council Evidence (T.N.A., Boundary Commission files, CAB/61/65).

<sup>842</sup> Charles Falls Statement, Fermanagh County Council Evidence (T.N.A., Boundary Commission files, CAB/61/65).

<sup>843</sup> Minutes of Fermanagh County Council, November 1921 (P.R.O.N.I., Local Authority Records, LA/4/2/GA/3);

*Impartial Reporter*, 24 November 1921.

<sup>844</sup> Representation of the Donegal Protestant Association to the North Eastern Boundary Bureau (N.A.I., North Eastern Boundary Bureau files, TAOIS/NEBB/4/3/2).

<sup>845</sup> *Fermanagh Times*, 24 November 1921; *Impartial Reporter*, 24 November 1921.

Any violent or dramatic expressions of a Fermanagh nationalism could be discounted as an imported nuisance.<sup>846</sup> The Enniskillen boycott was understood more easily by Unionists if it was blamed on servant boys from Leitrim as it was by an anonymous writer ‘Fermanagh Radical’ in a letter of 15 November 1921.<sup>847</sup> In the same month, ‘South Tyrone Radical’ wrote a letter making the same claim but also adding an accusation that the servants were betraying their employers to the I.R.A. by providing information to the raiding parties. Their recommendation was to fire all foreign labourers and let them return over the border ‘and serve Roman Catholic masters, where their pay will be lighter and their diet too’.<sup>848</sup> The *Fermanagh Times* reported that of the sixteen men brought up to Fermanagh Assizes on serious charges in March 1922 only three were from the county and complained of the county’s good name being ruined by such imports.<sup>849</sup>

This assertion that native born Fermanagh people were majority Protestant and that the county’s Catholic majority was an importation has little to do with demographic reality and certainly ignores Protestant ‘imports’ from elsewhere in Ulster and Britain. Taking the 1911 census, we can see that the Fermanagh-born population of the county stood at 85% of the total population. Of this population 57% were Catholic which is actually slightly higher than the overall rate of Catholicism in the county of 56%. Additionally, while Cavan-born people in the county were heavily Catholic they not entirely so. 28% of Cavan migrants to Fermanagh in 1911 were non-Catholic and 39% of Monaghan migrants.<sup>850</sup> When Major Charles Falls made a similar claim to the Boundary Commission he was greeted with scepticism as Eóin MacNeill noted that the county was not sufficiently agricultural for there to be a large market for hiring itinerant labourers.<sup>851</sup> Rather the idea was so pervasive due to its obvious political use and to the reassurance it offered the often-beleaguered Unionists in the county. For the *Fermanagh*

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<sup>846</sup> See for example Charles Falls Statement, Fermanagh County Council Evidence (T.N.A., Boundary Commission files, CAB/61/65).

<sup>847</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 17 November 1921.

<sup>848</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 10 November 1921.

<sup>849</sup> *Fermanagh Times*, 16 March 1922.

<sup>850</sup> All data from National Archives of Ireland, *Census of Ireland 1901/1911* (<http://www.census.nationalarchives.ie>: accessed 18 July 2018).

<sup>851</sup> Interview with Major Charles Falls, Fermanagh County Council Evidence (T.N.A., Boundary Commission files, CAB/61/66).

*Times*, for example, it served to explain away the Nationalist majority on the County Council.<sup>852</sup>

The ideas of a border and of a distinctive Ulster were crucial to the Unionist identity. As William Cassidy of Tievegarrow said to the Boundary Commission: ‘all our traditions and history are bound up with Northern Ireland.’<sup>853</sup> These elements were as present in Fermanagh as they were in Cavan and Monaghan. However, they are used in different ways. In Cavan and Monaghan, Ulster presented a chance to escape a nationalist government. It was an identity they had to constantly assert and defend. In Fermanagh, Unionists were less concerned about defending their own place within Ulster and more concerned about policing the meaning of the term.

Of great importance was defining the limits of Ulster. The preoccupation of Fermanagh Unionists with attributing an ‘Ulster’ character to areas was primarily a consequence of the uncertainty of the limits of Ulster after the abandonment of the nine-county principle and the creation of a border Buckland has described as ‘geographically absurd’.<sup>854</sup> Trimble, when discussing the electoral map of Fermanagh, claimed that South Fermanagh would have returned a Unionist M.P. in all previous elections were it not for the western shores of Upper Lough Erne, such an area was unnatural as it ‘formerly belonged to the province of Connaught’.<sup>855</sup> For Trimble, the Catholic majority in this area and its supposed non-Ulster status were therefore linked. Roslea was declared after its troubles to belong ‘more to Monaghan than Fermanagh’.<sup>856</sup>

It was clear that within the province there were varying degrees of belonging. Cavan, in particular, was described as being only marginally of Ulster. As Trimble said dismissively ‘County Cavan was not in the ancient Ulster, it was in Connaught.’<sup>857</sup> The *Fermanagh Times* began to refer to the nine-counties as ‘geographical Ulster’.<sup>858</sup> Meanwhile northern areas of Monaghan seemed to be regarded as partly in Ulster, even if we can only infer this through half references in text focused on other matters. In talking about the lack of knowledge between North and South the *Reporter* said

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<sup>852</sup> *Fermanagh Times*, 22 December 1922.

<sup>853</sup> William Cassidy Statement, Fermanagh County Council Evidence (T.N.A., Boundary Commission files, CAB/61/65).

<sup>854</sup> Buckland, *Irish Unionism II*, p. 118.

<sup>855</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 9 December 1920.

<sup>856</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 27 July 1922.

<sup>857</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 9 December 1920.

<sup>858</sup> *Fermanagh Times*, 22 April 1922.



‘Listowel, or Kilmallock or Bruree are as little known to Ulster folk as are Clones and Cookstown and Downpatrick to Southerners.’<sup>859</sup> North Monaghan was also suggested as one of the areas of the Free State most likely to be incorporated into the North.<sup>860</sup>

Despite this prevalent idea that the three counties were less ‘of Ulster’, six-county partition was not ideologically unproblematic. That Ulster could be broken up was controversial in Fermanagh, even if this was often justified not in terms of friendship and solidarity with Cavan, Monaghan and Donegal but through inward-looking anxieties about future fate of Fermanagh.<sup>861</sup> The *Fermanagh Times* republished a letter written to the *Irish Times* by T.F. Stack, the rector of Langfield in Tyrone, expressing misgivings about partition partially due to sympathy with the three counties but primarily due to a fear that once the concept of Ulster was undermined in this way then Derry City, Fermanagh and Tyrone all lost their best justification to belong to Northern Ireland – namely that they were in Ulster. Once this fact was no longer the key national determinant for a county then areas with Catholic majorities had a much stronger argument to defect southwards.<sup>862</sup> Stack repeated his argument years later to the Boundary Commission.<sup>863</sup> This was similar to the argument taken outside of Ulster by the *Daily Mail* who felt such a settlement ‘stereotyped partition and renounces the spirit of Union.’<sup>864</sup>

Despite this, the general consensus in the county was to support the partition settlement. For many Fermanagh Unionists it represented an ideal resolution of the partition crisis. A six-county Northern state had the largest possible Protestant majority while still incorporating Fermanagh. The plight of the three counties following partition was greeted with occasional sympathy in Fermanagh but little organised support. Responses were largely rhetorical and as much to assuage their own consciences. Trimble, writing for the *Reporter*, said that the cause of the three counties ‘excited great sympathy’ but contented himself with repeating the Unionist position on why six counties were preferable to nine.<sup>865</sup> On occasion a nine-county state was dismissed as

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<sup>859</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 3 August 1922.

<sup>860</sup> *Northern Standard*, 3 February 1922.

<sup>861</sup> Buckland, *Irish Unionism II*, p. 118.

<sup>862</sup> *Fermanagh Times*, 29 April 1920.

<sup>863</sup> Evidence of T.F. Stack (T.N.A., Boundary Commission files, CAB 61/135).

<sup>864</sup> *Fermanagh Times*, 29 April 1920.

<sup>865</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 18 March 1920.

an inevitable result of the Boundary Commission.<sup>866</sup> The *Reporter* by 1922 was reporting on events in Cavan and Monaghan as part of its broader ‘South and West’ news section.<sup>867</sup>

Fermanagh delegates to the Ulster Council in 1920 did sign a petition to the Ulster Council requesting a meeting to reconsider exclusion and were motivated by the potential resignation of the three county delegates. However, while eighty-six delegates from the six counties signed the document only six of them were from Fermanagh – only half of the total delegates sent by the county to the Council.<sup>868</sup> These delegates were James Cooper, Cecil Lowry-Corry, C.C. D’Arcy-Irvine, Col. Doran, Brigadier-General Ricardo and R.W. Strathearn.<sup>869</sup> Indeed while Buckland describes the pro-partition element in the U.U.C. as a ‘Belfast clique’, of all county delegates those from Fermanagh appeared to be the most in favour of the settlement.<sup>870</sup> Northern signatories to a representation on behalf of the three counties included no Fermanagh voices and only two from Tyrone. The majority of such signatories came from Down and Antrim, areas with sufficient Protestant majorities that they did not need to fear continued inclusion of the Catholic-heavy three counties.<sup>871</sup> Nor did any Fermanagh delegates resign in protest at the decision.<sup>872</sup> Fermanagh Unionism was roused to a far greater extent only a year later when the county’s Unionist Association unanimously passed a bill opposing any change in the boundaries of a six county Ulster.<sup>873</sup>

This is not to portray Fermanagh Unionism as a single united body. The *Fermanagh Times* was less enthusiastic about the settlement and reported in April 1920 that ‘some of the strongest Unionists in County Fermanagh fully share this opinion [against exclusion] and are altogether in sympathy with the Loyalist population of Cavan, Monaghan and Donegal.’<sup>874</sup> Public, political expressions of regret were uncommon but present. In a speech to the Enniskillen Guardians in February 1923, W.J. Brown, an Enniskillen Guardian, stated that the Northern Parliament should have

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<sup>866</sup> *Northern Standard*, 3 February 1922; *Impartial Reporter*, September 14 1922.

<sup>867</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 26 October 1922.

<sup>868</sup> Delegates extracted from U.U.C. Annual Reports (P.R.O.N.I., J. Milne Barbour files, D972/17).

<sup>869</sup> *Fermanagh Times*, 6 May 1920.

<sup>870</sup> Buckland, *Irish Unionism II*, p. 120.

<sup>871</sup> Representation on behalf of the three counties, April 1920 (P.R.O.N.I., U.U.C. files, D1327/18/28).

<sup>872</sup> Correspondence with the U.U.C. secretary including letters of resignation, May 1920 (P.R.O.N.I., U.U.C. files, D1327/18/30).

<sup>873</sup> *Fermanagh Times*, 10 November 1921.

<sup>874</sup> *Fermanagh Times*, 22 April 1920.

included Cavan, Monaghan and Donegal, and that their majority in the province had been sufficient to still guarantee Protestant domination.<sup>875</sup> In a letter of April 1920, Colonel Robert Doran head of Brookeborough Unionist Club, told Richard Dawson Bates that he could not ‘go against the three excluded counties in whom without a doubt there are true hearted loyalists.’<sup>876</sup>

Even when such expressions did exist they were not overly concerned with the problematic Ulster of Cavan or Monaghan and rather focused on either Donegal or the Covenant itself. In August 1920 at the Enniskillen celebrations of the Relief of Derry a speech was made by the Rev. Thomas Walmsley regretting the loss of his cross-border friends. However, this speech was referring solely to Donegal men. Cavan and Monaghan men were not referred to.<sup>877</sup> Hugh de Fellenberg Montgomery expressed hope that Donegal, due to its unique geographical position, may be ultimately included in Northern Ireland.<sup>878</sup> When pushed on why he had signed the petition against partition in May 1920, James Cooper, member of Enniskillen Council and future Northern M.P., reported that he and all the Fermanagh delegates to the Ulster Council had voted ‘to maintain the Covenant and keep the nine counties in Ulster’ and that this vote was motivated by the position of Donegal and the Protestants of Pettigo, not Cavan or Monaghan.<sup>879</sup>

While Ulster was portrayed as a geographic entity it was also understood in terms of community. The Ulsterman was an ethnic construction not a geographic one and Ulster was simply where they congregated. It was inherently exclusive of Catholics. As Trimble asserted: ‘In Ireland there are two races... races divergent in national traits and characters... The Ulsterman (two-thirds Scotch and one-third of him English) is altogether a different man from the Irish Celt.’<sup>880</sup>

Their community’s victories were celebrated along traditional religious lines – Archdale’s victory in the 1918 election against Kevin O’Shiel was celebrated by the

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<sup>875</sup> Minutes of Enniskillen Guardians, February 1923 (P.R.O.N.I., Board of Guardians Records, BG/14/A/134);

*Fermanagh Herald*, 10 February 1923.

<sup>876</sup> Letter from Robert Doran to Richard Dawson Bates, April 1920 (P.R.O.N.I., U.U.C. files, D1327/18/28).

<sup>877</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 19 August 1920.

<sup>878</sup> Letter from John Scott to Hugh de Fellenberg Montgomery, 8 April 1920 (P.R.O.N.I., Hugh de Fellenberg Montgomery Papers, D627/435/24).

<sup>879</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 17 August 1922.

<sup>880</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 8 March 1917; See also *Impartial Reporter*, 20 July 1922.

ringing of the Anglican Church's bells in Enniskillen, to the chagrin of the local reverend, Canon Webb. Regarding his complaints that those who rang the bells were Presbyterian the *Fermanagh Times* jocularly asserted that it was an Ulster Protestant victory and should be celebrated as such.<sup>881</sup>

This mode of thinking and acting reinforced Fermanagh's Protestant nature. The association of place with a specific community instead of geography allowed Fermanagh Unionists to place their own political identity central to the exclusion of their opponent. In his testimony to the Boundary Commission the Earl of Belmore proposed that although the county was Catholic, the central and most important part of it around Enniskillen was strongly Protestant.<sup>882</sup> Major Charles Falls also argued that, as Enniskillen was the most important town in the county and had been constructed by 'Unionist ratepayers', the county was indivisible and non-transferable.<sup>883</sup> In his meetings with Collins, Craig identified Enniskillen as one of the key areas over which Northern Ireland would not negotiate.<sup>884</sup>

Partition presented an opportunity to create a 'homogeneous Ulster' to the degree that the *Reporter* entertained some discussion about the abandoning of certain contested Ulster areas such as Belleek and Roslea.<sup>885</sup> James Cooper openly floated the idea of trading the majority of the Belleek region of the county for areas around Pettigo.<sup>886</sup> Major Charles Falls contested the idea that the southern, heavily Catholic half of Fermanagh up to Lough Erne should be transferred in its entirety. For Falls, some of the strongest Unionist areas such as Florencecourt, Letterbreen and Crum were south of Lough Erne and were so crucial to the identity of the county that they could not be abandoned.<sup>887</sup>

Any solution other than partition was to mean the subjugation of Ulstermen.<sup>888</sup> In a speech of November 1922, William Coote M.P. for Tyrone, declared the willingness of Ulstermen and the Orange Order to 'make Ulster safe' before noting that the road to

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<sup>881</sup> *Fermanagh Times*, 9 January 1919.

<sup>882</sup> Evidence of Earl Belmore (T.N.A., Boundary Commission files, CAB 61/30).

<sup>883</sup> Charles Falls Statement, Fermanagh County Council Evidence (T.N.A., Boundary Commission files, CAB/61/65).

<sup>884</sup> Laffan, *The Partition of Ireland*, p. 93.

<sup>885</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 19 February 1920.

<sup>886</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 17 August 1922.

<sup>887</sup> Interview with Major Charles Falls, Fermanagh County Council Evidence (T.N.A., Boundary Commission files, CAB/61/66).

<sup>888</sup> *Fermanagh Times*, 8 September 1921; *Impartial Reporter*, 7 March 1918.

Irish independence had been ‘strewn with the bodies of Loyalists.’<sup>889</sup> The states of both areas reflected the people in it. This played into the broader Fermanagh Protestant narrative. As another editorial put it: ‘Southern Ireland is a fitting commentary on the Southern Irish: they have made it what it is: and Ulstermen have made the North what it is.’<sup>890</sup>

While the degree of violence in the three counties elicited sympathy for their brethren across the border it also further reinforced their view of their own separateness. An anonymous article published in *Blackwood’s Magazine* described the crossing of the border into the six counties as the transition into Ulster and its Protestant inhabitants as ‘quite a different race.’<sup>891</sup> Violence in the three Ulster counties was not presented as different in character from violence in Munster, Leinster or Connacht. ‘The contest between Fermanagh and Tyrone and the Free State is visibly apparent. Here, close to us, in the County of Monaghan, in this very diocese of Clogher, scarcely a week passes without a railway bridge being injured or a signal cabin burned.’<sup>892</sup>

Fear was expressed that they will be converted into a ‘King’s County to Clare or Monaghan or Cork.’<sup>893</sup> Donegal was experiencing a ‘reign of terror’, in Cavan there was a ‘War on Protestants’, while the Monaghan Twelfth were cancelled because of a ‘vendetta against Protestants.’<sup>894</sup> In 1922, the *Fermanagh Times* sent a reporter to the border village of Pettigo following fighting between the I.R.A. and Northern Irish forces in the region. The reporter expressed his surprise that the arrival of the Free State into the town ‘has not been attended by the serious disadvantages and terrors for the loyalist population which were generally anticipated’. It added darkly: ‘how long the present... condition will prevail is quite a different matter.’<sup>895</sup>

These reports became particularly pronounced following partition and the establishment of the border which was portrayed as a bulwark against the chaos

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<sup>889</sup> County Inspectors Report for Fermanagh September 1922 (P.R.O.N.I., Home Office files, HA/32/1/129).

<sup>890</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 13 July 1922. See also *Fermanagh Times*, 7 March 1918.

<sup>891</sup> ‘Ulster in 1921’ in *Blackwood’s Magazine* No. MCCIXIV Vol. CCXII (October, 1922), p 431.

<sup>892</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 14 December 1922.

<sup>893</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 14 December 1922.

<sup>894</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, May 26 1921; *Impartial Reporter*, June 29 1922; *Impartial Reporter*, January 4 1923; For examples in the *Fermanagh Times* see *Fermanagh Times*, 16 February 1923 & *Fermanagh Times*, 29 June 1922.

<sup>895</sup> *Fermanagh Times*, 25 January 1922.

immediately beyond it.<sup>896</sup> The *Fermanagh Times* constantly expressed fear that the southern border of the county, particularly south of Lough Erne, was being ‘surrendered’ and the whole area ‘subject to Free State rule’.<sup>897</sup> The paper also published a poem by an undetermined author in March 1922 that captured this sense of paranoia:

And motor cars are dashing  
Each packed with men at post haste speed  
To the border racing madly  
For time means gain and the pace is hot  
With the roads cut up so badly

And terror filled each village  
For treach’rous foes at dead of night  
With fire and sword were trying  
To kill all those of English blood  
Who in their bed were lying.<sup>898</sup>

There was sympathy for the individual southern Protestant victims of revolutionary violence although this sympathy was put to a political use as evidence of the inherent sectarianism of the south and therefore as an argument to exclude Fermanagh from the Free State. Cases like that of Johnston Hewitt of Cloverhill, Cavan, were promoted under headlines like ‘chasing the Protestants out of Cavan’.<sup>899</sup> As in Cavan and Monaghan, it was held as true that Protestants were being specifically targeted in the South and being driven out. The *Reporter* frequently characterised these as a ‘War on Protestantism.’<sup>900</sup> David Fitzpatrick has also suggested that such events were used to further alienate Ulster Unionist opinion and justify a hard-line official policy being taken in negotiations with the Free State.<sup>901</sup>

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<sup>896</sup> Ulster in 1921’ in *Blackwood’s Magazine* No. MCCIXIV Vol. CCXII (October, 1922) p 428 - 30.

<sup>897</sup> *Fermanagh Times*, 20 April 1922; *Fermanagh Times*, 4 May 1922.

<sup>898</sup> *Fermanagh Times*, 9 March 1922; These are selected lines only, the full poem is 40 lines.

<sup>899</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 6 July 1922.

<sup>900</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 19 May 1921; *Impartial Reporter*, March 24 1921; *Impartial Reporter*, 16 June 1921; *Impartial Reporter*, 4 May 1922.

<sup>901</sup> Fitzpatrick, *Two Irelands*, p. 121.

The Boundary Commission received a lengthy submission from Fermanagh County Council with statements of loyalists who claimed to have been driven out of the south and who were unable to return. James Johnston formerly of Bawnboy, went so far as to claim that half of all Protestants in his district had been terrorised and driven from the district.<sup>902</sup> While the pictures of a lawless, sectarian South were drawn crudely in these statements they touched upon a genuine fear held by Fermanagh Protestants of what their position would be in the Free State. This fear in turn added to their sense of precariousness which added to their sense of fear. George Lester of Roslea, a town right on the border with Monaghan, complained to the Boundary Commission:

There is a good deal of distress in the Electoral Division... the horrors of 1921 are too fresh in our memories for us to view with anything but the greatest alarm the transfer of any part of our territory into what is to us a hostile country.<sup>903</sup>

The ‘horrors of 1921’ was likely a reference to the attack on members of the B Specials in Roslea which will be examined in Chapter 5. Despite such an event being motivated and carried out by Fermanaghmen as much as Monaghanmen, it re-entrenched the Fermanagh Protestant fear of the land south of the border as lawless and sectarian.

Within its own territory, Fermanagh Protestantism was more confident and expressive than in Cavan or Monaghan. There were no areas in the three counties so Unionist as Ballinamallard or Lisbellaw where an Orange march could be greeted with ‘Welcome’ strung out across the street.<sup>904</sup> The end of the Great War in Enniskillen was greeted with far more public participation than it was in Carrickmacross. The town was ‘beflagged by the Protestant people’ while celebrations carried on into the night.<sup>905</sup> Or as in Maguiresbridge where a torchlight procession marched twice around the town.<sup>906</sup> The

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<sup>902</sup> James Johnston Statement, Fermanagh County Council Evidence (T.N.A., Boundary Commission files, CAB 61/64). As we will see in Chapter 6 this was not the case.

<sup>903</sup> George Lester Statement, Fermanagh County Council Evidence (T.N.A., Boundary Commission files, CAB/61/65).

<sup>904</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 14 July 1921.

<sup>905</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 14 November 1918.

<sup>906</sup> *Fermanagh Times*, 14 November 1918.

anniversary of the relief of Derry saw a parade in 1917 that allegedly took a full half an hour to pass by.<sup>907</sup> An Orange demonstration in Enniskillen on 12 August 1920 drew in thousands of people and over fifty bands, according to the County Inspector.<sup>908</sup>

Such events also served to further divide the community as it made their differences more visible and public. The *Reporter* noted of the victory celebration in Enniskillen that the bunting ‘while embracing three-fourths of the main streets was confined almost entirely to one section of the population.’<sup>909</sup> These events also enabled more divisive rhetoric than would have been safe in Cavan or Monaghan. We shall see later how Edward Archdale’s acceptance speech following his victory in the 1918 election nearly incited a riot. At the 1920 Twelfth, William Coote felt strong enough to threaten Sinn Féin that outrages would result in parish priests being taken as hostages.<sup>910</sup>

After partition Northern and southern loyalists only celebrated such events together on rare occasions. Following the Roslea burning, the Monaghan Chapter of the Royal Black Institution confirm that it would hold its annual march in Clones that year and would be joined by the Cavan and Fermanagh branches.<sup>911</sup> However, it was between Fermanagh and Tyrone that the greatest number of shared events were now seen.

### Local Politics

Outside of public displays of Protestantism and Unionism, the implementation of the Unionist identity in local bodies accentuated these divisions. Discussion in local councils was based on the political divide and on religion. With the difference in numbers so slight, the prizes of political dominance – appointments, officerships and policy – became flashpoints. The Earl of Belmore described the demographic divisions of the county to the Boundary Commission based on who controlled which local bodies and placed great importance on the long-term Unionist control of Enniskillen Urban Council.<sup>912</sup> Nationalists were similarly boisterous about their own successes in electoral

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<sup>907</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 16 August 1917.

<sup>908</sup> County Inspector’s Returns Fermanagh, August 1920 (T.N.A.: CO/904/116).

<sup>909</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 14 November 1918.

<sup>910</sup> *Fermanagh Times*, 15 July 1920; *Impartial Reporter*, 15 July 1920.

<sup>911</sup> *Northern Standard*, 10 June 1922.

<sup>912</sup> Earl of Belmore evidence (T.N.A., Boundary Commission files, CAB 61/30).



politics.<sup>913</sup> In a letter to Lord Farnham in March 1919, Hugh de Fellenberg Montgomery expressed his opposition to electoral reform that would increase Catholic presence on local bodies and reduce ‘the already too small section of Ireland where Unionists and Protestants have any chance of obtaining appointments.’<sup>914</sup> We find a tension and drama in Enniskillen local governance that is not present in Cavan or Monaghan. This tension was particularly evident in the contestable bodies of the County Council and the Enniskillen local boards – the Urban and Rural District Councils and the Enniskillen Board of Guardians.

The intention here is not to discuss how these elections were contested or what electoral policy the parties followed. These are less useful points of contrast with Cavan-Monaghan, as the Unionist minority there was sufficiently small that even the most shameless gerrymandering would have been wasted. Instead focus shall be on the inter-party dynamics that emerge. Of particular concern here are the cross-communal relationships that were maintained (or alienated), the ways in which parties articulated their causes and how the difference between both groups was expressed and reinforced.

In a county of such fine political margins attendance was crucial. As early as April 1917, the *Reporter* lamented the failure of the Protestant members of the County Council to adequately attend. Only George Arnold of Lisnaskea was identified as ‘always at his post, always true to his principles’.<sup>915</sup> In 1920, the Nationalist members of the Enniskillen Guardians would pass a vote recognising Dáil Éireann by waiting for the Unionist members to leave following normal business but holding that until the Chairman left his chair the meeting had not finished. They were then able to pass a resolution ‘unanimously’.<sup>916</sup> In a letter to the editor of the *Reporter*, ‘Unionist Ratepayer’ wrote that the three Unionist candidates for Kesh and Lisnaskea might have been returned and control of the Council given to them for the next three years had there been greater party organisation in the area.<sup>917</sup> They learned their lesson: in the 1923 election the North

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<sup>913</sup> Phoenix, *Northern Nationalism*, p. 85.

<sup>914</sup> Letter from Hugh de Fellenberg Montgomery to Lord Farnham, 25 March 1919 (P.R.O.N.I., Hugh de Fellenberg Montgomery Papers, D627/437/62).

<sup>915</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 12 April 1917.

<sup>916</sup> *Fermanagh Herald*, 24 December 1921; *Impartial Reporter*, 24 June 1920.

<sup>917</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 10 June 1920.

Eastern Boundary Bureau noted the Unionists were calling into service every available vehicle to maximise turnout.<sup>918</sup>

Great importance was attached to the control of local bodies and significant efforts made to obtain them. De Fellenberg Montgomery maintained that Unionist successes in local elections in 1918 had been the key factor in swinging government support for a six instead of four county partition.<sup>919</sup> In 1922 after the disbarment of the Labour Councillor Campling from the Fermanagh Technical Committee, the Unionist members of the County Council were reported to have had replaced him not with a member of the same political persuasion but with a fellow Unionist, David Reilly.<sup>920</sup> The *Fermanagh Herald* sarcastically lauded this “tolerant” policy.<sup>921</sup>

In July 1921 Nationalists attempting to elect one of their own as county secretary tried to include the chairmen of two Rural District Councils (Beleek and Clones No.2) that had been made defunct after amalgamation. The Nationalist claim was that such men were still members of the Council until the next election. This type of wrangling over could vote and who could not was common. Ultimately, the Nationalist chairman of the Council, McHugh, decided against including the Nationalist members, noting the High Court’s recent ruling against their inclusion.<sup>922</sup>

The 1918 election of the Chair of Enniskillen Board of Guardians proved contentious. The discussion began with a conciliatory tone as the Unionist chairman John Crozier announced his intention to step down and nominated a Catholic, Patrick Crumley, the Home Rule M.P., as his replacement. Crumley was seconded by two Unionist members in Lord Belmore and Robert O’Hara. Belmore was effusive saying they ‘could not have a better man than Mr Crumley.’

The move was opposed by another Unionist, F.R. Carson, who nominated his fellow Unionist W.J. Brown. Carson professed no ill will to Crumley but said that the chairman should be in a position to attend regularly. Brown accepted the nomination as

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<sup>918</sup> Research on 1923 Northern Ireland Election (N.A.I.: North Eastern Boundary Bureau files, NAI TAOIS/NEBB/1/1/6).

<sup>919</sup> Letter from Hugh de Fellenberg Montgomery to Lord Farnham, 25 March 1919 (P.R.O.N.I., Hugh de Fellenberg Montgomery Papers, D627/437/62).

<sup>920</sup> Minutes of Fermanagh County Council, September 1922 (P.R.O.N.I., Local Authority Records, LA/4/2/GA/3).

<sup>921</sup> *Fermanagh Herald*, 23 September 1922.

<sup>922</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 18 August 1921: *Impartial Reporter*, 25 August 1921.

a 'farmer's candidate' being nominated to represent that group. We have seen already that implicit in Fermanagh Unionism was the conflation of large farmer/landholder with Protestant Unionist. The *Reporter* recorded Brown's candidacy as one for the Unionists and not one for the farmers. Only O'Hara voted for Crumley among the Unionists. Lord Belmore reversed his vote to revert to party lines.<sup>923</sup>

The previously cordial tone swiftly changed. Nationalist member Meehan shouted across the table to Brown that he was 'well pleased you got a beating. To grab a seat is a thing our side of the house would not attempt.'<sup>924</sup> This is a dynamic we see in neighbouring Tyrone. Following the election of the Duke of Abercorn as chairman of the County Council in June 1919 an official complaint was lodged by the Nationalists, not against the popular Abercorn personally, but against the principle of a Protestant chairman in a Catholic county.<sup>925</sup>

These contests died down after partition, when Unionists, backed by the new Belfast government, assumed control of local government under a veil of business as normal. Although initially local elections were conducted under Proportional Representation which gave nationalists control of the County Council and a number of local councils, this was quickly abandoned 'to safeguard the loyalist interest.'<sup>926</sup> Additionally paid council officers were required to take a declaration of allegiance.<sup>927</sup> Enniskillen District Council redrew its political boundaries to achieve a Unionist voting majority of one despite the district's Catholic majority. Even this majority had only been achieved after numerous nationalist candidates in Florencecourt were struck off when too many of them had been nominated.<sup>928</sup>

While this process was characterised by Laffan as the new Belfast government asserting its control over its sovereign territory, it was also a more local endeavour.<sup>929</sup> It represented the return of Fermanagh government into the care of Fermanagh Unionists, its traditional place. Enniskillen Guardians, the most acrimonious of all bodies, was brought under Unionist control. Shorn of its Cavan constituencies the Board obtained its

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<sup>923</sup> Minutes of Enniskillen Guardians, June 1918 (P.R.O.N.I., Board of Guardians Records, BG/14/A/126); *Impartial Reporter*, 13 June 1918.

<sup>924</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>925</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 12 June 1919.

<sup>926</sup> Phoenix, *Northern Nationalism*, p. 243.

<sup>927</sup> Fitzpatrick, *Two Irelands*, p. 155.

<sup>928</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 16 June 1921.

<sup>929</sup> Laffan, *The Partition of Ireland*, p. 91.

first Unionist majority in twenty-four years.<sup>930</sup> Joseph Geddis was put forward as a candidate and defined in traditional Unionist terms as ‘a large ratepayer’. Lord Belmore expressed regret at losing the services of Edmund Corrigan as chairman but attributed it to ‘the fortune of war’. He hoped that in the future one of the Catholics may be put in one of the lower chairmen but ‘the Unionists had not had a chair for 21 years, and it was time now that they got one.’<sup>931</sup>

For Unionists gerrymandering and other abuses could be explained away as a response to the electoral malpractices of the Catholics themselves (like the aforementioned ‘importing’ of voters) or as an attempt to preserve the ‘natural’ order in the county.<sup>932</sup> In a speech in the House of Commons in February 1922, Captain Charles Craig M.P. for South Antrim, claimed that there were many districts with a Catholic majority only because the Protestant population had been disproportionately killed in the War and that therefore any change in electoral representation made due to their absence would be grossly unfair.<sup>933</sup>

The issue of patronage and of limiting the boons of local political power to within your own community was a common point of contention between the groups and one of the main sources of conflict. In November 1921, the Chairman of the County Council John McHugh made a speech calling for the introduction of competitive examinations instead of appointments to all future Council jobs. ‘His experience of public Boards was that each party that got into power believed that its friends should be placed in the positions whether they were fully qualified or not’.<sup>934</sup>

The issue was particularly prominent on the Boards of Guardians who were responsible for appointing and setting the wage for a number of important positions. Older holders of offices were more likely to have been appointed by Unionist-dominated Councils and so the degree to which preference for a job was to be given to the incumbent also became politicised. In McHugh’s speech to the Council, Protestant and Catholic

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<sup>930</sup> J.M. Geddis Statement, Fermanagh County Council Evidence (T.N.A., Boundary Commission files, CAB/61/65).

<sup>931</sup> *Fermanagh Herald*, 18 June 1921; *Fermanagh Herald*, 25 June 1921; *Impartial Reporter*, 16 June 1921.

<sup>932</sup> For a spirited defence of Unionist policy towards gerrymandering see: Interview with Major Charles Falls, Fermanagh County Council Evidence (T.N.A., Boundary Commission files, CAB/61/66).

<sup>933</sup> House of Commons Debates, 5th series, vol. 150, 8 February 1922, col. 188.

<sup>934</sup> Minutes of Fermanagh County Council, November 1921 (P.R.O.N.I., Local Authority Records, LA/4/2/GA/3).

were split cleanly as to whether some preference should be given to pre-existing office holders.<sup>935</sup> This is a complaint seen in Cavan and Monaghan but only from the Unionist community railing against Catholic domination of the local bodies such as in Colonel Madden's complaint that 'Whenever a place is going to which a salary is attached then I say the principle acted upon is that no Unionist need apply.'<sup>936</sup>

A neat example of how this dynamic worked can be seen in a meeting of the agricultural committee of the County Council to appoint a County Veterinary Inspector which was marked by the presence of numerous Nationalist and Sinn Féin members who were disqualified from attendance. After a complaint was raised by Richard Strathearn, a Unionist, three Catholic members were reluctantly removed. Of the three candidates, the incumbent, Herbert, was Protestant while the other two, Harte and Donnelly, were Catholics. Following this removal of voters, Harte withdrew from the vote and Donnelly was elected to replace Herbert.<sup>937</sup>

The political element of this was often explicit. In July 1921 attempts were made by Sinn Féin to secure for Thomas Corrigan the position of county secretary following the death of the previous holder. Corrigan was a noted republican and objections to his suitability were raised by the Unionist councillors. Buckland has noted that in the case of Corrigan it was not necessarily his political convictions that made him unacceptable as a candidate but his previous prison sentence for political agitation.<sup>938</sup> In response to a remark made by the Chairman of the Council that if Corrigan had been a staunch Protestant he would not have had such trouble, it was responded that if Mr West (assistant secretary at the time) had been Catholic he would not have been passed over.<sup>939</sup>

The trouble re-emerged a month later when six republican councillors signed a resolution demanding West's resignation and the immediate appointment of Corrigan.<sup>940</sup> Cahir Healy disingenuously claimed they put forward the resolution as a 'business proposition and he hoped that there would be no political heat or recriminations.' He

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<sup>935</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 2 November 1921.

<sup>936</sup> *Northern Standard*, 2 December 1920.

<sup>937</sup> Minutes of Fermanagh County Council, March 1921 (P.R.O.N.I., Local Authority Records, LA/4/2/GA/3);

*Impartial Reporter*, 10 March 1921.

<sup>938</sup> Buckland, *Irish Unionism II*, p. 150.

<sup>939</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 2 August 1921.

<sup>940</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 18 August 1921: The members were James McCorry, John Cassidy, John McLoughlin, Cahir Healy and James McGrath. McHugh the Chairman did not sign.

assured West too that he had no issues with how he did his business but that he held five public offices and had sufficient responsibilities while Corrigan had been elected and therefore entitled to the office.<sup>941</sup> The attempt was finally ended in September 1921 when the I.P.P. and Unionists voted together to defeat a Sinn Féin motion.<sup>942</sup>

The greatest conflicts between the two factions (three if we allow for the I.P.P.) came at obvious moments of symbolic power. Responses to issues like conscription, partition and acts of violence were a far greater divider between the two communities.<sup>943</sup> The power of the resolution and the protest trumped that of the appointment. The Earl of Belmore noted later that although business in the councils very often passed with no reference to politics there were always individuals determined to bring forth resolutions that again divided the councillors.<sup>944</sup>

The decision of the Enniskillen Board of Guardians to recognise Dáil Éireann in June 1920 led to extraordinary scenes of confrontation in which Edmund Corrigan was again central. This time as Chair of the Board he allowed the vote to be undertaken after many Unionist members had left the room, thinking the meeting over. The following week when the incident was discovered in the minute books Unionist member F.R. Carson demanded the record be expunged. There followed an extended ‘duel’ in which Carson refused to sit down and allow the meeting to continue while Corrigan used his gavel to interrupt Carson’s attempts to talk. The incident was resolved by Carson putting forward a notice of a motion to excise the record from the minutes and writing to various Unionist groups to motivate the Unionist members to attend.<sup>945</sup>

Two years after this incident the Enniskillen Guardians, now under Unionist control, were again engulfed in controversy after the Sinn Féin contingent to the Board put forward a motion that the minutes of the board be sent to Dáil Éireann and not Belfast. The Chairman, Joseph Geddis, refused to accept the motion and cancelled the meeting in the following uproar. After they left the Nationalist members again stayed late, put Mr Corrigan in the chair and passed their resolution. This move was inspired by the inverse

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<sup>941</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 25 August 1921.

<sup>942</sup> *Northern Standard*, 2 September 1921.

<sup>943</sup> *Fermanagh Times*, 18 April 1918.

<sup>944</sup> Earl of Belmore evidence (T.N.A., Boundary Commission files, CAB 61/30).

<sup>945</sup> Minutes of Enniskillen Guardians, June 1920 (P.R.O.N.I., Board of Guardians Records, BG/14/A/130); *Impartial Reporter*, 24 June 1920.

which was committed at a meeting of the Enniskillen U.D.C. where it was the Unionists who installed their own Chairman following an adjournment.<sup>946</sup>

On discovering this, the Unionist opposition refused to sign or even permit the minutes to be read. They argued that following an adjournment there should be none. Thomas Elliott took the position that the Enniskillen U.D.C. had been incorrect to act as they did but as the Guardians were an unrelated body this should not matter. The meeting was noted later for its bitter tone, with Corrigan shouting over Geddis whenever he attempted to assert order. This culminated in Corrigan and Geddis bellowing directly into each other's faces across Geddis' desk. It was threatened to call the police. The meeting descended into further squabbling before it was agreed to sign the minutes relating to everything that happened before the adjournment, and deal with the rest at a later date.<sup>947</sup>

This incident demonstrates the severity of the conflict between nationalist and Unionist in hung bodies like Enniskillen Guardians, even after partition. Lisnaskea Guardians made the same decision with far less opposition from the Unionist contingent.<sup>948</sup> The power of having the chair was immense, it allowed Corrigan to barrack Carson until he stopped speaking and then after power switched allowed Carson to call Cahir Healy a 'whelp' without rebuke and prevented Healy from making any speech without being yelled down.<sup>949</sup> After losing a vote on recruitment in Fermanagh, the Nationalist Chairman McHugh was able to frustrate attempts to create a recruiting committee by declining to act.<sup>950</sup> Less dramatic fighting occurred between the two factions in the County Council after their decision to recognise Dáil Éireann, while Enniskillen Rural Council saw furious scenes after the Belfast riots.<sup>951</sup> This vote would lead to the dissolution of the Council by the fledgling Belfast government.<sup>952</sup>

Motions of condemnation, consolation and support became equally contentious. Enniskillen Guardians attempted to pass a motion of sympathy with the widow of Henry

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<sup>946</sup> *Fermanagh Herald*, 7 January 1922; *Impartial Reporter*, 5 January 1922.

<sup>947</sup> Minutes of Enniskillen Guardians, January 1922 (P.R.O.N.I., Board of Guardians Records, BG/14/A/133);

<sup>948</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 5 January 1922.

<sup>949</sup> Minutes of Enniskillen Guardians, January 1922 (P.R.O.N.I., Board of Guardians Records, BG/14/A/133); *Fermanagh Herald*, 7 January 1922; *Impartial Reporter*, 5 January 1922.

<sup>950</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 18 July 1918.

<sup>951</sup> Buckland, *Irish Unionism II*, p. 151; *Fermanagh Herald*, 24 December 1921; *Impartial Reporter*, 24 November 1921; *Impartial Reporter*, 3 November 1922; *Impartial Reporter*, 8 September 1921.

<sup>952</sup> Eamon Phoenix, 'Cahir Healy (1877-1970): Northern Nationalist Leader' in *Clogher Journal* Vol. 18, No. 1 (2003) 38 – 40.

Wilson, following his assassination, despite Sinn Féin dissent.<sup>953</sup> Equal dissent came a year later in the same Council when a motion was proposed welcoming the Duke of Abercorn to the town.<sup>954</sup> These resolutions were often just a means to provide the members of the bodies with a speaking platform. A resolution to welcome the new Governor of Northern Ireland by Enniskillen Guardians in February 1923 became an opportunity for W.J. Brown, a Unionist member, to deliver a speech denouncing ‘Romanism’ in all its forms.<sup>955</sup>

A common accusation in these environments was bigotry. When local government was run along party lines such claims were easy to make. In March 1922, the Chairman of Enniskillen Urban Council was accused of anti-Catholic bigotry by the Catholic and former Chairman of the Council Joseph Gillin. Gillin’s claim was based on the alleged refusal of the Council to provide housing for Catholic families in the area. The Chairman of the Council and the *Reporter* both provided the same response to the accusation – excusing such an act by counter-accusing Gillin of bigotry of his own. As the *Reporter* said at the time: ‘If the present Chairman refuse in future to let houses belonging to the Council to Roman Catholics... he will only be following the precedent set by his predecessor’.<sup>956</sup>

In July 1919 in a discussion about the reduction of payment to the master of the Enniskillen workhouse, a Catholic named Duffy, degenerated into such accusations. The argument was led by Edmund Corrigan who opposed the move as ‘blind bigotry’. His argument centred on the refusal of the Unionists to attempt to cut the salary of the district Doctor, a Dr Betty, because ‘he belongs to your side.’ Corrigan also noted that the previous master had had a salary of £20 more than Duffy. The Unionist response to the accusations fit into traditional forms. William Elliott noted that they were the largest ratepayers and therefore had the greatest incentive to manage how rates were spent, that it was unfair to bring Dr Betty’s own pay into the matter, and that politics should not be present in a board meeting.<sup>957</sup>

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<sup>953</sup> Minutes of Enniskillen Guardians, June 1922 (P.R.O.N.I., Board of Guardians Records, BG/14/A/133).

<sup>954</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 8 February 1923.

<sup>955</sup> Minutes of Enniskillen Guardians, February 1923 (P.R.O.N.I., Board of Guardians Records, BG/14/A/135); *Fermanagh Herald*, 10 February 1923.

<sup>956</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 9 March 1922.

<sup>957</sup> Minutes of Enniskillen Guardians, July 1919 (P.R.O.N.I., Board of Guardians Records, BG/14/A/128); *Impartial Reporter*, 22 July 1919.



Local power contests were complicated by this combination of implicit and explicit religious divides, contested majorities and the tricks used to create them. The prospect of political control and the potential rewards meant that aside from the actual process of governance the political campaign itself was an active and divisive force in Fermanagh life. This was the case to a far greater degree than in Cavan and Monaghan where Unionist candidates often refused to run for fear of drawing attention to themselves.

An election campaign was important because it provided a sort of health check on the position of precarious Fermanagh. Insufficiently fervent Unionist support or dishonest nationalist tricks could render a Council or a parliamentary seat to the other side and give false representation of the political makeup of the county. Buckland has detailed the use the Ulster Unionist party made of general elections in 1921, 1922 and 1923 to build support for the new regime but this was building on an older policy that had already been used in elections in 1920 and 1918 before.<sup>958</sup> After Nationalist victories in the local elections of June 1920, Peter Raffan, the Liberal M.P. questioned Winston Churchill, the colonial secretary, about whether such successes would force him to redraft the Government of Ireland Bill.<sup>959</sup> Churchill responded in the negative, but the threat posed by lost elections was obvious. O'Shiel noted this when recounting the importance of his 1918 election defeat in North Fermanagh and the strength of the Unionist reaction following it:

The great fear of the Unionists and their great relief... are very understandable today; for, had I won, it would have meant that the entire parliamentary representation of the County Fermanagh would have been held by Sinn Féin – in other words, by anti-partitionists of the most uncompromising type ... it would have been extremely difficult, not to say impossible, for the British Government to have placed the County Fermanagh under a Belfast Partitionist Parliament.<sup>960</sup>

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<sup>958</sup> Buckland, *Irish Unionism II*, p. 131.

<sup>959</sup> House of Commons Debates, 5th series, vol. 130, 10 June 1920, col. 578.

<sup>960</sup> B.M.H. Ws. 1170 (Kevin O'Shiel).

This was a sentiment that had been repeated during his campaign.<sup>961</sup> A successful election was a significant expression of political security for the victorious community. In 1922, Sir Robert Lynn, M.P. for Belfast, expressed fears he had heard that Fermanagh and Tyrone were likely to be the victims of an attempt by ‘the South’ to rig their elections by driving individuals north and registering them as voters.<sup>962</sup>

For the *Fermanagh Times* in particular, the idea of voter engagement was crucial. The organisation and motivation of the Sinn Féin machine was held as an example of the need for Fermanagh Unionists to themselves turn out in large numbers. The 1918 election was portrayed as the community’s greatest opportunity to be vindicated as an ‘integral part of that “Ulster” against which the government has on successive occasions announced that it has no intention of applying methods of coercion’.<sup>963</sup> Even failure to get elected as with James Cooper in South Fermanagh served as a valuable reminder that ‘there are at least 4,524 men and women in South Fermanagh who will have no truck with Home Rule or Sinn Féin’.<sup>964</sup>

The political campaign provided common goals for disparate Unionist groups to unite over. As the new rector of Enniskillen Parish, Canon Arthur Webb, was testily informed on his refusal to hold a combined Protestant memorial service: ‘Enniskillen Protestants agree in all things political... whenever opportunity offer such as some manifestation of public rejoicing, of national thanksgiving... they should mingle their voices together in common prayer’.<sup>965</sup> Indeed the political vote was often the ultimate expression of Unionism; the failure to exercise it rendered all other displays meaningless

Wearing an Orange sash on the 12 July or a Black sash on the 12 August, attending demonstrations and talking about what our forefathers did is all of no avail if when asked to exert ourselves a little and do something practical to help the cause to which we profess allegiance we fail in our duty.<sup>966</sup>

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<sup>961</sup> *Fermanagh Times*, 4 July 1918; *Impartial Reporter*, 19 December 1918.

<sup>962</sup> House of Commons Debates, 5th series, vol. 151, 3 March 1920, col. 747.

<sup>963</sup> *Fermanagh Times*, 29 January 1919.

<sup>964</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>965</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 9 January 1919.

<sup>966</sup> *Fermanagh Times*, 21 August 1919.

Victory in elections was greeted with wild and very public celebrations which again widened the gulf between the communities and which we do not find present in any real form in Cavan or Monaghan. Following the election of James Cooper to the Northern Parliament in 1921 the loyalists of Enniskillen lit a large tar barrel on fire on the prominent Windmill Hill. Bonfires greeted the victory in Mullaghy, Fivemiletown and Garvary. In Ballinamallard, Florencecourt and Maguiresbridge Union Flags were draped across the town and large drum and fife processions took place.<sup>967</sup>

Just as the victories were celebrated so too were the defeats met with ill humour. The fallout from electoral failure and how blame was apportioned for such was extremely important and tended outwards instead of inwards. For every complaint about local councillors failing to attend important votes or local Unionist organisations failing to rally voters there were more assertions about the dishonest tactics used by their political opponents.<sup>968</sup> Following the capture of Tyrone County Council by Sinn Féin in 1920, the *Reporter* focused not on that political change but on the ‘disreputable Sinn Féin tactics’. These allegedly included changing of clothes to vote multiple times, intimidation of local voters after the withdrawal of the R.I.C. and impersonation of the dead.<sup>969</sup>

There were also complaints of what O’Shiel termed ‘swallow voters’ or men who were let property in a constituency solely for the purpose of voting in the local elections.<sup>970</sup> O’Shiel notes that this was how Omagh Council in Tyrone was eventually captured by Nationalists.<sup>971</sup> In October 1919, Richard Mogaghey of Ballinamallard, the Unionist agent for Trillick, wrote a letter to the Local Government Board complaining about the subletting of smaller cottages in the area to multiple Catholics at any one time and noting that ‘if this were allowed to continue there would soon be seventy five votes out of twenty five cottages in the Trillick district’.<sup>972</sup> A particularly egregious example of this in Enniskillen in 1922 saw 92 votes claimed by Nationalists on the basis that they held graveplots in the Enniskillen East district and were therefore occupiers and entitled

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<sup>967</sup> *Fermanagh Times*, 2 June 1922.

<sup>968</sup> For examples of such complaints see *Impartial Reporter*, 12 April 1917; *Impartial Reporter*, 10 June 1920; described in more detail earlier.

<sup>969</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 10 June 1920.

<sup>970</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 11 January 1923.

<sup>971</sup> B.M.H. Ws. 1170 (Kevin O’Shiel).

<sup>972</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 19 October 1919.

to vote in that district.<sup>973</sup> It was also claimed that Nationalists in Castlecoole had rented plots of bog in order to vote in the District.<sup>974</sup>

These complaints were not paranoia. Under a plan devised by Archdeacon Tierney in 1914, Nationalists used such methods to finally seize Enniskillen Urban Council from Unionist control.<sup>975</sup> However this reasoning was used primarily to delegitimise the Nationalist vote. Such stories allowed groups like the *Reporter* to frame such stories as ‘how Nationalists make votes’ and served to undermine Nationalist numerical supremacy.<sup>976</sup>

In general, the political campaigns were characterised by relative civility. Speeches and rallies were unlikely to coincide with each other, particularly as campaigns would try to stick to their heartlands. In the rare cases where this did not happen, such as in Enniskillen on fair days they still kept different times to one another.<sup>977</sup> The North Eastern Boundary Bureau noted that even when the Unionists were secure in their political ascendancy, in 1923, the election of that year still saw very limited public meetings or speeches.<sup>978</sup>

Pre-partition there was more significant electoral violence in Cavan and Monaghan, where the A.O.H. and Sinn Féin, secure in their majority, were in infrequent but open conflict. In the 1918 North Fermanagh campaign two communities went to greater efforts to cooperate in elections out of fear of Unionism. The initially selected Sinn Féin candidate, George Irvine, was set aside after he was deemed unacceptable by the local Hibernian elites who proposed Joseph Gillen instead. Local Hibernians made it known that they would not support Irvine, a veteran of the Easter Rising, in the election with his Protestantism given as a primary reason.<sup>979</sup> Sinn Féin agreed to withdraw Irvine and put forward Kevin O’Shiel instead. Irvine himself accepted the compromise immediately.<sup>980</sup>

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<sup>973</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 23 November 1922.

<sup>974</sup> Interview with James Cooper, Fermanagh County Council Evidence (T.N.A., Boundary Commission files, CAB/61/66).

<sup>975</sup> Livingstone, *Fermanagh*, p. 268.

<sup>976</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 19 October 1919.

<sup>977</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 19 December 1918.

<sup>978</sup> ‘Research on 1923 Northern Ireland Election (N.A.I.: North Eastern Boundary Bureau files, NAI TAOIS/NEBB/1/1/6).

<sup>979</sup> B.M.H. Ws. 1170 (Kevin O’Shiel); for a detailed account of Irvine’s life see Valerie Jones, *Rebel Prods: the Forgotten Story of Protestant Radical Nationalists and the 1916 Rising* (Dublin, 2016) pp 147 – 154.

<sup>980</sup> Letter from Healy to Editor (P.R.O.N.I., Cahir Healy Papers, D2991/A/3/29).

Earlier cases demonstrated some violence between Catholics and Protestants but little that appeared systemic or commonplace. Most notably in Maguiresbridge following the election of Jeremiah Jordan to the South Fermanagh seat in 1910, there were clashes between large crowds of Nationalists and Unionists. This was triggered by post-election celebrations with a group of Nationalists gathering to burn a tar barrel in celebration, with a group of Unionists afterwards trying to break the barrel.<sup>981</sup>

The only significant accounts we have of pre-partition electoral violence come from Kevin O'Shiel's account of his own election campaign in 1918 and the violence described is small scale. O'Shiel recounts two incidents. The first came after a campaign stop in Ballinamallard, a strongly Protestant town and one neither O'Shiel nor his campaign manager Dick Herbert were otherwise inclined to visit.<sup>982</sup>

The visit took place in the afternoon specifically for the security of O'Shiel, in hopes of increased visibility and less men being present. O'Shiel found himself addressing a crowd of two hundred women and children. Initially he was only interrupted with traditional Unionist chants such as 'to hell wi' the Pope's man'. Eventually three drummers appeared and made the crowd angrier. The violence was more implicit than realised: 'they took the long hat-pins from their hair and made wicked stabs at us with them', but it was enough for Herbert and O'Shiel to flee the town 'amidst a shower of stones and clods and a salvo of curses.'<sup>983</sup>

The reason for this visit is interesting as clearly no party wanted O'Shiel speaking there. The campaign only stopped there because of the new Sinn Féin policy of speaking in all possible towns and villages and on 'no account, to ignore the Protestant and Unionist districts... we were fundamentally a propagandist movement.'<sup>984</sup> The violence witnessed cannot be described as typical of electoral campaigns in the county as traditionally such campaigns would avoid Unionist areas as a provocation. Electoral violence in this regard is reactive instead of proactive.

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<sup>981</sup> *Sunday Independent*, 13 February 1910; *Fermanagh Herald*, 19 February 1920.

<sup>982</sup> B.M.H. Ws. 1170 (Kevin O'Shiel): Indeed, when O'Shiel told Herbert it was their next stop he told him he'd taken leave of his senses and proceeded to recount the numerous tales of the 'anti-Catholic fury of the Ballinamallardians.'

<sup>983</sup> B.M.H. Ws. 1170 (Kevin O'Shiel).

<sup>984</sup> *Ibid.*

The second incident, however, came in a place where the mixing of both groups was more necessary – the delivery of the election results. O’Shiel lost his election to Edward Archdale – a result that was not unexpected due to the disorganisation of the Nationalist campaign.<sup>985</sup> The initial Unionist reactions were largely good-natured although O’Shiel did note that the local Anglican Church was broken into in order that the crowd could ring the bells in celebration. On being ejected by the local curate, the men returned and forcibly held the belfry to ring the bell.

The true problem began when Archdale began his victory speech, which congratulated his ‘fellow Orangemen and fellow Loyalists’ for clearing the ‘rebels, traitors and pro-Germans out of loyal North Fermanagh’. The speech so inflamed the crowd that O’Shiel was unable to deliver his own concession speech and began to worry about escaping. He was however saved by the crowd starting to fight with a nationalist mob who cleared them sufficiently away that he was able to leave.<sup>986</sup>

That the reports we can find of electoral violence in Fermanagh are primarily from southern papers may be in part because electoral violence in Fermanagh was Protestant on Catholic, especially in the later period when Protestant groups were supported by the state. As accounts of electoral violence focus around the crucial 1922 Northern election the role of partition here is likely important. The Free State government had been receiving reports surrounding the Northern elections alleging that B Specials, particularly in areas like Tullyhogue and Lisbellaw, were actively raiding houses in an attempt to intimidate the Nationalist population out of voting.<sup>987</sup>

In Lisbellaw, in 1922 and 1923 Nationalist personation agents were attacked by angry crowds following polling. The first of these incidents involved the agents locking themselves in the polling room until police arrived to scatter the crowd. A car was also sent from Enniskillen to rescue them but was turned away from the village by armed men. On the same night an agent cycling home from Ballinamallard was set upon by a crowd of people who cut the tyres of his bike. In Florencecourt Francis Maguire J.P. was set

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<sup>985</sup> Letter from Hugh de Fellenberg Montgomery to Hugh Barrie, 22 January 1918 (P.R.O.N.I., Hugh de Fellenberg Montgomery Papers, D627/433/12).

<sup>986</sup> B.M.H. Ws. 1170 (Kevin O’Shiel).

<sup>987</sup> Research on 1923 Northern Ireland Election (N.A.I.: North Eastern Boundary Bureau files, NAI TAOIS/NEBB/1/1/6).

upon by a large crowd of youths. In Legnahorna, Michael Carson, another agent, was also reportedly attacked.<sup>988</sup>

That these attacks should happen in areas that were strongly Protestant – Lisbellaw, Florencecourt and Ballinamallard – is significant and as it shows in what areas such events were most likely to arise. The *Fermanagh Herald* later referred to these districts as ‘storm centres’.<sup>989</sup> Fears had been raised to the North Eastern Boundary Bureau by Catholics in the Marlbank area that they would be prevented from voting in the 1923 election.<sup>990</sup> These areas were identified to be given a heavier police presence in 1923 to prevent such attacks. In Ballinamallard and Florencecourt this worked, and agents were greeted with ‘groans’ but not open hostility. In Lisbellaw, after the close of polls and when the agents and police left the building they were greeted by a large crowd (nationalist estimates say between three and four hundred people) who attacked them. Agents were again forced into the polling station which they locked behind them. The *Herald* reported sectarian chants such as ‘if they come out we shall make the Papist blood flow.’<sup>991</sup>

That events should become most heated immediately after polling and results is not surprising. Such moments often engendered the greatest emotion and necessitated mixing of both groups. Relating to the mid-Tyrone election, O’Shiel recalled seeing a jubilant Protestant clergyman, the Rector of Erganagh, drive his horse and cart clear through a crowd of squabbling Nationalists. On driving away, he flew a large Union Jack over his head. The event surprised O’Shiel as he knew the rector and had considered him a ‘man of much charm and address’.<sup>992</sup> These acts are interesting as they are a way of democratising political conflict. While incidents in Boards of Guardians or Urban Councils may serve to identify prominent members of both communities, it was electoral campaigns that engaged with far more people and allowed them to reinforce their own political identity.

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<sup>988</sup> *Fermanagh Herald*, 25 November 1922; *Fermanagh Herald*, 15 December 1923.

<sup>989</sup> *Fermanagh Herald*, 15 December 1923.

<sup>990</sup> Research on 1923 Northern Ireland Election (N.A.I.: North Eastern Boundary Bureau files, NAI TAOIS/NEBB/1/1/6).

<sup>991</sup> *Derry Journal*, 7 December 1923; *Irish Independent*, 7 December 1923; *Fermanagh Herald*, 15 December 1923.

<sup>992</sup> B.M.H. Ws. 1170 (Kevin O’Shiel).

## Conclusion

This chapter focused on two key topics: how Fermanagh Unionists constructed a Protestant identity for the county itself and how Fermanagh Unionists interacted with their Nationalist counterparts in local politics. Both of these points were related and motivated by an intense awareness of their own precariousness in Northern Ireland. While Cavan, Monaghan and Donegal knew the anguish of missing the lifeboat, Fermanagh knew the fear that they would be the first jettisoned in case of trouble. Consequently, there is a hollowness to much of their boisterousness and confidence, their arguments about being the largest ratepayers, and Fermanagh's Protestant heritage are so consistently trotted out that they feel learned by rote.

There is great similarity between how Fermanagh Unionists conceived of a wild southern wasteland and how Cavan and Monaghan Unionists did so. However, while Cavan and Monaghan Unionists did not include themselves in this wasteland, Fermanagh did. Their views of their southern neighbours are surprisingly callous, despite the greater cross-border population on the Fermanagh border it is with Tyrone that more expressions of regret and solidarity with three-county Unionists were felt. This was again a consequence of Fermanagh's own precariousness in the North; the county sought as stable a political resolution as possible that included them in Northern Ireland.

This fear of exclusion also motivated their relations with Catholics. The prize of control of local Councils and election campaigns was security and when the margins of victory were so tight it encouraged intense competition and any number of bad faith tactics on both sides. It was not disingenuously that Colonel Madden compared Monaghan to Fermanagh by noting that south of the border they had learned to live together. Marches and electoral rallies were designed as much to convince others to keep away from voting as they were to rally one's own support.



## **Chapter 5: Violence and revolution in Fermanagh, 1916 - 1923**

We can now move on from representations of identity and the practical effects of a public Unionism to look at our second area of comparison – the differing experiences of revolutionary violence between Cavan and Monaghan, and Fermanagh. Here we shall broadly divide the period into pre and post-partition. This is done as the existence of a Northern state and an official border in the second period changed the dynamics of violence in the county. In general, we find that Fermanagh was less violent and that the Protestant community in it experienced less violence than in Cavan and Monaghan. However, this was largely down to the size and organisation of the Protestant community. The actual tension between both communities was much greater in Fermanagh and, when violence erupted, it did so on a larger scale.

Under investigation is whether the Revolution developed along similar paths and whether acts of revolutionary violence were distinguishable in Fermanagh, either by volume or form, from Cavan and Monaghan. It will allow us to look at the phenomenon of Protestant on Catholic violence that was not present in Cavan or Monaghan and in doing so give us an insight into how such communal tensions play out. By examining whether certain forms of violence are present in one county and not the other, or whether certain violent acts are prominent in one over the other, we can gain an insight both into what motivated such revolutionary attacks and what underlying factors shaped them.

We shall also look at the role the border had in determining the shape of the Revolution: was it a creator of, or frontier from, violence? This study is integrated into this chapter for two reasons. Firstly, as it allows us to demonstrate the relevance of the border to issues of violence as they arise during our investigation. Secondly, the imposition of the border led to more violence in Fermanagh than in Cavan or Monaghan. It represented a final frontier for six county Unionists, something to be defended and the land beyond largely ignored. Fermanagh incursions into the Free State were much rarer than Monaghan/Cavan forays northward. However, this chapter will also engage with those incursions from Northern Ireland into the Free State.

## Quiet Years? Revolution and revolutionary violence pre-partition in Fermanagh.

The Easter Rising passed Fermanagh by almost unnoticed, even if the *Impartial Reporter* could claim to be the first paper in the country to publish a report on it.<sup>993</sup> The Volunteers in the county were only notified on Friday morning after a dispatch finally made its way to local organisers.<sup>994</sup> Francis Tummon of Newtownbutler later recalled that the details of the Rising and its defeat were reported to general disapproval in a speech read at mass by the local priest.<sup>995</sup>

Livingstone has noted three Fermanagh Protestants who fought in the Easter Rising: William Scott, George Irvine and an unnamed Wilson.<sup>996</sup> Of these, Irvine is by far the most celebrated, being of a prominent Presbyterian family and Vice-Commandant of the first battalion of the Irish Volunteers. This is the same Irvine who would later withdraw from the 1918 general election in favour of O'Shiel.<sup>997</sup> Scott meanwhile appears to have come into the Rising through his involvement with organised labour and was a founding member of the Irish Citizen Army.<sup>998</sup>

Fermanagh was slow to develop a cohesive republican organisation. The first Sinn Féin club did not exist in the county until June 1917 when it was established in Enniskillen by Fr Michael McCarvill. In the 1918 elections only one seat was won by Sinn Féin. The party and militant republicanism in general would never be established as effectively in Fermanagh as they were in Munster or Leinster. The larger Protestant population and traditions of Protestant organisation (such as the U.V.F. and Orange Order) enabled the Fermanagh loyalists to oppose the I.R.A. more securely than in Cavan or Monaghan. There was also a fear that activity in Fermanagh had a greater risk of triggering serious sectarian conflict that would be hard to control and could have unintended results.<sup>999</sup> In March 1919, the Fermanagh judge of Assize felt able to boast that the county was the quietest in the entirety of the country.<sup>1000</sup> This was echoed by the republican side when

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<sup>993</sup> John Horgan, 'An Irishman's Diary on a journalist's nightmare in 1916' in *Irish Times*, 16 September 2015; *Impartial Reporter*, 8 January 2016.

<sup>994</sup> Livingstone, *Fermanagh*, p. 280.

<sup>995</sup> B.M.H. Ws. 820 (Francis Tummon).

<sup>996</sup> Livingstone, *Fermanagh*, p. 279.

<sup>997</sup> Jones, *Rebel Prods*, pp 147 – 50.

<sup>998</sup> William Scott Pension (I.M.A., Military Service Pensions, 1644 E885).

<sup>999</sup> Livingstone, *Fermanagh*, p. 286.

<sup>1000</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 13 March 1919.

Joseph Lawless, a colonel in the I.R.A., travelled through the border from Virginia to Pettigo in 1920 and noted that ‘there was little sign to be seen of the war which the daily press reports showed to be widespread’<sup>1001</sup>

Fermanagh saw just three burned barracks in the entire period, although this was still enough for the *Reporter* to worry that the chaos that had characterised the rest of the country was spreading to the county.<sup>1002</sup> Revolutionary activity came largely from Cavan, Monaghan, Leitrim and Donegal where the I.R.A. were more established and could cast around for other targets.<sup>1003</sup> Unionist figures saw Monaghan as the cause of ‘a good deal of the trouble’ in eastern Fermanagh.<sup>1004</sup>

Most of those activities were of the same sort as those already examined in Chapter 3. They were primarily raids for arms and ammunition, designed both as a practical measure and to intimidate those selected for raiding. Livingstone refused to assign any sectarian character to these raids, saying that some captains only raided Catholics, while others exclusively focused on Protestants and that this pattern was entirely local.<sup>1005</sup> In March 1920 a Protestant labourer named Andrew Gilleece of Gortoral near the Cavan border was raided and threatened with shooting unless he swore to make his son leave the R.I.C.<sup>1006</sup>

Another significant aspect of revolutionary activity which was much less prominent in Fermanagh was boycotting. It was not until September 1921 that the County Inspector conceded that the Belfast Boycott was ‘being felt in the towns to a small degree’.<sup>1007</sup> Although efforts were made to institute the wide boycott that Monaghan saw, the size of the Unionist population rendered it difficult.<sup>1008</sup> Enniskillen was the primary focus of the campaign. Pamphlet distribution was common and in August 1921 the Enniskillen

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<sup>1001</sup> B.M.H. Ws. 1043 (Joseph V. Lawless).

<sup>1002</sup> Livingstone, *Fermanagh* p. 283.; *Impartial Reporter*, 28 October 1920.

<sup>1003</sup> Livingstone, *Fermanagh*, p. 284; It is important to note that this reference to activity ‘coming’ from other counties is more a reference to the origin point of the individuals in the brigades and not what battalion they belonged to. From 1921, the South East of Fermanagh (the Lisnaskea battalion) was under the Fifth Northern (Monaghan) Division. Belleek was under Bundoran while Pettigo and Ederney were under Pettigo (Donegal). Additionally, the Fermanagh Brigade itself contained parts of Tyrone, Cavan and Leitrim.

<sup>1004</sup> Letter from Sir Ernest Clark to Sir George Hacket-Pain, 11 May 1921 (P.R.O.N.I., Department of Finance files, FIN 18/1/211).

<sup>1005</sup> Livingstone, *Fermanagh* p. 286.

<sup>1006</sup> *Fermanagh Times*, 1 April 1920.

<sup>1007</sup> County Inspector’s Returns Fermanagh, September 1921 (T.N.A.: CO 904/116).

<sup>1008</sup> County Inspector’s Returns Fermanagh, June 1921 (T.N.A.: CO 904/115).

Committee of the Belfast Boycott was established but to little effect.<sup>1009</sup> In February 1922, a sign proclaiming a boycott was put up in Pettigo, although according to reports it was largely ignored.<sup>1010</sup>

These activities clustered in late 1921 during a lull in violence following the truce. Initial attempts to impose boycotting directly were foiled by a police raid on the Sinn Féin headquarters in the town. Following this a subtler approach to boycotting was taken in which it was instead publicly announced that certain houses were being ‘watched’.<sup>1011</sup> In isolated areas a boycott could be successfully implemented, generally these areas were both on the border and majority Catholic. In a letter to James Craig asking for assistance, Edith and Sadie Cox of Roslea reported a collapse in their grocery business after Edith married a B Special in 1921 and was subsequently boycotted in the Catholic district.<sup>1012</sup> In January 1922, a shopkeeper in Ederney was fined for his part in breaking the boycott.<sup>1013</sup>

What distinguished the War of Independence in Fermanagh is the presence of an aggressive and organised Protestant opposition to the I.R.A. In June 1920, the I.R.A. moved to burn down the recently vacated R.I.C. barracks at Lisbellaw. They were met with organised Unionist resistance. The Unionists of the town had received advance warning and had taken early positions to ambush the I.R.A. men.<sup>1014</sup> These were the ‘Irish Protestant vigilantes’ who were still armed from the days of the U.V.F. and who would later form the bulk of the B Specials.<sup>1015</sup> They demonstrated a level of tactical discipline in their response, refusing to fire on sight at the I.R.A. scouts and instead drawing their main force into the town proper and using Church bells as a means of coordinating and summoning help from the countryside.<sup>1016</sup>

That this should happen in Lisbellaw is unsurprising as it had always been a centre of Unionism in Fermanagh and was known by the I.R.A. to be ‘99% hostile’.<sup>1017</sup> A memo

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<sup>1009</sup> County Inspector’s Returns Fermanagh, August 1921 (T.N.A.: CO 904/116).

<sup>1010</sup> General Report of 18 February 1922, Divisional Commissioner’s bi-monthly reports (P.R.O.N.I., Home Office Files, HA/5/152).

<sup>1011</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 11 August 1921.

<sup>1012</sup> Letter from Sadie Cox to James Craig of 4 April 1929 (P.R.O.N.I., Home Office files, HA/4/1/132).

<sup>1013</sup> General Report of 18 January 1922, Divisional Commissioner’s bi-monthly reports (P.R.O.N.I., Home Office Files, HA/5/152).

<sup>1014</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 10 June 1920; *Skibbereen Eagle*, 12 June 1920; *Fermanagh Times*, 17 June 1920.

<sup>1015</sup> Fitzpatrick, *Two Irelands*, p. 118.

<sup>1016</sup> *Ulster Herald*, 6 November 1920; *Impartial Reporter*, 10 June 1920.

<sup>1017</sup> B.M.H. Ws. 559 (James Smyth).

by Ernest Clark listing the organised military groups in the six counties, ignored Basil Brooke's more famous 'Fermanagh Vigilance', and instead listed an unnamed Lisbellaw group.<sup>1018</sup> In 1920 a raid on the house of William Glendenning in the town was driven off after a local band of marching loyalists were notified. This band was identified as U.V.F.<sup>1019</sup> The first Orange Hall in the county had also been founded in the town.<sup>1020</sup> The very movement to burn down the station in Lisbellaw was in response to an earlier failed attempt to raid a house in the area which was resisted by the same men.<sup>1021</sup> Attempts to raid houses in Belcoo and Carngreen were also thwarted by the strength of Protestant opposition in the area.<sup>1022</sup>

In other areas a similar opposition was attempted but failed. Belleek barracks were burned as a response to a warning by locals against attacking the town.<sup>1023</sup> Belleek's Catholic majority would have made it more difficult for armed Protestants to resist. William Copeland Trimble recorded that the Revolution in Fermanagh might have been much worse were it not for 'the nightly watch in certain districts of volunteers, who maintained a steady watch and warded off danger.'<sup>1024</sup>

Primarily, resistance came from a willingness on the part of individual Fermanagh loyalists to act in reprisal. After the attack on Lisbellaw, it was darkly reported that 'more drastic measures' were being considered in response to the attacks.<sup>1025</sup> This fear of further reprisal was echoed by the R.I.C. County Inspector who noted that the event had engendered a bitter party feeling and describing the prospective conflict as 'very serious'.<sup>1026</sup>

The willingness of the loyalist movements to commit serious reprisals can be seen following the raid on Tempo Barracks on 25 October 1920. Philip Breen, captain of the Tempo company of the I.R.A., did not take part in the raid and, to provide himself with a public alibi, remained home that evening, occasionally appearing out on to the street.<sup>1027</sup> While out, Breen was shot dead from an unknown source. His own father later stated: 'it

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<sup>1018</sup> Memo on Fermanagh Vigilance (P.R.O.N.I., Department of Finance files, FIN 18/1/2).

<sup>1019</sup> *Belfast Telegraph*, 25 May 1920.

<sup>1020</sup> Brian Barton, *Brookeborough: The making of Prime Minister* (Belfast, 1988) p. 34.

<sup>1021</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 10 June 1920.

<sup>1022</sup> B.M.H. Ws. 559 (James Smyth).

<sup>1023</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 19 September 1920.

<sup>1024</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 9 December 1920.

<sup>1025</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 10 June 1920.

<sup>1026</sup> County Inspector's Returns Fermanagh, June 1921 (T.N.A.: CO 904/115).

<sup>1027</sup> B.M.H. Ws. 559 (James Smyth); *Impartial Reporter*, 25 November 1920.

was the civilians who killed him. I am not going to mention names... there are men having rifles who should be in jail'. This reference to men with rifles is taken by Livingstone to refer to the former members of the U.V.F.<sup>1028</sup>

Often, local Protestant organisation manifested simply as resistance to a raid, such as in Pettigo in September of the same year when a raid was fought off after the victim invited the raiders into his house on the pretence of handing over his rifle before turning around and shooting them.<sup>1029</sup> In other cases the response was more directly coded as an anti-I.R.A. reprisal. In the aftermath of Lisbellaw, Robert Barton who came to town on business was forced to make a hasty retreat following threats from the local people and shots fired at his vehicle.<sup>1030</sup> An I.R.A. convoy driving through Roslea in November 1920 was fired on and forced to retreat, in response to an attack on a Monaghan loyalist at the same spot just the day before.<sup>1031</sup>

In other instances, the response was a threat issued, both to those directly involved in revolutionary activity and those whose political associations suggested they might be. Dr John Carraher, a Catholic with Sinn Féin associations on the Enniskillen Board of Guardians, refused to return to the Tempo district following the shooting of Breen. By his own account, in a letter presented to the Board on 23 November 1920, after the shooting he had noticed he was being ignored by his former Unionist friends before being held up by a 'drunken policeman' who verbally abused him and threatened him with death if he did not clear out of the district. Carraher added himself that he had it on good authority that he was wanted 'by the same men that shot Breen.'<sup>1032</sup>

That there should be this organisation in Fermanagh was a symptom in itself of a broader Protestant militant feeling that came as a consequence of its position in a contested border area. As Brooke noted one of the primary motivations he had for founding Fermanagh Vigilance was a fear that, without a structure to control the 'hotheads on the Ulsterman's side', violence might spark out uncontrolled. The group provided a Protestant alternative to the I.R.A.'s otherwise monopoly on organised violence. Brooke

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<sup>1028</sup> Livingstone, *Fermanagh*, p 238.

<sup>1029</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 16 September 1920.

<sup>1030</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 10 June 1920; *Impartial Reporter*, 1 July 1920.

<sup>1031</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 18 November 1920.

<sup>1032</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 25 November 1920.

expressed an apprehension that unprotected Protestant families might turn to Sinn Féin simply to be connected to any military force in the county.<sup>1033</sup>

The commitment of these Protestant groups and individuals to resisting the I.R.A. should not be underestimated. As an unnamed officer of one such group said to *Reporter* ‘if they interfere... it will not be an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth with us, but two eyes and two teeth.’<sup>1034</sup> Local knowledge was used here in the same vein as it was by the I.R.A. The same interview concluded with the unnamed officer reassuring the paper that they had a list of names to target.<sup>1035</sup>

Having such a large and armed loyalist community also brought opportunity to Fermanagh nationalists. Accounts of Fermanagh arms raids in the Bureau of Military History tend to emphasise the quantity of weapons and ammunition yielded. John Connolly recounts a raid on loyalists in the Roslea area which encapsulates the opportunity and difficulties of this arrangement. At the first house raided, the Warrington family were taken completely by surprise, mid-prayer, and relieved of three rifles and two revolvers. On its own this was a huge addition. A search of the out-offices revealed even more ammunition. ‘Elated’ the party moved on to the next loyalist family, the Andersons, only to find they had already been alerted and were prepared and too well armed for the house to be taken.<sup>1036</sup> The I.R.A. encountered rather more Andersons than Warringtons. As James Smyth, a Monaghan volunteer close to the border, later said:

The difficulties under which the I.R.A. operated in County Fermanagh were constantly very great and often indeed were insurmountable... It must also be remembered that the majority of those who were opposed to the I.R.A. were fully armed and constantly on the lookout for any movement on the part of the I.R.A.<sup>1037</sup>

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<sup>1033</sup> Correspondence on Fermanagh Vigilance Force (P.R.O.N.I., Sir Ernest Clark Papers, D1022/2/3).

<sup>1034</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 30 September 1920.

<sup>1035</sup> Unusually the *Reporter* places itself against this policy and instead pleads for a preservation of the peace. In later times they would not be so reluctant to glorify reprisals. Direct comment is made by Basil Brooke on the use of local knowledge by such groups in his summary of their formation here: Correspondence on Fermanagh Vigilance Force (P.R.O.N.I., Sir Ernest Clark Papers, D1022/2/3).

<sup>1036</sup> B.M.H. Ws. 598 (John T. Connolly).

<sup>1037</sup> B.M.H. Ws. 559 (James Smyth).

## Years of Terror? Revolutionary violence in Fermanagh post-partition

Following partition, the creation of organised Protestant forces such as the B Specials was a continuation of the earlier militias seen in Lisbellaw and Tempo. Crucially it was also an expansion of their coverage and a legitimisation of their role. While many of the themes of post-partition violence in Fermanagh can be seen in earlier incidents, partition itself was the catalyst for them to expand and distinguish the closing of the revolutionary period in Fermanagh as something distinct.

There are three significant violent incidents that are fundamental to understanding revolutionary violence along the Fermanagh border. Those are the burning of Roslea, the Pettigo-Belleek affair and, across the border, the Clones affray. We will examine all three here but with more attention paid to the two located in Fermanagh: Roslea and Pettigo. In addition we will look at two other unique elements of violence in Fermanagh post-partition: the role of the Specials in establishing and defending the new border and the presence of Protestant on Catholic violence in the county.

### *The Burning of Roslea*

The most significant outbreak of violence in Fermanagh in this period occurred in Roslea in the early months of 1921.<sup>1038</sup> Roslea town sits less than a kilometre from the Monaghan border. In the 1911 census the D.E.D. of Roslea was reported as 86% Catholic.<sup>1039</sup> Pre-partition it existed primarily in the economic sphere of Clones. The town was also under the aegis of the Clones brigade of the I.R.A. and was more fully integrated into its command than other Fermanagh groups such as Wattlebridge.

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<sup>1038</sup> As with many cases in Northern Ireland, the divisions between the Catholic and Protestant communities in Roslea were pronounced enough to even manifest themselves in placenames. The case of Roslea is particularly egregious given the miniscule differences insisted upon as the terms of distinction. Roslea can be categorised as the Catholic spelling of the name while the addition of an s transforms the place to a very Protestant Rosslea. When writing about the place here we shall use Roslea, primarily because of its predominance across our sourcebase. See also Cooneen or Coonian, Ederney or Ederny, Aghadrumsee or Adrumsee and Bellanaleck or Belnaleck.

<sup>1039</sup> National Archives of Ireland, *Census of Ireland 1901/1911* (<http://www.census.nationalarchives.ie> : accessed 18 July 2018).



The Roslea attack can best be sketched out in a pattern of attack, reprisal and counter-reprisal. Events began when George Lester, a local B Special, was shot in February 1921. At about 10pm, a party of B Specials entered Roslea and burned a number of Nationalist homes. In response to this, Eoin O’Duffy, commander of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Northern Division, ordered a campaign of raids on the houses of local members of the Specials. In total four Unionists were killed, three in the I.R.A.’s reprisal raid and one accidentally in the initial burning of Roslea.

For both sides it confirmed implicit biases about the partition situation: that Catholics in a Protestant state were inherently unsafe and at the mercy of Protestant militias, and that Catholics in a Protestant state, were a fundamental threat and an opponent of legitimately consecrated authority.

The account of the shooting of George Lester is contested. Both the *Northern Standard* and the *Impartial Reporter* alleged that Lester had received a warning letter from the I.R.A. approximately two weeks before his shooting but did not go into detail on what this was for.<sup>1040</sup> The *Fermanagh Times* makes no mention of such an event. The link between Lester’s shooting and any actions he may have undertaken beforehand was not made and instead the shooting was couched in terms of senseless violence. Lester’s own respectability in the community was of paramount importance; he was described in the *Times* as ‘highly respected and popular’.<sup>1041</sup> Later accounts from the County Inspector undermine this and instead describe Lester as a ‘hysterical Orangeman’.<sup>1042</sup> Lester also said that prior to his joining the Specials he had made himself unacceptable to the local republicans by refusing to sign up to the Belfast Boycott in 1920 and had been targeted ever since.<sup>1043</sup>

Republican accounts made Lester a more active participant in his own shooting although they were not entirely consistent. Eoin O’Duffy described him to Mulcahy as a ‘notorious informer’.<sup>1044</sup> Patrick McMeel of Carrickroe Company (Monaghan) who took part in the reprisal raids simply remembered that Lester had been ‘very active as a spy.’<sup>1045</sup> James McKenna, the O/C of the North Monaghan Brigade, recorded that weeks

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<sup>1040</sup> *Northern Standard*, 25 February 1921; *Impartial Reporter*, 24 February 1921.

<sup>1041</sup> *Fermanagh Times*, 24 February 1921.

<sup>1042</sup> County Inspector’s Returns Fermanagh, August 1921 (T.N.A.: CO 904/116).

<sup>1043</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1044</sup> Monthly Report of Monaghan Brigade, February 1921 (U.C.D.A., Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/19).

<sup>1045</sup> B.M.H. Ws. 520 (Patrick McMeel).

previously he had held up two individuals he suspected of carrying messages for the I.R.A. McKenna implied that the two held up were not actually message carriers for the I.R.A. The unrelated John McKenna of Newbliss recounted that he had heard it was because Lester had passed on information about Volunteer movements.<sup>1046</sup> The most detailed account of Lester's involvement in his own shooting and, due to its overlap with other statements, probably the most accurate came from John T. Connolly who was the Captain of the Roslea I.R.A. brigade. Connolly reported that Lester had threatened a local I.R.A. man handing out notices on the Belfast Boycott.<sup>1047</sup>

This account raised several other issues. That in this version the initial conflict was based on the Belfast Boycott is interesting – broader underlying tensions that played out more peacefully south of the border were much more volatile in the highly-strung politics of Fermanagh. It is possible too that the note given to Lester, was either the same note he had received earlier or else the note was particularly upsetting to him because he had previously been threatened.

Additionally, Lester was not shot solely on the basis of his religion but had undertaken aggressive actions which had provoked a response. This is more understandable in the context of him being an authority figure attempting to maintain a peace the I.R.A. threatened. That he should therefore be emboldened, and capable of confronting his disloyal neighbours, is perfectly consistent. There is strong overlap between McKenna and Connolly – in both accounts the decision to shoot Lester was not local but came from O'Duffy across the border.

Immediately following the shooting of Lester, his assailants were pursued. His brother Thomas emerged from the house and began firing at the men. When out on the main road from the town they were also engaged by two 'Unionists and B Specials' named Magwood who emerged to cut off their retreat but allowed them to pass when they saw they were armed.<sup>1048</sup> The Magwood encounter is interesting in itself as it shows us both that Protestant households were immediately willing to oppose I.R.A. groups in a way that we do not see as strongly south of the border, and that guns and severe threat

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<sup>1046</sup> B.M.H. Ws. 552 (John McKenna).

<sup>1047</sup> B.M.H. Ws. 598 (John T. Connolly).

<sup>1048</sup> Ibid.

were not endemic features of I.R.A. raids – the Magwoods were surprised that their opponents had guns.

According to most accounts, the reprisal burning of Catholic homes in the village took place on the same day but beyond that there are significant differences. A detachment of Specials arrived in the village in the afternoon to make enquiries as to what had occurred and left warning the people of the village that they [the Specials] would not be responsible for what was to happen next before returning around ten in the evening to begin the burnings.

The *Standard* also reports an intervening visit by a group of Monaghan civilians who discharged guns in the town. The provenance or purpose of this visit was not described but a version was also recorded in the *Reporter*.<sup>1049</sup> The *Reporter* also reported that the initial chaos of the raid was in fact set off by this smaller raid after one of the men, a Finegan of Smithborough, accidentally shot and killed himself.<sup>1050</sup>

The *Fermanagh Times* noted that during the initial raid, the ‘Ulster Volunteers’ only fired shots into the air. It also reported the arrival of ‘Ulster Specials’, the fleeing of inhabitants from the town and the starting of fires throughout the town. It did not attribute these fires to the Specials but nor did it provide an alternate explanation. The event was covered in the *Times* in less than ten sentences.<sup>1051</sup> By contrast its later coverage of the reprisals would stretch over multiple pages.

The presence of Monaghan U.V.F. men as well as others from the Fermanagh border means that a cross-border Catholic raid was responded to with a cross-border Protestant raid.<sup>1052</sup> The unfortunate Finegan had been in the employ of a Smithboro Protestant named McLean and had been shot ‘while attempting to batter in the door of the Catholic Curate of Roslea.’<sup>1053</sup> George Lunt, grandson of one of the Unionist victims of the I.R.A. reprisals, also recalled that the man who died that night was a ‘B Special’, although he did not name him.<sup>1054</sup> Witnesses later reported seeing two groups of thirty

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<sup>1049</sup> *Northern Standard*, 25 February 1921.

<sup>1050</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 24 February 1921.

<sup>1051</sup> *Fermanagh Times*, 24 February 1921.

<sup>1052</sup> *Irish Independent*, 23 February 1921.

<sup>1053</sup> B.M.H. Ws. 552 (John McKenna); *Irish Independent*, 23 February 1921.

<sup>1054</sup> George Lunt, ‘Family Life on the Fermanagh-Monaghan Border’ [borderroadmemories.com](http://www.borderroadmemories.com/search-border-crossings/memories/family-life-on-the-fermanagh-monaghan-border/) <http://www.borderroadmemories.com/search-border-crossings/memories/family-life-on-the-fermanagh-monaghan-border/> (accessed 25/01/2018).

and sixty men marching down the road in military formation from Monaghan on the night.<sup>1055</sup> However, Eoin O'Duffy only referenced a group of 'Ulster Volunteers from an area five miles around Roslea.'<sup>1056</sup>

Any analysis of the origin of these raiders is further complicated by the fact that later discussions did not distinguish between a first, more informal, raid and the later burnings, either implying that they were part of one and the same movement, or that the first raid was responsible for everything before the B and A Specials moved in to restore order. This does not match the initial reports of the raid from all sides which very clearly distinguish two phases, and the reports of the Catholic victims who noted seeing forces arrive in lorries, unlike the Monaghanmen who were consistently portrayed as marching on foot.

It is unlikely this raid was entirely the doing of Monaghan Protestants. As Colonel Madden of Hilton Park said while defending Monaghan County Council from their compensation obligation at the Fermanagh Assizes in July 1921: 'there was a U.V.F. force in Monaghan before the war and they now regret that they ever joined it as they are outside Northern Ireland.'<sup>1057</sup> That such a strength of local feeling could exist to mobilise over ninety men to burn out Catholics in another state is unlikely, no matter how strong a local feeling existed.

So exactly who participated in the burnings and when is unclear. Major Falls, the county solicitor for Fermanagh, put forward a theory in Enniskillen Quarter Sessions that the only engagement official authorities had with the event was through the R.U.C. itself. In his version, police arrived after the shooting of Lester and gave a paternal warning to the local people that they could not guarantee their safety. The police then called to Enniskillen for reinforcements who tragically only arrived after the damage had been done. This allowed for the entirety of the attack to have taken place by an unknown Monaghan group. The B Specials, the group attacked in the initial shooting and then later hit by the reprisals, are not mentioned at all and such a theory is, at best, unlikely.<sup>1058</sup>

The opposite view, that Monaghan had little to do with the burnings which were an entirely Fermanagh affair and that therefore that Monaghan had no responsibility to

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<sup>1055</sup> *Anglo-Celt*, 7 May 1921.

<sup>1056</sup> Monthly Report of Monaghan Brigade, February 1921 (U.C.D.A., Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/19).

<sup>1057</sup> *Fermanagh Herald*, 16 July 1921.

<sup>1058</sup> *Anglo-Celt*, 30 April 1921.

contribute to compensation, was put forward most forcefully by Colonel Madden.<sup>1059</sup> His main argument was that no man from Monaghan had been proven to have taken part in the raid in court. Even those men seen marching from the direction of Monaghan could plausibly have been marching from the only concealed meeting place in the surrounding area, a grove close to the border. He also argued that as reprisals for the act had been centred around Roslea itself should be ‘strong, circumstantial proof that it was Fermanaghmen and not Monaghanmen who were accused of the deed.’ Finally, he pointed to the lack of any remaining organisational structure that could have driven these men up to Roslea: ‘in Monaghan they had no Special Constabulary of any kind’.<sup>1060</sup>

Curiously, there is little to no discussion of who the perpetrators of the attack were or what form the attack took, in any of the nationalist recollections. The recollections of John Connolly, James and John McKenna, Patrick McMeel, James Mulligan and Patrick McCabe uniformly ignore the specifics of the raid itself. The initial attack on the village served as little more than a framing device here for the real object of interest – the reprisals. Richard Mulcahy’s diary of revolutionary activity in early 1921 recorded the perpetrators simply as ‘the Unionists’.<sup>1061</sup>

Whether Monaghan or Fermanagh was more responsible for the Roslea burnings can seem like frivolous squabbling, but it is important. Firstly, the answer has the capacity to change what we give greater weight to in explaining why a large force of Unionists were able to burn the town on 21 March 1921. Was it because of a wide-ranging and irresolute sectarian tension in the broader Clogher region in which an attack on one community provoked a response across a large geographical area? Or was the burning the result of local tensions and only achieved the scale it did through the active participation of the authorities? Secondly, it changes our view of the reprisals carried out a week later: whether the victims were attacked for their personal complicity or their community’s.

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<sup>1059</sup> It is not a relevant enough point to make in the main chapter, but acknowledgement must be given here to Madden’s wonderful theatricality in his first and main point: geography, that Roslea lay in Fermanagh. This was a contention he ‘proved’ facetiously through repeated reference to a large map of the county and the border with Roslea marked on it. When Madden failed to convince the judge that Monaghan had no obligation to pay compensation to the victims of the attack, he dropped this argument and instead pleaded for him specifically to be exempted.

<sup>1060</sup> *Anglo-Celt*, 30 April 1921; *Fermanagh Times*, 28 April 1921.

<sup>1061</sup> Monthly diary of events, March 1921 (U.C.D.A., Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/16).

It is most likely that the groups involved in the burning, both Specials and non-Specials, were drawn from the local area although perhaps not from Roslea itself. We should ask ourselves why there exists a mystery over who exactly committed the act. Were the perpetrators drawn from the locality then they would likely have recognised. Large scale involvement of Monaghanmen however is unlikely. Were it have taken place it would at the very least ask the question of why no defiance on such a scale took place in Monaghan itself.

We do not find any pattern to who was targeted other than their shared religion. Victims of the burnings and their losses were listed as Philip Trainor, grocery shop worth £1,000; Matthew Finnegan, newly opened drapery worth £4,000; James McMahan, farmer's premises worth £1,000; James Flynn's tenement houses occupied by John Fox and James McCarvill were also destroyed. Other victims included Dan McEntee, Patrick Tully, Anne Carron, J. McElvaney and Hugh McCaffrey.<sup>1062</sup> In total ten houses were burned and many others damaged.

That only Catholic houses were burned does suggest local involvement. The speed at which the houses were burned, almost simultaneously, suggests some level of preselection.<sup>1063</sup> O'Duffy, with characteristic exaggeration, reported to Mulcahy that the raiders had tried to attack 'every Catholic house' and had made a serious effort to 'burn them alive'.<sup>1064</sup> It would later be asserted that some of those targeted were members of Sinn Féin or the I.R.A., but this would not hold up later in compensation applications. For example, it was asserted that Matthew Finnegan was a member of the I.R.A. due to the explosions that rocked through his house after it was set on fire due to bombs being stored in the attic. Finnegan's own representative however pointed out that the village had had nearly an entire afternoon to prepare for the attack and that it seemed likely one of Finnegan's first actions before the arrival of potential arsonists would be to remove explosives from his house.<sup>1065</sup> Nor do we find significant mentions of any of the individuals targeted in the Bureau of Military History witness statements.

The *Standard* noted that the burnings led to no extra loss of life on the Catholic side thanks primarily to the terror felt by the potential victims who fled their property to

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<sup>1062</sup> Ibid; *Irish Independent*, 28 April 1921.

<sup>1063</sup> *Irish Independent*, 23 February 1921.

<sup>1064</sup> Monthly Report of Monaghan Brigade, February 1921 (U.C.D.A., Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/19).

<sup>1065</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 7 July 1921.

Clones.<sup>1066</sup> Connolly recalled seeing families moving all their furniture and belongings out onto the road in preparation. He described an exodus as people went out to friends or relatives in the country or in some cases over the border in Clones.<sup>1067</sup> Others still, the *Independent* noted, got as far as the safety of the surrounding hills and turned around in time to see their homes go up in flames.<sup>1068</sup>

These acts were broadly condemned. It was characterised later by the Fermanagh Unionist judge James Johnston as a ‘Savage and inhuman reprisal’.<sup>1069</sup> As we have seen Fermanagh officialdom disassociated itself from the attack claiming it had been committed by unknown out of county forces while the police had only arrived afterwards to restore order.<sup>1070</sup> While the *Standard* expressed horror at what had happened, the *Reporter* was not only unrepentant but also painted the reprisal in quasi-official terms when it declared: ‘The Sinn Féiners must understand that reprisal in Fermanagh will be prompt and vigorous for any of their actions’<sup>1071</sup> The *Fermanagh Times* focused primarily on the assault on Lester as the true crime worth reporting.<sup>1072</sup>

Subsequent nationalist accounts show an interesting divergence in how they describe the attack. John McKenna has perhaps the mildest summary of the event when he says simply ‘the Unionists burned down a number of Catholic houses in Roslea.’<sup>1073</sup> This placed the attack in the traditional Catholic-Protestant sectarian paradigm and allowed for the unspoken overlap between political and religious identities. The fact that McKenna did not mention the Specials is also interesting. To him, it was not the Specials but the Unionists in general who burned Roslea, suggesting that this was not a useful distinction to make in post-partition Fermanagh.

Both John Connolly and Patrick McMeel showed more awareness of this associational element to the attack. They identified the attackers as ‘Specials’ and ‘police’ – words which here see little to no distinction.<sup>1074</sup> Neither man used strong emotive

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<sup>1066</sup> *Northern Standard*, 25 February 1921

<sup>1067</sup> B.M.H. Ws. 598 (John T. Connolly).

<sup>1068</sup> *Irish Independent*, 23 February 1921.

<sup>1069</sup> *Irish Independent*, 28 April 1921.

<sup>1070</sup> *Northern Standard*, 25 February 1921; *Impartial Reporter*, 24 February 1921.

<sup>1071</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 24 February 1921.

<sup>1072</sup> *Fermanagh Times*, 24 February 1921.

<sup>1073</sup> B.M.H. Ws. 552 (John McKenna).

<sup>1074</sup> Connolly showed particular awareness of the various distinctions gradations of meaning and identity in the Protestant community. He identified the Magwoods for example as both Unionist and B Specials instead of having one imply the other.

language to describe the attack itself. Like McKenna they simply call it a ‘burning’ although McMeel also referred to the event as ‘A and B Specials run amuck’.<sup>1075</sup> Other more loaded terms like ‘sack’ or saying Catholics were ‘chased out’ are employed in the Marron Papers by James McKenna, Matthew Smith and James Mulligan. In all of these cases the perpetrators were clearly defined as ‘Specials’.<sup>1076</sup>

That the I.R.A. would respond to such a provocation was not immediately obvious and it was another few weeks before Eoin O’Duffy, who had been organising in Tyrone at the time, called a meeting of the officers of the Clones battalion in Derryheanlish on the Monaghan border to decide on a response. The initial debate on the response was hesitant and mindful of bringing further trouble on the Roslea Catholics – among the ideas toyed with was to delay a reprisal for a few extra weeks and allow the dust to settle. O’Duffy specifically asked Connolly about whether the nationalists of Roslea would stand beside them if they were to order a reprisal. Connolly answered in the affirmative although in his statement he attributed this to his own youth and desire to see revenge brought upon ‘the houses and in some cases the persons of those responsible.’<sup>1077</sup>

The strongest initial opposition to reprisal burnings came from a senior source – Frank Aiken who was scared such an act would result in further reprisals. However, he was won over by O’Duffy’s argument that a strong enough response would warn local Unionists out of a response. Aiken’s response was curt: ‘Well, burn them and their houses’.<sup>1078</sup> This response should also colour our view of the brutality of the attacks themselves. We should not see the actions committed by the I.R.A. as solely motivated by anger and a desire for revenge but also in order to inspire enough fear in the community as to prevent repercussions – cauterising the cycle. In O’Duffy’s words the plan was to ‘teach them such a lesson as they would hardly forget’, an action doubly motivated by an understanding of the precarious position of Roslea Catholics within a new Protestant state.<sup>1079</sup>

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<sup>1075</sup> B.M.H. Ws. 520 (Patrick McMeel); B.M.H. Ws. 598 (John T. Connolly).

<sup>1076</sup> James Mulligan Copybook (Monaghan County Museum, Marron Papers); Statement of James McKenna (Monaghan County Museum, Marron Papers); Statement of Matthew Smith (Monaghan County Museum, Marron Papers).

<sup>1077</sup> B.M.H. Ws. 598 (John T. Connolly).

<sup>1078</sup> B.M.H. Ws. 1028 (James McKenna).

<sup>1079</sup> Monthly Report of Monaghan Brigade, March 1921 (U.C.D.A., Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/19).



How were the victims to be chosen? That there was significant planning is obvious. Each house was preselected and assigned to a different raiding party of up to ten men. The raids themselves were to take place simultaneously.<sup>1080</sup> There were to be sixteen in total, two for every Catholic house burned and a clear statement of intent from O'Duffy. In this the I.R.A. were adopted a new distinctly Northern approach to revolutionary violence. Fitzpatrick has described how the new enemy for the I.R.A. was not British forces or the R.I.C. but members of the Specials who had popular support among the Protestant community and served only informally. In response to this more 'vigilante' type of enemy, the I.R.A. themselves became more like 'vigilantes' and focused more on attacking members of the Specials and their homes and families rather than ambushing their patrols.<sup>1081</sup>

McKenna was clear that at least some of the victims were chosen because of their explicit association with the earlier burnings.<sup>1082</sup> McLean of Smithborough, the late Finegan's employer, was selected precisely for that reason. The only four people otherwise specifically chosen were the four Specials sergeants known to reside in the area.<sup>1083</sup> 'Orangemen', 'loyalist' and 'Special' were all muddled together in the various accounts of the reprisals and the direct thread of culpability between perpetrator and victim was not always apparent.

Other houses targeted like the Magwoods or Thomas Lester's (George Lester's brother) who opposed the retreat of the men at the original shooting, were selected because of previous opposition to the I.R.A. or because of how likely it was that they were complicit. John McGonnell, commander of the Clones brigade, identified the other groups targeted simply as 'other Orangemen'. Most attacks focused on Roslea itself but, as Tim Wilson has noted, they spread across the border to Smithborough and Scotshouse of Monaghan as well.<sup>1084</sup>

Philip Marron noted that these three areas had a high Unionist population and that 'all young Unionists were armed and trained in the use of arms.'<sup>1085</sup> While this was an exaggeration it is possible to also view the attack as an early statement from O'Duffy,

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<sup>1080</sup> B.M.H. Ws. 598 (John T. Connolly); B.M.H. Ws. 1028 (James McKenna).

<sup>1081</sup> Fitzpatrick, *Two Irelands*, pp 118 – 9.

<sup>1082</sup> B.M.H. Ws. 1028 (James McKenna).

<sup>1083</sup> B.M.H. Ws. 1028 (James McKenna).

<sup>1084</sup> Wilson, 'Strange Death', p. 184.

<sup>1085</sup> B.M.H. Ws. 657 (Philip Marron).

as McKenna does, that the I.R.A. was armed and organised in those regions and would protect its own. The Fermanagh-Monaghan border with its isolated concentrations of Unionist households and relatively high level of I.R.A. activity was predisposed to see strong levels of Unionist organisation which was in turn likely to spark violent confrontations.

Roslea Company's sole role in the raid was scouting the houses and letting the raiders know if any A Special patrols were approaching. In this the local Protestant families were even hurt by their association with Catholics as McKenna noted that their guides into the area were poorer mountain men who were frequently taken on by the Unionist farmers.<sup>1086</sup>

Two houses escaped burning: the house of a Rowland Beatty that stood in an open field and was thus more difficult to sneak up on and the McClean household in Smithborough which had seen off previous I.R.A. raids and was likened to a fortress.<sup>1087</sup>

Most of the time the raiders were resisted until it became clear that they heavily outnumbered the inhabitants or until a breach was made in the building itself. McMeel recalled a raid on the house of a man named Leary in which the attackers successfully broke the back window of the house after realising the inhabitants could only defend one side at a time.<sup>1088</sup> Despite being injured by gunshot in doing so McMeel was lenient with his opponents when they surrendered. He allowed the family an hour to remove the majority of their belongings from the house after informing them it was to be burned.<sup>1089</sup>

McKenna also recalled this raid, although in his correspondence with Fr Marron he named the family as 'Larmour'. We can identify the raid as the same as both share the incident of McMeel climbing around the back of the house and being injured. Additionally, no Larmour was mentioned in any news reports of the raids nor did one live in the surrounding area in the 1911 census.<sup>1090</sup>

McKenna's recollections are useful as they again show the degree to which the I.R.A. portrayed these raids, even thirty years later, as a sort of sectarian justice in which

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<sup>1086</sup> B.M.H. Ws. 1028 (James McKenna).

<sup>1087</sup> Wilson, 'Strange Death' p. 184; B.M.H. Ws. 520 (Patrick McMeel).

<sup>1088</sup> B.M.H. Ws. 520 (Patrick McMeel). The man is likely to have been William Leary of Kilcorran in Monaghan, an Anglican farmer with three sons who would have been 57 at the time.

<sup>1089</sup> B.M.H. Ws. 520 (Patrick McMeel).

<sup>1090</sup> National Archives of Ireland, Census of Ireland 1901/1911 (<http://www.census.nationalarchives.ie> : accessed 18 July 2018).

they are the defenders of the Catholic community. Larmour's response, if true, also provides us with an insight from the other side as to why Roslea was burned after the shooting of Lester:

I again knocked and shouted, 'are you there Larmour?' and he shouted, 'who is there?', I said the I.R.A. friends of the Catholics you turned out in Roslea and we are about to burn your house so come out at once. I heard the door being unlocked my men moved up behind me two men and a woman came out. I asked Mr Larmour where his second son was, and he responded, 'out on duty', 'on armed patrol?' I asked, he replied 'yes', I said 'if you had kept your sons at home from the sack of Roslea we would not be here tonight' he replied heatedly 'you thought you could have it all your own way when you shot Lester.'<sup>1091</sup>

McKenna's recollection portrayed the raid more harshly than McMeel's. He told his men to shoot the elder man if he spoke again and only gave the family time to take out various essentials. This raid included an unusual interaction with one of the younger sons of the family. The young man approached McKenna and asked him for permission to also remove 'an overmantle mirror, a presentation from the Orange Lodge' which he treasured very much. Surprisingly, it was not the overtly Protestant and Unionist nature of the object that was the source of McKenna's reluctance. Rather it was the father's aggressive, non-deferential tone that bothered him. He was eventually persuaded after 'Young Larmour' divulged the size of the Special patrol his brother was out on at the time.

Equally interesting is that McKenna was convinced that 'Young Larmour' was one of those who engaged in the sack of Roslea yet seemed to hold no particular ill will towards him, judging him a 'naïve young fellow.'<sup>1092</sup> In fact, he also acceded to 'Young

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<sup>1091</sup> Statement of James McKenna (Monaghan County Museum, Marron Papers).

<sup>1092</sup> *Ibid.*

Larmour's request that he only burn the house and not their carts or stables that they will need to rebuild. McKenna was shocked: 'I told him we were not that bad.'<sup>1093</sup>

At the unsuccessful McClean raid, Marron noted that the family had been in the British army between 1914 and 1918 and was comprised of four brothers.<sup>1094</sup> This placed them in the usual position of being trained enough and numerous enough to be able to defend their home, as they had done in the past. Marron's plan to take the house involved stealthy breaking and entering instead of an open assault on the property. As this was the most isolated house raided there was not the sound of gunshots firing that may have alerted the other houses to what was going on.<sup>1095</sup>

For some unknown reason, Marron chose not to follow his own plan and instead knocked on the door demanding the family open up before cutting loose all the horses they had tied in the stable. At this point the McCleans had all been awakened and began to fire on the raiders. After half an hour of continuous fire Marron decided the defenders were not going to run out of bullets and instead retreated to the hay loft resolving to burn that instead and hope it spread. Descending into farce however Marron realised that 'in lighting the material on the loft we forgot to open the windows and the fire got suffocated for the want of air and smothered itself.'<sup>1096</sup> The raiders left shortly after.

The McClean raid is the most instructive to take place not only because it failed but because of how it failed. That the McCleans were able to maintain constant fire for half an hour suggests significant raid-preparedness, indeed it is a good example of the raid resistance technique we see elsewhere in the county of outlasting the raiders. This raid is also significant because of its response in the community. Nestled in the Fermanagh border, Smithborough was a securely Protestant enclave and as such was able to organise defence on a communal level as outlined in Chapter 3. Marron left not only because of his own repeated mistakes in raiding the household but also because his

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<sup>1093</sup> B.M.H. Ws. 1028 (James McKenna).

<sup>1094</sup> Statement of James McKenna (Monaghan County Museum, Marron Papers).

<sup>1095</sup> Wilson in his chapter 'The Strange Death of Loyalist Monaghan' makes the point about how wide-ranging these reprisals were and points to the Smithborough raid as a key example of that. While this is true and is especially valid in the context of the reprisal being a response to men from Smithborough going to Roslea, we should note that it is not that the reprisals themselves formed a chain leading out to the McClean household but rather this was the most isolated homestead by far; something evidenced by the fact that it was the only target given to the Monaghan battalion to carry out.

<sup>1096</sup> B.M.H. Ws. 657 (Philip Marron); *Impartial Reporter*, 24 March 1921.

men noticed the surrounding sound of gunshots from surrounding Unionist households raising the alarm.

Over the course of the night, three men were shot and killed. William Gordon of Rathkeevan was shot through the window of his parent's home. Gordon was an active Unionist and had served as the master of the local Orange and Black lodge.<sup>1097</sup> He was shot in his parents' kitchen through the window.<sup>1098</sup> He was 34 at the time and left a pregnant wife who would give birth only five days later.<sup>1099</sup>

This shooting was less violent than that of Samuel Nixon. Nixon was a farmer of thirty-five living in Tattymore and a member of the local lodge. He was wounded in the first volley of shots that entered the house. He and his wife lay on the floor of their house for half an hour before the raiders declared that if they did not come immediately out they would be burned alive. The couple left the house together, were disarmed by a group of men, and then Samuel Nixon was shot without warning by another man running towards him from behind the house and his wife was wounded. Nixon was shot several more times while on the ground. The house itself however was left untouched.<sup>1100</sup> Harry Macklin, another Volunteer, expressed no regret for either death: 'from what we heard they were a pair of bad boys and richly deserved what they got.'<sup>1101</sup>

The other man shot was James Douglas of Aghafin. He lived with his mother and was drawn out by a threat to otherwise attack the entire house. He was shot and left for dead but was removed to Clones hospital after the raiders had left.<sup>1102</sup> In other cases the threat to clear out was either not offered or did not work. Edward Nelson of Mullaglass had the house set alight while he was within and he only escaped with his sons by jumping from an upper window.<sup>1103</sup>

William Andrews, also of Mullaglass, met with a lucky escape. He was also disarmed after his parents were threatened with harm. He was then tied up and blindfolded and told he was going to be shot before the raiders were drawn away by

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<sup>1097</sup> George Lunt, 'Family Life on the Fermanagh-Monaghan border'.

<sup>1098</sup> *Anglo-Celt*, 2 April 1921.

<sup>1099</sup> George Lunt, 'Family Life on the Fermanagh-Monaghan border'.

<sup>1100</sup> *Anglo-Celt*, 2 April 1921.

<sup>1101</sup> Statement of Harry Macklin (Monaghan County Museum, Marron Papers).

<sup>1102</sup> *Anglo-Celt*, 2 April 1921; *Fermanagh Herald*, 26 March 1921.

<sup>1103</sup> *Fermanagh Herald*, 26 March 1921.

commotion elsewhere and he was able to escape.<sup>1104</sup> This resembles the false execution that we saw in Chapter 3. There is little else to suggest that Andrews was a prominent Unionist in the area and he appears in no other sources. Thomas Lester and his sister were similarly threatened with execution.

The aftermath of the attack was characterised by shock as police and Specials poured into the county. The raiders immediately had to go into hiding. Connolly remembered that: ‘after the Roslea affair we had all to go on the run and sleep away from home. We could take no chances of either being seen by B-men or being captured by Crown forces.’<sup>1105</sup> Catholics in the area were reported as being extremely fearful of reprisals and asked the newly established Clones garrison for potential protection.<sup>1106</sup>

The *Anglo-Celt* and *Fermanagh Times* provided the first list of victims: Samuel Nixon, William Gordon, James Douglas, Edward Nelson, Mrs Magwood, Thomas Lester, William Andrews, John Johnston, William Leary.<sup>1107</sup> Both Leary and Douglas were located just over the border in Kilcorrin and Aghafin respectively while Nixon and Gordon were killed in townlands on the border itself. Gordon and Nixon were buried on 29 March 1921 in Clough parish in Monaghan. Both coffins were covered in a Union Flag and escorted some of the way by Crossleys, ‘thus according semi-military honours’.<sup>1108</sup>

Gordon’s grandson stated in an interview in 2015 that his grandfather was carried over the border ‘by Protestant and Catholic neighbours alike’.<sup>1109</sup> As this is a memoir we should be slightly suspicious as no contemporary sources record this event. Bertie Kerr’s recollection of his father’s experience of the border raids had a similar phenomenon. The lives of the ancestor commemorated and their stature in the community are emphasised through their ability to overcome that most fundamental of forces – sectarian tension. In Kerr’s case he reports his father, Willie Kerr, being saved from attack by a Donegal I.R.A. troop by the intervention of local Catholics.<sup>1110</sup>

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<sup>1104</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1105</sup> B.M.H. Ws. 598 (John T. Connolly).

<sup>1106</sup> *Anglo-Celt*, 2 April 1921.

<sup>1107</sup> *Fermanagh Times*, 24 March 1921; *Anglo-Celt*, 26 March 1921.

<sup>1108</sup> *Anglo-Celt*, 2 April 1921.

<sup>1109</sup> George Lunt, ‘Family Life on the Fermanagh-Monaghan border’.

<sup>1110</sup> ‘Bertie Kerr’ in T. Brady, *Borderlines: personal stories and experiences from the border counties* (Ireland, Borderlines Project, 2006).

Elevated tension in the district played itself out in smaller ways. In mid-April, the Roslea A.O.H. hall was raided by uniformed men said to be Specials and had their drums and other items carried away.<sup>1111</sup> A Specials playing football on the streets of the town would strike Catholics walking by with the ball or deliberately aim to smash the windows of Catholic houses and ‘party cries [were] indulged in’.<sup>1112</sup> However, despite Catholic fears of an escalation Roslea proved the high-water mark of violence. The only significant military consequence of the raid was the capture of local commander Matt Fitzpatrick after he was injured attacking the Magwood house. Another man named Frank Connolly also died in this attack although no further harm came to the family.

Local leaders of both faiths organised a peace conference in Clones chaired by Canon Ruddell, rector of the town. The conference eventually agreed to appoint a committee whose purpose was to attempt to heal the rifts between Catholic and Protestant in Roslea. Members included both Thomas Toal and Michael Knight, the informal leaders of Monaghan’s two communities and Reverends Morris and Martin of Clough and Smithboro, two other prominent Unionists.<sup>1113</sup>

That such a meeting should take place in Monaghan is significant. Possibly this is because of the greater experience of Monaghan Unionists, as a minority, of engaging and compromising with instead of challenging their Catholic neighbours. Certainly, Colonel Madden, in his earlier attempts to exonerate Monaghan from any blame in the initial burnings, brought up the peace conference as an example of the inherently peaceable nature of Monaghan religious relations, arguing that the tension and violence must therefore come from Fermanagh.<sup>1114</sup>

This cross-communal meeting was a later manifestation of an idea that had been floating about the border region for a number of years. In Cavan, Monaghan and Fermanagh the R.I.C. had made overtures about the establishment of ‘protection committees’ which would have functioned as informal communal policing bodies. These attempts were initially unsuccessful, partly because of intimidation and Catholic reluctance to aid the British government, and partly because of the reluctance of

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<sup>1111</sup> *Northern Standard*, 22 April 1921.

<sup>1112</sup> *Anglo-Celt*, 11 August 1921.

<sup>1113</sup> *Fermanagh Herald*, 9 April 1921.

<sup>1114</sup> *Anglo-Celt*, 30 April 1921.

Unionists to join an unarmed and unofficial policing body.<sup>1115</sup> However by October 1920 they were functioning, if ineffectively, in Monaghan.<sup>1116</sup>

Roslea became an important symbol to the Fermanagh Protestant community. It was a cautionary tale of the dangers of unchecked Catholic aggression. Commemorations of the Gordon and Nixon murders were especially common with the two painted as martyrs – a process seen in the semi-military funeral procession accorded both men. The biannual meeting of the Monaghan Black Chapter in June 1921 passed a vote of sympathy with the family of William Gordon (a member) in complete silence.<sup>1117</sup>

Nixon's death, due to its drama, became particularly prominent – his defencelessness and the closeness of his family were central themes. 'Of mercy there was none. A gallant man, after surrendering, was treacherously riddled with bullets in the presence of his wife and little ones.'<sup>1118</sup> The resistance of Roslea Protestants was 'splendid'.<sup>1119</sup> Nixon's wife Minnie, was cast as the traditional grieving widow. She had remained by the body of her husband until 6 in the morning when a neighbour came to take her away, a 'barefoot vigil', while her haggard appearance and faint voice at her husband's inquest were remarked on in tones of deep sympathy. Nixon's young age and large family of six children (of whom the eldest was 9) were also remarked on.<sup>1120</sup>

The more traditional heroism of those who successfully held off the attackers was lauded in Protestant publications like the *Impartial Reporter* which initially thrilled to the 'marvellous escape' of those loyalists who 'defended their homes with rifles and revolvers [and] have accounted for at least two Sinn Féin dead and five others wounded.'<sup>1121</sup> Its aggressive tone was even noted in Parliament by Liberal M.P. Joseph Kenworthy as 'advocating reprisals of the very worst sort.'<sup>1122</sup> The *Fermanagh Times* too reported stories of the 'plucky' farmers who fought back against raiders.<sup>1123</sup> The successful defence of Lisbellaw from an I.R.A. raid received particular attention as 'heroic' and 'patriotic'.<sup>1124</sup> Later a similar defence of Protestant homesteads against

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<sup>1115</sup> County Inspector's Returns Cavan/Fermanagh, July 1920 (T.N.A.: CO 904/112).

<sup>1116</sup> County Inspector's Returns Monaghan, October 1920 (T.N.A.: CO 904/113).

<sup>1117</sup> *Northern Standard*, 10 June 1921.

<sup>1118</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 30 March 1921.

<sup>1119</sup> *Fermanagh Times*, 31 March 1921.

<sup>1120</sup> *Northern Standard*, 1 April 1921; *Northern Standard*, *Impartial Reporter*, 30 April 1921.

<sup>1121</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 24 March 1921.

<sup>1122</sup> House of Commons Debates, 5th series, vol. 139, 8 March 1921, col. 401.

<sup>1123</sup> *Fermanagh Times*, June 10 1920.

<sup>1124</sup> *Fermanagh Times*, June 17 1920.



Catholic raiders, this time in Drumshanbo, Tyrone, was hailed as ‘emulating Rosslea!’<sup>1125</sup> The defence of the McClean household in particular was framed in almost mythological terms as ‘200 against three!’<sup>1126</sup>

The *Reporter* put itself to the fore of post-Roslea commemoration. It was the chief organiser of a fund aimed towards providing relief for those families affected by the raids but also towards the commissioning of a memorial to the event to cement its place in the mythology of Fermanagh Unionism.<sup>1127</sup> From the outset this movement and this call were limited to the Protestant community. There was to be no consideration of relief to those Catholics who had lost their homes or to Protestants in Monaghan.<sup>1128</sup>

This call was framed in the religious terminology common in Ulster Protestantism. This was no mere charitable effort but a ‘sacred appeal’ and framed in traditional biblical terms visiting ‘the fatherless and widows in their affliction’.<sup>1129</sup> The fund sat ambiguously and deliberately between religion, politics and charity. An early and popular method of raising money for the fund was to organise collections in Protestant churches of all denominations on politically important days such as the opening of the Northern Parliament.<sup>1130</sup> Other popular events included public parades of Special Constables before pan-denominational Protestant services.<sup>1131</sup>

The Rosslea Fund, defiantly Protestant in how it spelled the placename, had its aims quickly grow beyond simply organising a memorial and providing compensation to the limited number of families affected by the attack. A decision was made on 5 May 1921 to amalgamate the Fund with the County Special Constabulary Benevolent Fund and to expand its scope to the care of all Special Constables and their families injured through enemy engagement in the county.<sup>1132</sup> However such was the strong sentimental appeal of Roslea that it continued to be used as the primary name of the organisation. Although it offered compensation to those who applied, its primary purpose was to provide an income supplement to the families of those affected.

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<sup>1125</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 21 April 1921.

<sup>1126</sup> *Fermanagh Times*, 24 March 1921; *Impartial Reporter*, 24 March 1921.

<sup>1127</sup> For an example of a Roslea fund subscription book see Bundle of eight letters referring to Special Constabulary (P.R.O.N.I., Papers of James Kerr, D1163/41).

<sup>1128</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 30 March 1921; *Impartial Reporter*, 4 May 1922.

<sup>1129</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 11 May 1922.

<sup>1130</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 4 May 1922.

<sup>1131</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 12 May 1921.

<sup>1132</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 12 May 1921.

An examination of a weekly subscription list to the fund shows that the vast majority of its supporters were small donors, and all Protestant. The largest donations came from Specials Patrols themselves.<sup>1133</sup> The most famous patron of the association was Sir Basil Brooke, later Lord Brookeborough, and County Commandant of the Specials and the large donations from the Specials patrols may not have been entirely voluntary as Brooke had committed himself and the Specials to donating to the fund.<sup>1134</sup>

While the fund represented a genuine charitable impulse (at least towards Protestant families) it is important for another reason. No other organisation so promoted the cause and suffering of Roslea Protestants (and by extension any Protestants who were so unfortunate as to come across the I.R.A.) and in doing so no other organisation created such an exaggerated and overdrawn view of loyalist suffering: ‘picture women and children hoarded together for a night’s rest behind barricades; there is through the night the dread of the bullet; the accommodation is the most primitive as several families under one roof cannot have the same comfort as in their own homes. The district is experiencing a state of war.’<sup>1135</sup>

### *The Pettigo-Belleek Affair*

While Roslea was the most significant breaking of the peace in Fermanagh in the revolutionary period it was not the only outbreak of violence. Of near equal importance was the conflict between British soldiers, Northern Irish police and I.R.A. forces in the border villages of Pettigo and Belleek in June 1922.

Especially on the Fermanagh Protestant side the Pettigo event was presented in explicitly ‘bordered’ terms. Pettigo-Belleek was an invasion, the movement of one state’s forces into another state’s territory. It underlined that Fermanagh was the new borderland and the frontline in a Catholic-Protestant, North-South conflict. It also served as a symbolic first test of the integrity of the new state. Pettigo was not the origin point of any

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<sup>1133</sup> Bundle of eight letters referring to Special Constabulary (P.R.O.N.I., Papers of James Kerr, D1163/41).

<sup>1134</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 7 April 1921.

<sup>1135</sup> *Ibid.*

of these ideas, but it was a crystallising moment much like Roslea. Our focus will be more on Pettigo-Belleek as a cultural event rather than a military one, and on the impact of Pettigo-Belleek on the non-military personnel living in the area.

The area being contested in this incident was a roughly triangular patch of land (sometimes called a salient) that ran about twelve straight miles along the Fermanagh-Donegal border from Pettigo in the north to Belleek in the south and out to Lough Erne in the east. This land was largely wooded and boggy with limited communications networks with the rest of Fermanagh. Even before the occupation of the village by the I.R.A. Unionist authorities had struggled to exert control over the region.<sup>1136</sup>

The two towns in question, Pettigo and Belleek, were both pierced by the new border and divided awkwardly between the two new jurisdictions. While Pettigo was majority Protestant it lay predominantly on the Donegal side of the border, including the R.I.C. Barracks, the train station and the majority of the shops. Belleek meanwhile was largely Catholic but had the majority of its infrastructure and population in Fermanagh. Crucially, however, Free State Belleek contained an old military fort which occupied a strategic position overlooking the town.

On 10 April 1922 Belleek and its surrounding area came under the control of the I.R.A. through no action of their own. Rather this was the date the R.I.C. forces in the town chose to abandon it. Belleek was suffering in Fermanagh what Drummully suffered in Monaghan; left by partition without a route to anywhere else in the county that did not first pass over the border. This meant that Nationalist forces controlled access into and out of the town and did so with the compliance of the local Catholic population. Consequently, the area was seen as ungovernable by the local R.I.C. Inspector who made the decision to leave with his 20 men (first asking the I.R.A. permission to pass through their territory).<sup>1137</sup>

The control of the Belleek-Pettigo area would have been crucial should a conflict between North and South have erupted in 1922. The Irish National Army placed official garrisons in both villages. Pro and anti-treaty forces cooperated in their operations along the border. Control of the fort also allowed the I.R.A. to stage raids into Fermanagh and provided a safe haven for I.R.A. men on the run. After the collapse of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Northern

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<sup>1136</sup> Livingstone, *Fermanagh*, pp 308 – 9.

<sup>1137</sup> *Fermanagh Herald*, 10 June 1922; Livingstone, *Fermanagh* pp 308 – 9.

Division in May large numbers of Tyrone I.R.A. men ended up in the district and were put to patrolling.<sup>1138</sup>

The response to this came not through the military or the police but through the Specials. Barton ties the initial catalyst as being the assassination of Unionist M.P. William Twaddell on 22 May 1922.<sup>1139</sup> On 29 May 1922, a force of Specials assembled and crossed into the triangle on a pleasure barge *The Lady of the Lake*. The men occupied Magherameena Castle in Pettigo which was the home of the local priest – a prominent Sinn Féiner unpopular with Pettigo Unionists, Lorcán Ó Ciaráin. Ó Ciaráin was ordered to clear out.<sup>1140</sup> This act, influenced by local vendettas, religious prejudices and strategic considerations well demonstrates the ambiguous layers of identity that informed so much military logic in this period.

The initial invasion was beaten back by an I.R.A. counter-invasion from Donegal and the force was compelled to retreat to Buck Island in the middle of Loch Erne. This cost three I.R.A. men and one Special their lives. An attempt by another force of Specials to rescue them was also defeated. However, the isolated I.R.A. could not hope to hold out forever, nor did they have any realistic long-term goals. The arrival of British reinforcements and artillery requested by the Northern government turned the tide against the I.R.A. who fled Pettigo after a day of combat on Sunday 5 June 1922.<sup>1141</sup> Belleek held out slightly longer, but it was inevitable that the town would fall. Aware of this, the I.R.A. abandoned the fort on 6 June. The I.R.A. also abandoned Cliff Lodge, a fortification even further into Donegal.

On 8 June the British forces arrived at a largely empty Belleek and took the fort.<sup>1142</sup> Controversially, they hoisted a Union Flag atop the castle.<sup>1143</sup> Even in a time when the border was new, such an action would have been knowingly provocative action and an obvious violation of the Treaty. It also remains the last time a military fortification was

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<sup>1138</sup> B.M.H. Ws. 721 (Nicholas Smyth).

<sup>1139</sup> Barton, *Brookeborough*, p. 154.

<sup>1140</sup> Livingstone, *Fermanagh*, p. 308.

<sup>1141</sup> It is not the intention here to provide a detailed military history of Pettigo-Belleek, but such can be found in the recollections of Nicholas Smyth (B.M.H. Ws. 721) and the combined account of John Travers, James Scollan, Nicholas Smyth, Denis Monaghan and Felix McCabe (B.M.H. Ws. 711). For governmental perspectives on the attack see Belfast Brigade report, June 1922 (U.C.D.A., Mulcahy Papers, P7/B/77) and 'Incidents-June 1922' (P.R.O.N.I., Home Office files, HA/5/151B).

<sup>1142</sup> Compensation claims for Pettigo-Belleek (P.R.O.N.I., Cabinet files, CAB/9/W/1/1).

<sup>1143</sup> Northern Border Commission report 10 June 1922, Reports for the Boundary Commission (P.R.O.N.I., Home Office files, HA/32/1/16).

taken by British troops in the twenty-six counties. It was justified by the British as being a strategic necessity although the symbolic act of raising the Union Flag undermined a purely utilitarian argument.

After this, peace returned to the area, aided by the I.R.A. becoming distracted by the Civil War. By late 1922, troops were withdrawn from Pettigo as police arrived in the town and in January 1923 official control was returned. Belleek fort remained British until 1925.<sup>1144</sup> Aware of the fears of the loyalist population following the previous occupation the head of the local garrison Captain Joyce made particular efforts to liaise with local reverend E.W. McKegney.<sup>1145</sup>

For Protestants in Pettigo their recapture was cause for celebration. They had been kept as prisoners during the entire engagement (presumably out of fear of spies) and were vocal in their desire for the British forces to keep the town.<sup>1146</sup> Indeed, following recapture, they published a letter in the *Fermanagh Times* appealing for inclusion in Northern Ireland. They listed in the letter some of the indignities suffered, including being made to remove the motto 'Fear God, Honour the King' from a gable and having their houses searched for pictures of the king or British soldiers. They listed as their greatest fear: 'that any future time the protection of the military might be withdrawn and that we would again be at the mercy of [the I.R.A.]'.<sup>1147</sup>

The I.R.A. for their part asserted that this was a normal and impartial policy they had implemented on everyone in the village, although in December 1922 Joyce admitted that he could not guarantee the Protestant population of the town from unfair arrest and advised them to not engage in any political activity.<sup>1148</sup> During the occupation Protestant able bodied men, had been prevented from fleeing the town and were allegedly ordered 'to dig trenches and suffer every insult'.<sup>1149</sup> A man named Johnston was reported to have been shot and left in a critical condition after refusing to make himself available for

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<sup>1144</sup> Livingstone, *Fermanagh* p 310.

<sup>1145</sup> *Fermanagh Times*, 25 January 1923.

<sup>1146</sup> Northern Border Commission report 10 June 1922, Reports for the Boundary Commission (P.R.O.N.I., Home Office files, HA/32/1/16).

<sup>1147</sup> *Fermanagh Times*, 31 August 1922.

<sup>1148</sup> *Donegal Democrat*, 8 September 1922; *Belfast Newsletter*, 14 December 1922; *Impartial Reporter*, 14 December 1922.

<sup>1149</sup> County Inspectors Report for Fermanagh September 1922 (P.R.O.N.I., Home Office files, HA/32/1/129); *Impartial Reporter*, 15 June 1922. *Impartial Reporter*, 15 June 1922.

menial labour, although no record of this can be found elsewhere.<sup>1150</sup> The majority of the refugees fled to Enniskillen where they were taken in by locals and had charity provided to them by the Freemasons.<sup>1151</sup> The *Reporter* reported that divine service had continued in the Church of Ireland all throughout the occupation; this was intended to convey the resilience of Pettigo Protestants rather than the tolerance of Free State administration.<sup>1152</sup>

Nationalists both in Belleek and Pettigo found themselves in the same position following the area's recapture. They were only allowed to leave their homes if they could obtain a permit from the local British commander.<sup>1153</sup> A local Catholic, Jane Gallagher, sued for compensation for religious artefacts in her house allegedly burned by British forces.<sup>1154</sup> A report of 2 November 1922 to Richard Mulcahy noted that conditions for Catholics in the town had become very bad and the population was subject to 'all kinds of terrorism'.<sup>1155</sup>

Tales of the unfair treatment meted out to Protestants trapped in Pettigo became commonplace in the Unionist media.<sup>1156</sup> The *Impartial Reporter* described an 'exodus' of Protestants out of the town. It carried stories of Protestants being arrested and held without charge before being released.<sup>1157</sup> The *Fermanagh Times* reported they had been 'reduced to a condition of worse than slavery for one of Ulster stock'.<sup>1158</sup> This was portrayed as an inherent feature of nationalist rule, the *Reporter* sarcastically referring to the Protestant community as having gotten its first 'sample of Free State "government"'.<sup>1159</sup> The *Times* commented that Protestants in the districts had experienced ruination under Free State rule and peace under British rule and could 'draw their own moral conclusions'.<sup>1160</sup>

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<sup>1150</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 15 June 1922; Other reports mention a David Johnston, a 14-year-old boy who was held under armed escort by the I.R.A. during the occupation of Pettigo, but we have no report as to why. It is possible that this was the origin point of the shooting story that became corrupted as it spread.

<sup>1151</sup> *Belfast Newsletter*, 21 May 1922.

<sup>1152</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 15 June 1922.

<sup>1153</sup> Incidents-June 1922' (P.R.O.N.I., Home Office files, HA/5/151B).

<sup>1154</sup> *Fermanagh Herald*, 11 June 1922.

<sup>1155</sup> Report on Pettigo-Belleek (N.A.I., North Eastern Boundary Bureau files, TAOIS/NEBB/1/1/6).

<sup>1156</sup> *Fermanagh Times*, 11 January 1923.

<sup>1157</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 1 June 1922.

<sup>1158</sup> *Fermanagh Times*, 8 June 1922.

<sup>1159</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 1 June 1922.

<sup>1160</sup> *Fermanagh Times*, 11 January 1923.

An estimate of one hundred was provided for Pettigo Protestants who fled the town following the start of military engagements. Examples included Albert Anderson who was forced to flee with his 80-year-old mother by boat to Boa Island or of another 80-year-old Pettigo Protestant (unnamed) who was forced out of bed at revolver point while the I.R.A. searched his home and who compared the affair to Belgium during the war.<sup>1161</sup>

The narrative focused around a few key symbolic points. Primary among these was the Specials, who served as a wider metaphor for the Unionist response. Not only was their conduct during the affair praised but stories were also reported of young men enlisting as a result. This included one incident of ‘one lad [who] swam the river when pressed and arriving in Fermanagh enlisted in the Special Constabulary’.<sup>1162</sup>

The response to Pettigo-Belleek was different to that of Roslea, despite both being portrayed as an invasion of southern savagery into Fermanagh. While Roslea’s response mirrored the responses to similar violence in Cavan and Monaghan, the response to Pettigo-Belleek was one that was informed by putative concept of a national territory. The *Fermanagh Times* characterised the initial occupation as ‘Free State rule in Fermanagh’.<sup>1163</sup> The Divisional Commander for Fermanagh expressed confidence that the ‘humiliation’ suffered by the I.R.A. at Pettigo had taught them to ‘treat the Border with due respect’.<sup>1164</sup>

Unlike Monaghan’s *Northern Standard* or the *Irish Post and Weekly Telegraph* of Cavan, the *Reporter* issued statements of the readiness of the Fermanagh Unionists to respond, complete with the implicit threat to the I.R.A.: ‘Ulster is roused and alive... even a blind man must see what can be the only outcome of any attack on her.’<sup>1165</sup> The *Fermanagh Times* greeted the military action in the salient with exultation, running the headline ‘Fermanagh Avenged!’<sup>1166</sup>

### *The establishment of the border and the B Specials.*

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<sup>1161</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 15 June 1922.

<sup>1162</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 15 June 1922.

<sup>1163</sup> *Fermanagh Times*, 20 June 1922.

<sup>1164</sup> General Report of 30 June 1922, Divisional Commissioner’s bi-monthly reports (P.R.O.N.I., Home Office Files, HA/5/152).

<sup>1165</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 15 June 1922.

<sup>1166</sup> *Fermanagh Times*, 8 June 1922.

Pettigo and Roslea represented the two most significant flareups of violence in Fermanagh post-partition, and more broadly throughout the period. However, there was another flaring of violence that tells us a significant amount both about the creation of the border and its impact on day-to-day life in the county. This was longer term and comprised of many smaller incidents. This was the six months of border unrest leading up to the Derry hostage crisis and the Clones Affray. Our examination of this incident will also allow us to focus on two crucial differences between revolutionary violence in Fermanagh and that in Cavan and Monaghan: the existence and power of the Specials, and the prominence of Protestant on Catholic violence.

By 1922, the I.R.A. had evacuated out of Fermanagh and taken up a position along the border, in effect reinforcing it.<sup>1167</sup> Post-partition disturbances in Fermanagh were clustered strongly around the six-month window leading up to the outbreak of the Irish Civil War. At this time, the work of the I.R.A. was geared towards disrupting and preventing Northern efforts to create a physical border by destroying the roads and bridges that criss-crossed it.<sup>1168</sup> This primarily involved firing on patrols of Specials or R.U.C. who came too near the border. As in Cavan and Monaghan, the families of those who joined the B Specials were also threatened unless the Special in question resigned.<sup>1169</sup>

These disturbances brought with them a response. Cross-border shootings became commonplace, especially along Monaghan's border with Tyrone and Armagh by comparison with Fermanagh.<sup>1170</sup> Along the Fermanagh border, conflict focused on the area nearest to Clones.<sup>1171</sup> Years later, Bertie Kerr recalled that such firing forced his family to live away from their home on the Leitrim border for nearly two months.<sup>1172</sup> These cross-border shootings tended to be indiscriminate with regard to religion or political orientation. As they were characterised by sniping, individuals were often too

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<sup>1167</sup> B.M.H. Ws. 598 (John T. Connolly).

<sup>1168</sup> Account entitled 'On the Ulster Border with the Royal Irish Constabulary' (P.R.O.N.I., Brookborough papers, D3004/C/2/108); *Belfast Newsletter*, March 8 1922.

<sup>1169</sup> General Report of 30 June 1922, Divisional Commissioner's bi-monthly reports (P.R.O.N.I., Home Office Files, HA/5/152).

<sup>1170</sup> General Report of 17 June 1922, Divisional Commissioner's bi-monthly reports (P.R.O.N.I., Home Office Files, HA/5/152).

<sup>1171</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 13 July 1922.

<sup>1172</sup> 'Bertie Kerr' in Brady, T. *Borderlines: personal stories and experiences from the border counties* (Ireland, Borderlines Project, 2006).



far away to be accurately identified and one's side of the border was often the only marker used in the decision to shoot.<sup>1173</sup>

While the I.R.A. were fighting against the establishment of a border, in doing so they aided its creation. In March 1922, John Davidson, for example, was denied passage over the border into Monaghan and was told to 'return over the border'.<sup>1174</sup> In the same month, three northern businessmen in Clones named Knaggs, Conn and Barrett were judged to be of suspicious character and informed 'you have got to get out of the Free State.'<sup>1175</sup>

Unionist reporting of the fighting takes the opportunity to portray the border as the frontier of a wild and violent land from which they were constantly threatened.<sup>1176</sup> In January 1921, the District County Inspector for Fermanagh noted that thirteen outrages had taken place in the county, primarily along the borders with Cavan and Monaghan.<sup>1177</sup> This was a sentiment he reiterated next month when stating that the entirety of the county was peaceful except for that portion which bordered the south.<sup>1178</sup>

From 1921 both the *Impartial Reporter* and the *Northern Standard* began to distinguish news on the border – identifying sections with 'On the Border' or 'From the Border' as titles. These reports were mostly comprised of events like those already discussed, cross-border sniping, removal of people, holding up of border crossings. However, they also included actions more specifically referring to the border itself and less to the people living near it; trenching of roads, blowing up of bridges, reinforcing of defensive positions around the border.

The act of reinforcing the border was undertaken by the B Specials. At the height of the deployment, following the Clones Affray, it was estimated that 5,000 men were

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<sup>1173</sup> Examples of these cases can be found in the N.A.I. FIN/COM.P./2 files and especially those relating to Monaghan. See particularly the cases of James Mullan, Emyvale (N.A.I.: FIN/COM.P./2/18/187); Patrick Fox, Tullynahattina (N.A.I.: FIN/COM.P./2/18/170); John McKenna, Emyvale (N.A.I. FIN/COM.P./2/18/121), and Patrick Kerr, Emyvale (N.A.I.: FIN/COM.P./2/18/108). See also: files relating to the death of Robert Scott (P.R.O.N.I., Cabinet files, CAB 9B/42(7)/1).

<sup>1174</sup> *Northern Standard*, 31 March 1922.

<sup>1175</sup> *Northern Standard*, 24 March 1922.

<sup>1176</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 13 July 1922; *Impartial Reporter*, 15 June 1922.

<sup>1177</sup> County Inspector's Returns Fermanagh, January 1921 (T.N.A.: CO 904/114).

<sup>1178</sup> County Inspector's Returns Fermanagh, February 1921 (T.N.A.: CO 904/114).

tasked with guarding a border line that stretched from Portadown to Belleek, with the line extending further north being held by British soldiers.<sup>1179</sup>

Most of this work involved little danger. Attempts to trench roads or demolish bridges might be met with responding fire but stopping and searching strangers in a locality was less hazardous. Roads that were destroyed were often smaller routes into the county with the intent of funnelling traffic through easily monitorable main roadways.<sup>1180</sup> General blockades on the border would also be instituted by local Special forces and enforced with violence. An example of this was the blockade at Castlesaunderson instituted 'as a precautionary measure' on 2 March 1922 and which led to two drivers for the bakery of Edward Brady of Clones being shot at and wounded after they failed to stop in time.<sup>1181</sup> Major crossings such as Ballagh bridge became flashpoints for cross-border sniping and occasional raids on guard outposts.<sup>1182</sup>

Fermanagh was disproportionately represented in lists of Special casualties. Between 1920 and 1923, sixteen Specials based in the county died: five in Clones, three in Roslea, two in Pettigo-Belleek, two in ambushes at Mullaghfad and Garrison; and four by accident.<sup>1183</sup> This represented roughly a third of all Special casualties during the revolutionary period, a total of forty-nine.<sup>1184</sup>

The Specials themselves had a strong connection to Fermanagh. The organised defensive Unionism seen at Lisbellaw provided a link between the U.V.F. and the Specials. Basil Brooke the man perhaps most responsible for the creation of the force was also based in the county.<sup>1185</sup> That first point was particularly emphasised in contemporary speeches. In Enniskillen John Porter-Porter, D.L., declared that 'the

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<sup>1179</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 16 February 1922; *Impartial Reporter*, 27 July 1922; *Northern Standard*, 17 February 1922.

<sup>1180</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 9 March 1922; *Impartial Reporter*, 16 March 1922; *Northern Standard*, 10 March 1922.

<sup>1181</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 9 March 1922; *Northern Standard*, 3 March 1922.

<sup>1182</sup> General Report of 1 May 1922, Divisional Commissioner's bi-monthly reports (P.R.O.N.I., Home Office Files, HA/5/152).

<sup>1183</sup> Livingstone, *Fermanagh*, p. 300.

<sup>1184</sup> Major John Furniss Potter, *A Testimony to Courage – the Regimental History of the Ulster Defence Regiment 1969 – 1992*, (London, 2001) p. 5.

<sup>1185</sup> Correspondence on Fermanagh Vigilance Force, (P.R.O.N.I., Sir Ernest Clark Papers, D1022/2/3); Memo on formation of B Specials in Fermanagh 1919 (P.R.O.N.I., Brookborough papers, D3004/C/2/107).

whole thought of this organisation had sprung from what they had done in the small village of Lisbellaw'.<sup>1186</sup>

The Specials' creation was inherently bordered. Their origin can be found in the insecurity felt by Fermanagh due to their position along the border and in a Catholic majority county. As the *Fermanagh Times* noted when at the first recruitment call 'the response to this call to duty in Enniskillen and Fermanagh will form a real test of the loyalty of our male population... talk and sentiment in themselves are not worth a straw if not backed up by action.'<sup>1187</sup> It is telling that the only county to outperform recruitment in Fermanagh for the Specials was the county most similar in terms of non-Catholic population and geographic position: Tyrone.<sup>1188</sup> Eoin O'Duffy commented that in Fermanagh and Tyrone: 'every Unionist may be safely reckoned one of them [the Specials]'.<sup>1189</sup> This demonstrates not only the level of support for the Specials in the county but also the degree to which they were associated with a single community's interests.

The *Reporter* assigned a man to follow the Specials on the border in early 1922. The ostensible purpose was to 'try to teach those living in perfect safety and let them learn something of the perils run by the men in the border country'.<sup>1190</sup> These reports were not unusual, Basil Brooke actively encouraged them to increase support for the cause of Ulster.<sup>1191</sup>

It is worth noting that we have no proof that any statements in these reports were genuinely made by Specials. However, it is useful when we take it in context as a lesson both on how the Specials were being portrayed in Unionist circles but also how they were seeking to portray themselves.

Stories underlined the discipline required of the men both in the *Reporter* and the *Fermanagh Times*.<sup>1192</sup> The early mornings and late nights and the distance that had to be travelled were common tropes. The constant vigilance of the searchers and their

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<sup>1186</sup> Barton, *Brookeborough*, p. 59.

<sup>1187</sup> *Fermanagh Times*, 2 December 1920.

<sup>1188</sup> Barton, *Brookeborough*, p. 67.

<sup>1189</sup> Monthly report of Monaghan Brigade, April 1921 (U.C.D.A., Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/39).

<sup>1190</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 15 February 1922.

<sup>1191</sup> Account entitled 'On the Ulster Border with the Royal Irish Constabulary' (P.R.O.N.I., Brookborough papers, D3004/C/2/108).

<sup>1192</sup> *Fermanagh Times*, 13 April 1922; *Fermanagh Times*, 30 March 1922.

ruthlessness in searching anyone they came across at night were also underlined. Neither women nor ministers are allowed to pass the billets after a certain hour.<sup>1193</sup>

The dangers faced were focused on very rarely. Discussions of shootings were only mentioned in the past tense after the Specials had already won a great victory, as in the case of Lackey bridge, or to assure readers that the Specials would win, as when discussing the tactical advantages of defending Fermanagh's Donegal border.<sup>1194</sup> Duties such as searching passers-by or forcing suspects to return across the border are portrayed not as serious tasks but as interesting occupations, pleasant in fine weather.<sup>1195</sup> Incidents for which the Specials had been criticised such as an apparent drunken shouting match between Sinn Féiners and Specials on the Clones road following the shootings in the town were reconstrued as clever diversionary tactics through which their comrades were able to sneak into a field behind the town and rescue two constables who had lain there since Friday (there appears to be no other record of such an incident).<sup>1196</sup>

Lists of outrages in the south, particularly those close to the border such as the shootings in Ballyconnell, served as a sort of warning as to what should happen were they to fail, as did smaller incidents that happen just on the Fermanagh side of the border such as the robbing of Tullyrossmearn Post Office in February 1923.<sup>1197</sup> A speech in Ballinamallard in July 1922 by Basil Brooke included an exhortation to the Specials that their purpose was to be 'called upon to defend the border of their country'.<sup>1198</sup>

There were some small hints in the work too which suggest at broader attitudes. On at least one occasion the Specials were referred to as Tommies, a word with far more associations with the military than the police and suggests something about how the Specials represented their duties and circumstances.<sup>1199</sup> This view was reinforced in the same extract when another Special was quoted as saying 'a policeman's life is not the

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<sup>1193</sup> Account entitled 'On the Ulster Border with the Royal Irish Constabulary' (P.R.O.N.I., Brookborough papers, D3004/C/2/108).

<sup>1194</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 13 July 1922; *Impartial Reporter*, 27 July 1922.

<sup>1195</sup> *Fermanagh Times*, 12 May 1921.

<sup>1196</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 13 July 1922; *Impartial Reporter*, 27 July 1922.

<sup>1197</sup> Account entitled 'On the Ulster Border with the Royal Irish Constabulary' (P.R.O.N.I., Brookborough papers, D3004/C/2/108); *Impartial Reporter*, 13 February 1923.

<sup>1198</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 27 July 1922.

<sup>1199</sup> *Fermanagh Times*, 22 February 1923.

lot of a Special.’<sup>1200</sup> Eoin O’Duffy also noted the pointlessness of trying to distinguish between the Specials, the Black and Tans and the military.<sup>1201</sup>

The writer of this piece noted that isolation made Protestants more likely to join the Specials. In Roslea he saw a minority loyalist population that was entirely within the Specials, ‘their keenness was sharpened by the disaster of two years ago.’<sup>1202</sup> There was no disagreement from the writer who paints quite an evocative picture of an isolated border Protestantism that while overly sentimental is quite striking:

On lonely hillsides in the darkness stand here and there perhaps two men, watching all night. They have but their own stout hearts to steel their nerves for the strain is a mighty one, their numbers are so few. They are an hour’s journey from the nearest big posts, and the Rosslea garrison had a laborious task, but it is cheerfully and loyally rendered.<sup>1203</sup>

#### *Protestant on Catholic violence in Fermanagh post-partition*

From the beginning the actions of the Specials were coded in sectarian terms. Catholic houses inevitably fell more heavily under suspicion than Protestant ones, the inverse of what was seen in Cavan or Monaghan.<sup>1204</sup> Enniskillen in December 1920 saw in one day shots fired at St Michael’s Church by one platoon and another marching up and down the town shouting ‘to hell with the Pope’.<sup>1205</sup> A similar event was recorded in Newbliss when the local Catholic Club was fired on.<sup>1206</sup> I.R.A. men in Fermanagh and

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<sup>1200</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 13 July 1922.

<sup>1201</sup> Monthly report of Monaghan Brigade, April 1921 (U.C.D.A., Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/39).

<sup>1202</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 13 February 1923.

<sup>1203</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 13 February 1923.

<sup>1204</sup> *Fermanagh Times*, 30 June 1921.

<sup>1205</sup> Livingstone, *Fermanagh*, p. 56.

<sup>1206</sup> *Northern Standard*, 7 January 1921.

Tyrone recorded the growing frequency of raids on their houses and the stopping of all men suspected of an I.R.A. connection whenever they were passed on the road.<sup>1207</sup>

The institutional suspicion of Catholics enabled a trend that was not apparent in Cavan or Monaghan: organised and targeted violence against Catholics. This was distinct from the organised resistance to the I.R.A. we have seen elsewhere. In Fermanagh this violence was focused on threatening not exclusively militant republicans but also the broader Catholic community. The *Irish Independent* writing in May 1922 reported that ‘so aggressive have all sections of the Special Constabulary become no Catholic will now venture out at night.’<sup>1208</sup> Joe McGahey, a demobilised Free State soldier of Tattongeeragh, reported being raided and threatened by George Howe and Sam Doonan two B Special Constables in June 1924. He and his wife, Sarah, were threatened with ‘their brains blown out’ unless they were across the Border by the following morning. When McGahey asked what he had done, the response was the cryptic ‘you know what you have done’. McGahey went to Clones the following day while Sarah reported the affair to the sergeant in Roslea.<sup>1209</sup>

The use of an unspecified offense as the motive for the raid and the threat to remove oneself across the border had strong equivalents south of the border. These similarities were not peculiar. In 1922, Katie Green reported a raid on her home by eight armed and masked men. The men refused to give a reason for the raid other than saying that Green was the ‘one they wanted’. They fired into her windows and brought paraffin oil with them, threatening to burn the house down. Green and her mother were eventually able to drive the raiders away after wrestling a revolver away from one of the men who they unmasked and recognised as James Allen, the local B Special sergeant.<sup>1210</sup>

Raids, firing on passing traffic and threats were most common. Patrick Carleton of Paget Street, Enniskillen reported an attack in March 1922 that could have occurred to other Protestant in Cavan: ‘several shots were fired into my bedroom about one o’clock in the morning... my children had to lie on the floor to avoid the bullets.’<sup>1211</sup> Kate

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<sup>1207</sup> Monthly report of Monaghan Brigade, April 1921 (U.C.D.A., Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/39); B.M.H. Ws. 721 Nicholas Smyth.

<sup>1208</sup> *Irish Independent*, 4 May 1922.

<sup>1209</sup> Files relating to the intimidation of Joseph McGahey by George Howe (P.R.O.N.I., Home Office files, HA/5/1353).

<sup>1210</sup> Files relating to the attempted murder of Katie and Catherine Green by B Specials (P.R.O.N.I., Home Office files, H/828/1486).

<sup>1211</sup> *Fermanagh Herald*, 18 March 1922.

McGovern reported her hotel being raided by masked men looking to turn a guest, Sinn Féin liaison officer Brennan, out of the town. The attack was marked for its loudness and the unnecessary rudeness of the raiders who eventually left after realising they would not find Brennan on the premises.<sup>1212</sup> Fr O'Daly, parish priest of Roslea, was fired upon without warning while he cycled through the district of Magherarney.<sup>1213</sup>

The veracity of many of these individual events can be difficult to ascertain. They were often too small for official notice and are primarily recorded in the media. Eamon Phoenix has also correctly noted that these events took place in the broader context of southern suspicion of Northern sectarianism, particularly following the Belfast riots.<sup>1214</sup> The recording of these events was therefore inherently politicised. Southern newspapers like the *Freeman's Journal* and the Fermanagh nationalist paper the *Fermanagh Herald* recorded vastly more incidents than the *Impartial Reporter* or even the *Northern Standard* (which felt far less affinity to the B Specials and was less predisposed to defend them). Reports would appear in the *Journal* about drunken Specials searching Catholics in Fermanagh and in following editions the *Reporter* would disavow that any such events happened while labelling them a 'lie factory' and 'anti-Protestant propaganda.'<sup>1215</sup> The *Reporter* did not, however, deny that such incidents took place. In their response to a letter ordering J. Goodwin Esq of Dernavore to clear over the border Trimble personally commented 'we would like to see the writer of that letter driven across the border out of the Ulster he disgraces by his acts'.<sup>1216</sup>

The motivation behind these attacks was frequently as obscure as in Cavan and Monaghan. This can be seen in the McGahey and Green cases. While such attacks were not squarely sectarian they had a sectarian element to them. Those who were detained, for example, were asked for their religion.<sup>1217</sup> We see this too in the destruction of the sacred vessels of Derrygonnelly Church on 28 July 1923. Here Specials Robert Swindle

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<sup>1212</sup> *Fermanagh Herald*, 8 April 1922; For another example of this type of raid see the incident of Kate Green in Tempo in December 1922: *Impartial Reporter*, 7 December 1922; *Impartial Reporter*, 4 January 1922.

<sup>1213</sup> *Irish Independent*, 4 May 1922.

<sup>1214</sup> Phoenix, *Northern Nationalism*, p. 251.

<sup>1215</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 22 March 1922; *Impartial Reporter*, 30 March 1922; *Impartial Reporter*, 22 June 1922.

<sup>1216</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 3 August 1922.

<sup>1217</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 22 March 1922.

and James Patton were caught and charged with damaging an ablution bowl and a wine cruet belonging to the Church.<sup>1218</sup>

This case also demonstrates that a key reason these occurred. In the context of a build-up of inter-communal tension along the border, Northern Irish forces failed to quickly instil discipline in their forces. In Derrygonnelly, both men claimed to be under the influence of drink, which was a common factor in many of these cases and raises questions about the problem of a systemic lack of discipline in the corps and the role this may have played in their reputation.<sup>1219</sup> When visiting Roslea in June 1922, Northern Ireland's Border Commission had expressed concern over the ability of some 'eccentric' local commanders to adequately control their men and enforce discipline.<sup>1220</sup> Both Joseph McGahey and Katie Green's attackers were punished after the attacks were reported. However, Green's attacker, James Allen, was only one of eight and was punished only as he had been identified. The later R.U.C. report on the matter expresses suspicion that the man who arrested him, Sergeant Moulton, was himself one of the eight at the house.<sup>1221</sup>

One area where we can directly compare violent actions in Fermanagh, and Cavan and Monaghan is in the sending of threats and intimidatory letters. These letters share many characteristics with those sent to Protestants south of the border. In February 1922 the *Fermanagh Herald* reported four Catholic families in Ballinamallard receiving threatening letters. These letters all began in a familiar style: asserting the group that was sending the letter before asserting a deadline of how many days the family had before they had to clear out. The sending party here is never identified as the Specials but as some other organisation such as the 'Ulster Defence Association' or the 'Protestant Defence Association'.<sup>1222</sup> However in Florence Court in early 1923 an ex-Special named James Black was brought to trial for the writing of threatening letters to a local farmer Frank McGarvey.<sup>1223</sup>

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<sup>1218</sup> *Fermanagh Herald*, 6 October 1922.

<sup>1219</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1220</sup> Northern Border Commission report 20 June 1922, Reports for the Boundary Commission (P.R.O.N.I., Home Office files, HA/32/1/16).

<sup>1221</sup> Files relating to the attempted murder of Katie and Catherine Green by B Specials (P.R.O.N.I., Home Office files, H/828/1486).

<sup>1222</sup> *Fermanagh Herald*, 24 June 1922.

<sup>1223</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 4 January 1923.



The letters also share a certain dramatic flair with their republican equivalents. James Magee of Killymitten, was told ‘if you disregard this notice you will get Waterloo’.<sup>1224</sup> Patrick Gilroy of Aghavea in May 1923 meanwhile received a letter that warned him to ‘prepare his coffin’.<sup>1225</sup> James Hackett of Whitehill received a letter that was signed simply ‘Death’ in ‘large capital letters’.<sup>1226</sup> Frank McGarvey had both of those features combined in his letter which featured a drawing of a coffin and a bullet with the postscript ‘every time this speaks you know what it means: Death’.<sup>1227</sup> In Roslea, following the shooting of George Lester, multiple suspected republicans received letters ordering them to clear out signed ‘The Ulster Black Hand.’<sup>1228</sup>

Magee’s letters and those of James Green, also of Ballinamallard, were framed in very traditional Ulster iconography, to a far greater degree than we see with southern threats and nationalist iconography. Green’s read: ‘remember the Boyne and Croppies lie down under, for if they rise up they will be shot like a dog’ while Magee was warned ‘We do not forget Wexford’s Bridge and Scullabogue’s barn’. The letters to Green and Magee were also signed ‘The Men of Ulster. For King and Country’ and ‘Descendant of William the Third since the Boyne Battle’ respectively.<sup>1229</sup>

These documents are unlike the examples we have looked at for the south. They demonstrated an awareness of the border itself. They were focused on getting the target either over the border or generally out of Ulster. In the Ballinamallard cases, Hackett was told to go to ‘h\*\*\* across the border’ while Magee and Green were told the same thing ‘clear out of Ulster.’<sup>1230</sup>

The justifications for these letters varied and most sources do not record if they were sent out of a suspicion of revolutionary activity. The *Reporter* believed that J. Goodwin Esq. only was sent one because of his position as a prominent Catholic.<sup>1231</sup> In the Ballinamallard cases all men involved are referred to by various rebel pejoratives: ‘Fenians’, ‘blackguards’, ‘bloodthirsty gang’ and their reason for expulsion is made out

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<sup>1224</sup> *Fermanagh Herald*, 24 June 1922.

<sup>1225</sup> *Cork Examiner*, 3 May 1923.

<sup>1226</sup> *Fermanagh Herald*, 24 June 1922.

<sup>1227</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 4 January 1923.

<sup>1228</sup> Monthly Report of Monaghan Brigade, February 1921 (U.C.D.A., Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/19).

<sup>1229</sup> *Fermanagh Herald*, 24 June 1922.

<sup>1230</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1231</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 3 August 1922.

to clearly be because of their disloyalty.<sup>1232</sup> Fr Coyle, parish priest of Garrison, claimed to receive his solely based on his position as local curate.<sup>1233</sup>

Local petty concerns such as land disputes were less common than in Cavan or Monaghan. Patrick Gilroy's threats were made after a Protestant milesman had been fired from his gang and he suspected this was the root of the threats.<sup>1234</sup> James Green was told 'you know where you earned your money all your lifetime. It's over with you now earning from Protestants'.<sup>1235</sup> Edward Fitzpatrick, of Clinaroo, received a letter warning him off seeking compensation for a previous attack by Specials.<sup>1236</sup> In no cases, were the threats followed by any degree of land occupation or boycotting of auctions.

The different circumstances in the writing of the letters were important. Threats in Cavan and Monaghan came in a backdrop of contested and often absent central authority. In Fermanagh there was a strong central power, even if it was unfavourably orientated and this prevented any actions taking place which too far circumvented the rule of law. Special patrols in Caledon in Tyrone were responsible for protecting Catholics in the town from a local attempt to force the owners from their property and gift it to Protestant immigrants from Glaslough.<sup>1237</sup> It is for this reason that we even have records of the Gilroy and Garvey cases, both of which were reported on through the courts.

As was the case south of the border, such threats were not exclusively limited to the written word. They could be more effective if delivered in person. In April 1921, a number of Catholics in the Ballinamallard district were reported in the south to have been variously held up, threatened and attacked.<sup>1238</sup> On Saturday 11 February 1922, John Keown of Drumavaughan was shot in the leg while others were warned that their house would be burned. On the same day in Tullyrain, eight men playing cards were dragged out of a house and marched with their hands up into Ballinamallard town. One of their number Dominick Murphy was blindfolded and forced onto his knees before being asked

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<sup>1232</sup> *Fermanagh Herald*, 24 June 1922.

<sup>1233</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 22 August 1922.

<sup>1234</sup> *Cork Examiner*, 3 May 1923.

<sup>1235</sup> *Fermanagh Herald*, 24 June 1922.

<sup>1236</sup> *Fermanagh Herald*, 16 July 1921.

<sup>1237</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 23 March 1922.

<sup>1238</sup> Monthly report of Monaghan Brigade, April 1921 (U.C.D.A., Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/39).

if he was 'ready to die'. He was then let go and told to 'run' while the group was warned that if they were caught on the road in the coming week they would be shot.<sup>1239</sup>

These incidents were extreme. Phoenix has identified a campaign of violent reprisals in Belfast as a direct result of the Clones Affray and the surrounding tensions, and these incidents are best understood as a milder example of the same phenomenon.<sup>1240</sup> As in Cavan and Monaghan where events in Belfast held consequences for the local Protestant population, in Fermanagh the actions of southern Catholics affected the treatment of Fermanagh Catholics. A great deal of Protestant on Catholic violence in Fermanagh was retaliatory. When Northern Ireland's Border Commission visited the town of Garrison in 1922 they found a Catholic population leaving in fear of official or unofficial reprisal following the firing on of the County Inspector.<sup>1241</sup> This can also be seen in the single largest act of sectarian attacks in this period – the burning of Catholic homes in Roslea.<sup>1242</sup>

Such actions were repeated elsewhere in the county, particularly following the Clones Affray. The day following the incident in Crocknagowan near Lisnaskea, a Michael McManus was raided, and his house shot at on the excuse that he had refused to turn off a light in his house when asked.<sup>1243</sup> On 15 March, James McHugh was stopped by A Specials near Derrylin and allegedly ordered to curse the Pope and say 'God Bless the Specials'. After he refused to curse the Pope three shots were fired over his head and he was let go.<sup>1244</sup> In the House of Commons, it was reported that Catholic men in Fermanagh were being forced to spit on pictures of republican figures such as Terence McSwiney or kiss the Union Flag.<sup>1245</sup> A suspected Volunteer was reportedly ordered to strip naked and run up and down the road for half an hour.<sup>1246</sup> On 8 November 1923, the

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<sup>1239</sup> *Fermanagh Herald*, 25 February 1922.

<sup>1240</sup> Phoenix, *Northern Nationalism*, p. 183.

<sup>1241</sup> Northern Border Commission report 11 April 1922, Reports for the Boundary Commission (P.R.O.N.I., Home Office files, HA/32/1/16).

<sup>1242</sup> As discussed earlier in this chapter, it is problematic to characterise this whole incident as sectarian as it appears that the I.R.A. had a good idea of who was a member of the Specials and targeted them specifically. However, the Catholic houses burned in the village do not appear to have belonged to active I.R.A. members. It should be remembered though that membership of the Specials was a more public affair than membership of the I.R.A., and specific non-communal reprisals were therefore easier for Catholic groups to carry out than for Protestant ones.

<sup>1243</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 22 March 1922.

<sup>1244</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1245</sup> House of Commons Debates, 5th series, vol. 139, 8 March 1921, col. 400 – 3.

<sup>1246</sup> Monthly report of Monaghan Brigade, April 1921 (U.C.D.A., Mulcahy Papers, P7/A/39).

assistant manager of the creamery in Pettigo (a Catholic) was approached by a number of armed raiders and told to leave the country. He fled to Ballyshannon.<sup>1247</sup>

The most reported example of a post-Clones reprisal occurred in that loyalist stronghold of Lisbellaw. Two Catholic houses were attacked by a large mob immediately after the arrival of the train that had been attacked in Clones. The main house attacked was that of Bernard Hughes, a tailor, and his brother John. The Hughes brothers managed to resist the initial assault which smashed their windows and tried to force open the door. Later in the county court, they would estimate a crowd size of roughly 290. This number is likely exaggerated as Lisbellaw Town itself registered a population of only 352 in the 1911 census although it does demonstrate that scale of the attack made on the house.<sup>1248</sup> After the crowd went to fetch a sledgehammer, the two men attempted to flee to their father's house which was located next to the police barracks. They hoped this would offer them some protection.

However, they were spotted and set upon by 'a gang of young rowdies' who began assaulting the two men and left them on the street semi-conscious. They were not aided by any members of the town and it was only by their mother forcing them to move that they were eventually able to reach their parents' house. Their mother later testified that Bernard 'was covered with blood and I did not recognise him'.<sup>1249</sup>

Both men appear to have long been targeted and intimidated in the town, being one of only four Catholic households there, and the effects of this were evident in their actions. Not only were they too scared to ask for a doctor immediately, despite the seriousness of their injuries, but later on it was noted they had refused to report the matter to the police. Responding to a question by James Cooper, appearing for the Enniskillen Rural Council, about why this was, Hughes responded that the streets were too crowded for him to be able to do so without being seen. When asked about the presence of sympathetic Catholic policemen in the barracks, Hughes responded bitterly 'what good would they be your honour?'<sup>1250</sup> Hughes later made an unsuccessful application to the

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<sup>1247</sup> Report on Pettigo-Belleek (N.A.I., North Eastern Boundary Bureau files, TAOIS/NEBB/1/1/6).

<sup>1248</sup> National Archives of Ireland, *Census of Ireland 1901/1911* (<http://www.census.nationalarchives.ie> : accessed 18 July 2018).

<sup>1249</sup> *Fermanagh Herald*, 18 February 1922; *Fermanagh Herald*, 29 April 1922; *Freeman's Journal*, 16 February 1922; *Irish Independent*, 16 February 1922.

<sup>1250</sup> *Fermanagh Herald*, 29 April 1922.

Irish Grants Committee when he was no longer living in Lisbellaw and estimated his loss to be £130.<sup>1251</sup>

This incident also draws attention to a form of violence which had a place in Fermanagh, but which was not strongly present in Cavan or Monaghan. While violence south of the border was understood and mediated through the semi-official forms of the I.R.A. raiding party or boycott committee, in Fermanagh it had another less organised form – the mob. Mob violence as we find it in Fermanagh is not common and does not define the county, but the fact that it is present here and not elsewhere provokes comment.

Mob violence tended to be even less specific in its targets than the raids we have already looked at. John Hughes recalled later that he and his brothers had been marked for assault by someone shouting, ‘here are two – give it to them.’<sup>1252</sup> In Pettigo in January 1922, six months before the conflict between I.R.A. and Specials, five Catholics were attacked on Friday 27 by an unspecified gang of Unionists who had apparently been drinking. Attempts to intervene by other Catholics and break up the fight were prevented by ‘what is called ‘the tolerant and respectable element’.<sup>1253</sup> The effects of mob violence could be long reaching. The attack on the Hughes of Lisbellaw led to the permanent abandoning of attempts to build a Catholic workhouse in the town.<sup>1254</sup>

These acts were not spontaneous grassroots actions, removed from the official government or the Specials or other groups. We have seen in Lisbellaw how the inability or unwillingness of the police to stop or punish those who attacked the Hughes brothers was an important element in the attack. Equally in Pettigo the *Herald* reported policemen arriving but refusing to intervene, stating that they did not have accommodation for them in the barracks.<sup>1255</sup>

Despite this, there is only one recorded case of the death of a Catholic civilian in Fermanagh in this period which remains unsolved. On Thursday 23 March 1922 William Cassidy, Irvinestown, County Fermanagh, was found dead in a field having last been seen walking home the night before. He had been shot through the right ear. The circumstances around his death remain mysterious. At his inquest, R. Herbert, the solicitor for the next

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<sup>1251</sup> Bernard Hughes claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/178/16).

<sup>1252</sup> *Fermanagh Herald*, 29 April 1922.

<sup>1253</sup> *Fermanagh Herald*, 28 January 1922.

<sup>1254</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 16 February 1922.

<sup>1255</sup> *Fermanagh Herald*, 28 January 1922.

of kin, insinuated that he had been given information directly identifying the killer, but the coroner ruled it out of the scope of the inquest. Cassidy does not appear to have been active in the I.R.A. and his family had traditionally been loyal. His father served as a Recruiting Officer during the war. His father had no illusions about what had motivated the attack: 'I did good military service but the reward for my loyalty is that when I come back home my son is murdered. When I was recruiting in 1915 the people who are interfering with me now would not come near me.'<sup>1256</sup>

The presence of Specials so close to the border and to communities that were hostile to them in much greater numbers, was always going to create a problem. As early as January 1921, Specials from Newtownbutler had raided Clones town, breaking into the local public house. The owner sought help from the R.I.C. and this led to the very unusual sight of a pitched gun battle between loyalists and British forces. In this fight one Special was killed and another seriously wounded. The men were eventually arrested, and the platoon disbanded.<sup>1257</sup> In February 1922 an ambulance requested by County Inspector in Enniskillen accidentally passed through Monaghan on its journey and was held up by the I.R.A. While the ambulance was returned the five Specials onboard (four patients and one guide) were detained.<sup>1258</sup>

### *Accidental Invasion? The Clones Affray*

The most severe tension on the border was precipitated specifically by the arrest of a number of prominent republicans while they returned from playing a GAA match in Derry in early 1921, although this trip was a cover for a reconnaissance mission for a planned raid on Derry Gaol.<sup>1259</sup> These men were all based in Monaghan and included Dan Hogan, O/C of 5<sup>th</sup> Northern Division of the I.R.A.<sup>1260</sup> In retaliation the I.R.A. began

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<sup>1256</sup> *Fermanagh Herald*, 1 April 1922; *Ulster Herald*, 1 April 1922.

<sup>1257</sup> Livingstone, *Fermanagh*, p. 305.

<sup>1258</sup> files relating to the kidnapping of Specials by Enniskillen (P.R.O.N.I., Home Office files, HA 5/166).

<sup>1259</sup> Robert Lynch, 'The Clones Affray, 1922: Massacre or Invasion?' in *History Ireland*, Vol. 12, No. 3 (Autumn, 2004), p. 34.

<sup>1260</sup> Those arrested were Dan Hogan, Clones; James Brannagan, Monaghan; James McKenna, Clones; James Murphy, Clones; Thomas Quigley, Clones; Thomas Donnelly, Clones; James Winters, Clones; Edward O'Carroll, Clones; Thomas Mason, Carrickmacross; and P. McCrory, Glaslough. For a detailed

to raid over the border into Fermanagh and Tyrone targeting the homes of prominent Unionists. On 8 February 1921 a large-scale attack was made on the Enniskillen home of James Cooper, M.P.. Cooper was armed and able to drive the raiders off.<sup>1261</sup> Cooper's neighbour, George Elliott, a Unionist member of Enniskillen U.D.C., was also attacked and also resisted the raiders while at Glengreen a family named Allingham also held off the raiders.<sup>1262</sup>

Later that night another prominent Unionist, Ivan Carson, High-Sheriff of Fermanagh, was raided and ordered to come out. Carson was less willing to resist and complied before being shot in the shoulder. After the raiders broke down the door Mrs Carson fainted and Carson himself was taken to Ballyconnell. He was released on 21 February.<sup>1263</sup> On the same night the house of Richard Ward of Kinturk was seized while a Crossley tender of Specials was ambushed near Wattebridge.<sup>1264</sup>

As a broader attack, some forty Protestants were kidnapped and brought into the south as collateral against the I.R.A. men arrested in Derry.<sup>1265</sup> Due to the aim of the raid in providing counter hostages to use to secure the Derry prisoners' release it was in the interests of the raiders to secure high value individuals. In some instances, the I.R.A. repeated old targets as in Roslea when John Connolly was instructed to kidnap Thomas Lester.<sup>1266</sup>

Some loyalists were taken from Monaghan itself. These Monaghan kidnappings focused on the Clones area, even before the Clones Affray. The area was already one of significant tension and revolutionary activity. A pork buyer named Magwood was taken from his Clones home. A prominent Kilcorran farmer named Rowland Beatty, who had successfully fought off his assailants in the Roslea affair, was held up in his car before his house was ransacked. Louis De Montfort of Drummully, C.R. Addison, V.S., John

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account of the arrest see files relating to arrest of Monaghan footballers (P.R.O.N.I., Cabinet files, CAB/6/34) or B.M.H. Ws. 721 (Nicholas Smyth).

<sup>1261</sup> General Report on Fermanagh Border Raids and Kidnappings (P.R.O.N.I., Home Office files, HA/5/175); *Fermanagh Herald*, 11 February 1922.

<sup>1262</sup> B.M.H. Ws 559 (James J. Smyth); B.M.H. Ws 721 (Nicholas Smyth).

<sup>1263</sup> House of Commons Debates, 5th series, vol. 150, 8 February 1922, col. 135; *Fermanagh Herald*, 29 April 1922.

<sup>1264</sup> General Report on Fermanagh Border Raids and Kidnappings (P.R.O.N.I., Home Office files, HA/5/175).

<sup>1265</sup> Files relating to arrest of Monaghan footballers (P.R.O.N.I., Cabinet files, CAB/6/34).

<sup>1266</sup> B.M.H. Ws 598 (John Connolly).

Averell and a man named Flack both of Clones, were also reported taken.<sup>1267</sup> Additionally, in March 1922 fourteen R.I.C men from Belcoo were taken across the border.<sup>1268</sup>

On the other side of the border four Specials were taken from Roslea.<sup>1269</sup> It would have been more had John Connolly been able to successfully locate Thomas Lester. As it was the fortunate man had left town. Connolly's general attitude to the victims of these kidnappings can be seen in his decision, following this failure to locate Lester, to instead 'kidnap a policeman.' In this he does not appear to have had a specific one in mind as he wandered about the village for a time failing to locate one. On eventually locating a constable he was obliged to buy the man a whiskey in Scotstown to calm his nerves.<sup>1270</sup>

For the *Reporter* called for a stronger implementation of the border in the form of curfews, road patrols and the seizing of 'lay and clerical Sinn Féin leaders as hostages.'<sup>1271</sup> Their tone in an editorial was striking and portrayed the raiders as more of an invasive presence and takes quite a tribal position:

The marauders brought from the now provisional Irish Free State and their masters will find that Ulstermen will not tolerate such lawlessness as we have suffered from; and if by dint of an unexpected raid some of our people are seized or murdered that REPRISALS WILL BE MADE [sic].<sup>1272</sup>

The *Fermanagh Times* ran an editorial stating: 'no wonder Ulstermen are coming rapidly to the conclusion that their only hope of self-protection or security is to band themselves together and rely upon their own strength.'<sup>1273</sup> At a speech in Aughnacloy Methodist Church, William Coote M.P., whose own son had been taken by the raiders, said that it was 'very difficult to restrain their people from seizing the persons of active

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<sup>1267</sup> Evidence of Fermanagh County Council (T.N.A., Boundary Commission files, CAB 61/64).

<sup>1268</sup> General Report of 30 March 1922, Divisional Commissioner's bi-monthly reports (P.R.O.N.I., Home Office Files, HA/5/152).

<sup>1269</sup> *Northern Standard*, 10 February 1922.

<sup>1270</sup> B.M.H. Ws 598 (John Connolly).

<sup>1271</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 9 February 1922.

<sup>1272</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1273</sup> *Fermanagh Times*, 16 February 1922.



Sinn Féiners within their border and holding them hostage.’<sup>1274</sup> His caution against such acts was not based on any ecumenical spirit but on having faith in the A and B Specials to perform an appropriate reprisal.

The basic narrative of events following this is uncontested. In response to the kidnappings of border Protestants by the I.R.A. on 7 and 8 February the Specials moved to completely solidify the border. Guarding all crossings and exchanging frequent border fire. In essence a state of war existed with an extremely limited no man’s land across the border.

In this environment of heightened tension on 11 February 1922, word was received that a party of nineteen Specials travelling to Enniskillen from Newtownards had stopped over in Clones. While the group were not acting provocatively on their arrival, standing around mingling with civilians, they were uniformed and six of them were armed.<sup>1275</sup> Unlike earlier forays of the Specials into Monaghan, this seems to have been an innocent journey, one that ignored the border out of habit, but in the context of increased border tension it was inherently provocative.

Matt Fitzpatrick, the acting commander, acted with haste. Rushing over to the station as soon as he learned of the presence of the Specials. He entered the train and walked down the carriages until he came to the one holding the main company of Specials. Fitzpatrick shouted something to the Specials on the lines of ‘hands up, surrender!’<sup>1276</sup>

Accounts of the next few seconds vary as to whether Fitzpatrick then fired a shot and was retaliated against or whether he was shot without warning. In any case Fitzpatrick was shot in the head which prompted the I.R.A. patrol to open fire on the compartment. Four Specials were killed, including their commander a Sergeant Dougherty. All but two were wounded. The I.R.A. eventually removed everyone from the train and separated Specials from civilians. Perhaps strangely the train was eventually allowed to continue on its journey, where its arrival bullet holed and bloodstained in Lisbellaw, sparked outrage.<sup>1277</sup>

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<sup>1274</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, February 16 1922.

<sup>1275</sup> Statement of William Preston, Reports on the Inquest into Clones Affray (P.R.O.N.I., Home Office files, HA/32/1/15).

<sup>1276</sup> Reports on the Inquest into Clones Affray (P.R.O.N.I., Home Office files, HA/32/1/15).

<sup>1277</sup> *Fermanagh Times*, 16 February 1922; *Impartial Reporter*, 16 February 1922.

The Unionist media was split in its response to the events. The coroner in Enniskillen criticised the foolishness of the Specials themselves for taking such an inopportune route.<sup>1278</sup> The *Standard*, based in Monaghan, was less keen to make a moral judgement on the event. It asserted that there were ‘many conflicting accounts’ of the event itself, and characterised the Affray as the most serious political event amid a series of graver moral ones.<sup>1279</sup>

The *Reporter* was less measured, describing the event as a ‘massacre’ and ‘treachery’.<sup>1280</sup> While they did not explicitly claim that the attack was an unprovoked ambush they defended the Specials’ right to not surrender, stating that ‘we would have been ashamed of them had they done anything else.’<sup>1281</sup> Unusually the *Fermanagh Times* was the more extreme of the two papers, declaring it ‘planned and carried into execution by a horde of uncivilised savages’.<sup>1282</sup> The aftermath here was the same as Roslea in that it served to polarise debate between nationalists and Unionists even more deeply by providing both sides with an incompatible set of narratives and martyrs. The *Times* titled its editorial on the attack ‘Ulster and its enemies.’<sup>1283</sup>

## Conclusion

This chapter has focused on a number of key issues. It examined the relatively quiet Revolution prior to partition that was characterised by active Protestant and Unionist assistance of the R.I.C. making use of the structures that had been in place since the U.V.F. days and which would eventually become the B Specials. Key here is the increased population and clustering of Protestants and Unionists which enabled them to resist much more effectively than in Cavan or Monaghan. We then moved on to looking at Fermanagh post-partition. This focused around three key events that all involved the

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<sup>1278</sup> ‘Criticism of police force by coroner at inquest on murdered Specials at Enniskillen’ (P.R.O.N.I, Home Office files, HA/32/1/11).

<sup>1279</sup> *Northern Standard*, 10 February 1921.

<sup>1280</sup> *Impartial Reporter*, 9 February 1921.

<sup>1281</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1282</sup> *Fermanagh Times*, 16 February 1922.

<sup>1283</sup> *Ibid.*

border being violated to different effect: the burning of Roslea by B Specials in 1920 followed by raids on a number of Special houses, the ‘invasion’ of Fermanagh along the Pettigo-Belleek salient, and the campaign of border kidnappings following the arrest of the Monaghan Footballers and culminating in the Clones Affray. Additionally, the actions of the Unionists in Fermanagh, once permanently ensconced in power, provided a useful lesson into the consequences of the public political conflict examined in the previous chapter. Attacks on Catholics, which were partially examined in the previous chapter in the context of electoral violence, became far more commonplace. The intimidation of suspected republicans and normal Catholics alike could not have occurred in Cavan or Monaghan as those counties were lacking the decades of intense conflict leading up to that point.

The Revolution in Fermanagh can seem quite inconsistent. The relative placidity of the years before partition gave way to the chaos of the time afterwards. However, from having already looked at the political life of Fermanagh and the Revolution in Cavan and Monaghan we can see that the violence of the period post-partition had its roots in the same intercommunal tensions that were present in Cavan and Monaghan. Fermanagh offers an unpleasant counterfactual example of what might have happened in Cavan and Monaghan had the Protestant population been larger. The Lisbellaw Volunteer Force and Fermanagh Vigilance have their echoes in the Drum town guard and the Monaghan Protestant Defence Association. The greater viciousness of sectarian tensions in the county is perhaps the ultimate credit to the relative passivity of three-county Protestants and their quick adaptation to the Free State.

Post-partition violence also demonstrates the role the border had in creating violence. Fermanagh was distinct from Cavan and Monaghan in that the level of ‘imported’ violence it experienced was much higher and most of it came from those two counties. The newness of the border situation can be seen through the B Specials, both when they fatally took the wrong train to Enniskillen and in how they exercised their new power over their Catholic neighbours. The burning of Roslea and the Pettigo-Belleek affair are both significant events in their own right and both demonstrate that the border did not resolve longer standing tensions but only complicated them.

## **Chapter 6: Cross-border migration into Fermanagh**

The story of migration is a fundamental component to the history of the Protestant community in Ireland in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Between the censuses of 1911 and 1926 the net population loss of southern Protestants came to approximately one third of the 1911 population.<sup>1284</sup> While the population of the community had been declining long before 1911, this decline was both precipitous and abrupt. The fifteen years between 1911 and 1926 contained some of the most significant events in Irish history. The First World War, the Irish Revolution and the establishment of the Irish Free State all vie as explanations for the decline with broader demographic causes like naturally low fertility and nuptiality.<sup>1285</sup> This is to say nothing of the debate about ‘ethnic cleansing’ and its role in driving Protestants out of the country.<sup>1286</sup>

Additionally, our case study along the border allows us to examine a unique aspect of this migration. While migration had traditionally been seen as the process of leaving the island, or leaving rural for urban, following partition it was possible for a state boundary to be crossed without ever leaving Ireland. Studying migration in Cavan, Monaghan and Fermanagh is complicated by the potential for much easier and lower-scale migration than anywhere else and also by traditional patterns of settlement and movement which could only recently be classified as migration. How likely were Fermanagh-born people living just south of the border to return home now that the division between the counties was an international boundary? Similarly, how likely were Cavan and Monaghan people living in Fermanagh to return home following partition and the Revolution? Was the appeal of living in an Ulster Protestant state or the terror of living in a Catholic one strong enough to draw Cavan and Monaghan Protestants northwards and vice-versa?

This chapter will not seek to blindly replicate the work of Fitzpatrick or Bielenberg on a smaller scale. Our focus in this is not to discover the reasons for Protestant

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<sup>1284</sup> Fitzpatrick, ‘Protestant Depopulation’, p. 644.

<sup>1285</sup> This debate was covered in the introduction and references provided. In summary: the best examinations of these issues are Delaney, *Demography, State and Society*; Bielenberg, ‘Exodus, the Emigration of Southern Irish Protestants’; Fitzpatrick, ‘Protestant Depopulation’; Kennedy, *The Irish: Emigration, Marriage, and Fertility*.

<sup>1286</sup> This debate has also been engaged with in the introduction.

depopulation. We seek instead to examine the shape and scale of what Protestant emigration occurred and the role of the border in changing it. While much has been written on the reasons for Protestant depopulation less time has been spent looking at what happened to those groups following their departure.<sup>1287</sup> Those studies that do exist are mostly longer-term studies of Protestant migration using the early years of the Irish states as a useful starting point.<sup>1288</sup> In particular there is a gap in the historiography on the impact of the border on its immediate environs and on what motivated and drew cross-border movement on smaller scales.

This chapter will examine the patterns of cross-border migration in Fermanagh, Cavan and Monaghan. Our focus is on the role of the border and of partition. The chapter will be split into two sections. The first will take a specific case study of cross-border migration into Fermanagh found in James Cooper's private census of migrants into Fermanagh. The second will look for lessons in a comparison between the Irish and Northern censuses of 1911 and 1926.

### 1925 Cooper Census

For the purpose of examining cross-border movement, particularly the profiles, origins and destinations of those who moved, we are lucky to have such a unique source as the 1925 private census undertaken by James Cooper of migrants into Fermanagh between 1920 and 1925. This census comprises 1,092 names and covers some 2,047 individuals.<sup>1289</sup> Individuals recorded in it provided their name, place of origin, occupation and destination in Fermanagh.

It was undertaken for the Boundary Commission in 1925 by James Cooper and sons, a legal firm located in Enniskillen and presented to the Commission's secretary, Francis Bernard Bourdillon.<sup>1290</sup> Cooper was a prominent Unionist politician, who was

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<sup>1287</sup> Fitzpatrick, 'Protestant Depopulation', pp 648 – 58; Work is currently being undertaken on this topic in Dr Brian Hughes' SLIDE project.

<sup>1288</sup> For examples see Enda Delaney, 'The Churches and Irish Emigration to Britain, 1921-60' in *Archivum Hibernicum* vol. 52 (1998), pp. 98 – 114.

<sup>1289</sup> This is because only adults who were full members of the household were recorded. Children and domestic servants were recorded numerically in an adjacent column.

<sup>1290</sup> Terence Dooley, 'Protestant Migration from the Free State to Northern Ireland, 1920-25: A Private Census for Co. Fermanagh' in *Clogher Record*, Vol. 15, No. 3 (1996), pp. 87 – 132.

elected to the Northern Parliament in both 1921 and 1925 for Fermanagh and Tyrone. The census made no claim to being comprehensive but captured a twelfth of the total movement of people from the 26 southern counties into Northern Ireland between the 1911 and 1926 censuses.<sup>1291</sup>

Cooper undertook the census to provide evidence for his own statements to the Commission that ‘the Protestant people have been pouring into the Co. Fermanagh during the past few years’.<sup>1292</sup> This was a part of his broader argument against the incorporation of Fermanagh into the Free State based on the previous persecution of Protestants in the south and their need to flee northward. Additionally, it played into the deeper Fermanagh Unionist tendency, which we have examined in Chapter 4, to argue that official statistics were misleading about the nature of the county and that the 1911 census was not a sound basis to determine the political future of the county. This was a specific reaction against the ‘Anti-Partition Propaganda’ which Unionists across Ulster saw as misrepresenting demographic reality in the county.<sup>1293</sup> In this regard it was as much a political document as a statistical one and its assumptions about religion will be treated with scepticism and verified through the 1911 census. This file is contained within the representation of Fermanagh County Council along with numerous statements from southern Protestants claiming that they had been driven out of the Free State or ‘knew lots of Protestants who had to clear out.’<sup>1294</sup>

Cooper also made it clear in his cover letter to Bourdillon that the permanent residence of the emigrant in Fermanagh was a crucial element in being recorded in the census. Either full-time employment in the county or the purchase or renting of land in the area was required. This tendency to emphasise Protestant settlement in Fermanagh as permanent and in contrast to the itinerant labourers that characterised Catholic movement echoes our examination in Chapter 4. It is not certain what methodology Cooper employed to compile the census, but it appears to have been personal: based on his own enquiries and local knowledge. His legal work involved facilitating the purchasing of

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<sup>1291</sup> A number estimated by the Northern government themselves to be approx. 24,000. *Census of Northern Ireland, preliminary report, 1926*, p. xxv.

<sup>1292</sup> Statement of James Cooper, Fermanagh County Council Evidence (T.N.A., Boundary Commission files, CAB/61/65).

<sup>1293</sup> Letter of R. Dawson-Bates to Col W.B. Spender dated 4 September 1924 in Boundary Commission Correspondence (P.R.O.N.I., Home Office Files, HA/32/1/18).

<sup>1294</sup> Statement of James Woodhouse, Fermanagh County Council Evidence (T.N.A., Boundary Commission files, CAB/61/65).

farms in the Enniskillen area and was referenced as the primary way he learned of new arrivals into the county.

The census is contained in the Boundary Commission files in the National Archives in Kew (CAB/61/65) and was transcribed and published by Terence Dooley in the *Clogher Journal* but he made little attempt to analyse, instead aiming ‘merely to provide a list that may in future years be beneficial to genealogists or to those interested in this somewhat unique movement of Protestant people’<sup>1295</sup>.

Dooley noted at the time some of the limitations of the survey. Spellings were inaccurate in places and points of origin were inconsistent. Some individuals listed their origin down to the townland while others only gave their county. This can make tracing the individuals listed here somewhat challenging as can the significant distance in time between Cooper’s census in 1925 and the 1911 census. People were only required to state their point of residence before emigrating from the Free State, not their place of birth or even their long-term residence. This can make it more difficult to trace multi-stage emigrations and the more itinerant population of landless labourers.

However, the census is a major historical resource that has not been fully exploited by historians. It provides a detailed and large-scale survey of post-partition Protestant emigration into Fermanagh. It allows us to throw light on the character of early Protestant emigration to the North. Where were the emigrants coming from? What was their religious make up? Why would they choose to move to Fermanagh? Where in the county would they concentrate? Were certain occupations more likely to move than others? This census helps us to address these questions.

### *Profiles*

Although the focus of the list was on Protestant emigrants and Cooper himself claimed that his list was exclusively Protestant, this was inaccurate. At least thirty-six named individuals can be found from the census in 1911 registered as Catholics. This number increases to sixty-eight when we allow for the unnamed children, servants and governesses of each household.

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<sup>1295</sup> Dooley, ‘Census for Fermanagh’, p. 88.

This number was likely higher again as there are difficulties associated with locating many ‘Catholic’ surnames in the 1911 census. The greater volume of these surnames in the country provide too many potential options with the same names to definitively find these individuals in the census. However, if we look through the approximately 500 names that we were unable to source in the 1911 census we find at least 41 examples of surnames that register as over 90% Catholic in the same census.<sup>1296</sup> The individuals with these surnames in the Cooper census are therefore very likely to also be Catholic. If we include their unnamed dependents this number increases to 59 and raises the extracted Catholic contingent in the census to 127.

This was not a large minority, comprising only 6% of the 2,047 individuals. However, given the aim of the census to describe a uniquely Protestant movement, it should not exist at all. On a basic level this demonstrates the fallibility of a census that relies on informal local networks to be compiled and focuses on groups not yet fully enmeshed in the community. We could go further and say that the failure of a local study, aimed exclusively at Protestants, to only sample Protestants is evidence of a larger Catholic movement northward than what was anticipated or than what was captured in local dialogues. It is likely too, that a number of these Catholic émigrés were categorised as Protestant by Cooper by the fact that they had emigrated into Northern Ireland.

Among the Protestants of the census the vast majority belong to the Church of Ireland. The religious distribution of those entered in the census can be seen below:

Table 6.1 – Religious Distribution of non-Catholics in Cooper Census and in Fermanagh in 1911

	<b>Total</b>	<b>Cooper %</b>	<b>Ferm %</b>
<b>CoI</b>	810	76	78
<b>Methodist</b>	68	6	15
<b>Presb</b>	126	12	5
<b>Other</b>	56	5	2
<b>Total</b>	1060		

<sup>1296</sup> There is of course a greater number again of surnames that are 80% Catholic or simply majority Catholic but we have decided here to err on the side of caution.



We can note here that the Cooper migrants were less heavily Methodist than those already in the county and more strongly Presbyterian.

This Cooper religious distribution initially appears in line with what we find in 1911 in what becomes the Free State and therefore what we would expect the profile of the migrants to look like. Taking the census returns for Ireland, less the six counties of Northern Ireland, produces a distribution of 76%, 14% and 5% (Anglican, Presbyterian and Methodist). This is a slight underrepresentation of Presbyterians which becomes more pronounced when we weight our 'Free State' distribution to allow for the different representations of different areas of the country.<sup>1297</sup> For this purpose, we have also separated Leitrim from the Connacht figures and given them their own unique weighting. This was done to account for Leitrim's larger contribution to the movement into Fermanagh than the rest of the province.

After doing so we find that the weighted 'expected' distribution comes out as 70%, 22% and 5%. (Anglicans, Presbyterians, Methodists) The distribution of non-Catholic migrants in the Cooper census is 76%, 12%, 4%. While Methodists were arriving in expected numbers, we were finding more Anglicans arriving than we might expect and fewer Presbyterians.

There are a number of reasons for this shortfall in Presbyterians. The three 'Free State' counties which held the most Presbyterians in 1911 and the three from which we would therefore expect to be the largest contributors to the census are Donegal (15,061), Dublin (8,617) and Monaghan (8,512). Of these three, it was only Monaghan that provided a reliable stream of emigrants due to its long, shared border with the county. Dublin Presbyterians were unlikely to come to Fermanagh without special reason to do so, being so far from their native area. Looking at the census entries for those Presbyterians who did come to Fermanagh from Dublin or the Dublin area we find two

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<sup>1297</sup> Weighting involves finding the proportional weight of each point of origin into the census. If four times as many people emigrate from Cavan as from Cork it makes no sense to treat Cork and Cavan's religious distributions as equal when attempting to see if the migrants are reflective of their point of origin. In the hypothetical case above a weighted national average would be found by treating Cavan's distribution as being four times more significant than Cork's (in effect multiplying Cavan's distribution by four and then recalculating an average).

The methodology was not applied on an individual county basis but instead took Cavan, Monaghan, Donegal, Leitrim, Connacht (less Leitrim), Munster and Leinster as the units to be weighted. See Appendix 1 for exact working.

policemen, a bank official and their families, all of whom are more likely to have been assigned to Fermanagh than to have gone otherwise.

Donegal Presbyterians meanwhile did not have the monopolised border experience of Monaghan. They had three separate counties that they could move into quite easily and the allure of larger cities such as Derry. Intuitively, we would only expect to find movement into Fermanagh in the southern third of the county that shares a border with it. Examining those Donegal Presbyterians (20 individuals) caught in Cooper's census supports this idea as the entirety of them centred on either the Ballyshannon-Bundoran or the Pettigo regions both of which are in 'Fermanagh' Donegal.

When we examine the counties of origin of the census Presbyterians this idea that only Monaghan was reliably supplying Protestant emigrants appears to be supported. Monaghan was the point of origin for 55% of all Presbyterians in the census, as opposed to only 22% generally. Donegal only accounted for 16% and Dublin for 5%. The importance of proximity is again shown as the next highest contributor of Presbyterians in the census was Cavan with 14%.

However, Monaghan also shares three borders with Fermanagh, Tyrone and Armagh and its emigrants did not originate as closely to the border as Donegal's. Although the population centres close to the Fermanagh border such as Newbliss, Clones and Drumcaw are the main suppliers of people (19 individuals or 27%) there are also significant contingents from more eastern towns, primarily Castleblayney (12, 17%) and Ballybay (12, 17%). This complicates our analysis as Monaghan migration to Fermanagh was not so strongly defined by proximity to the border. There were few other religions represented in this influx of migration: three Baptists, seven Plymouth Brethren and an Open Brother.

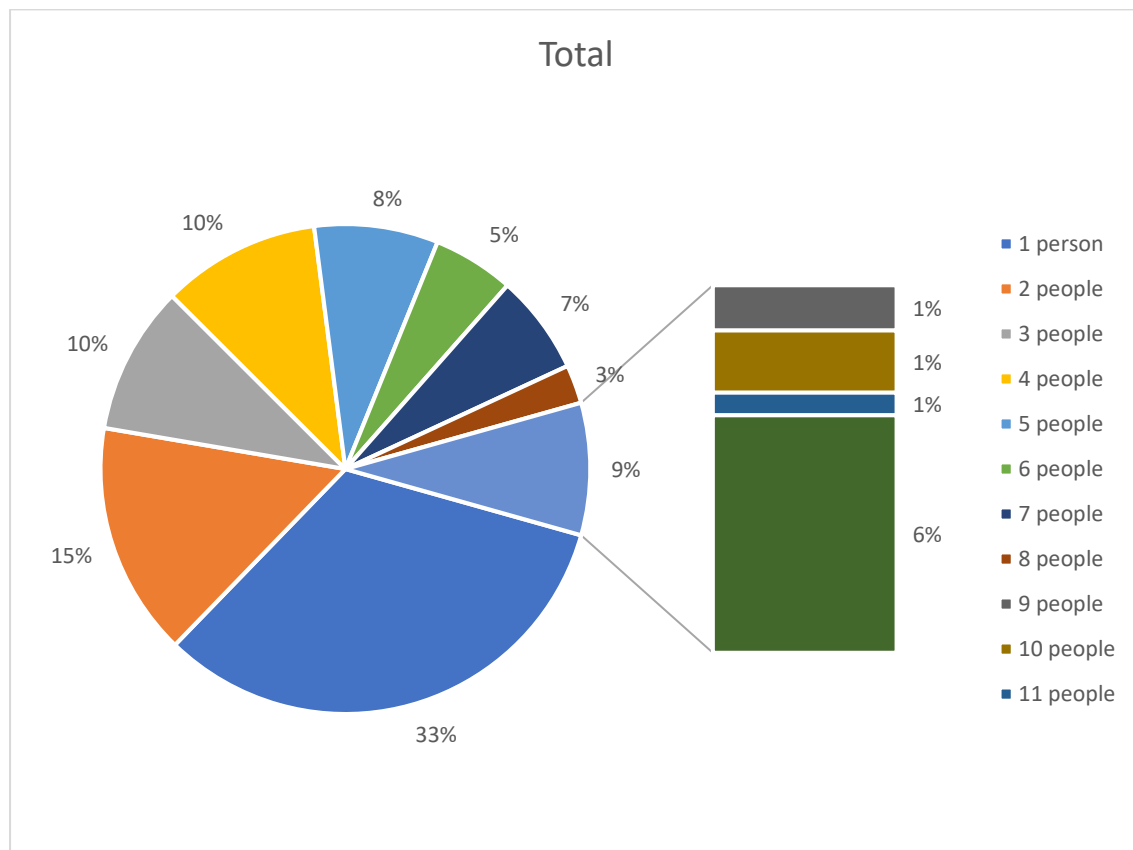
The average household size seen in this census was two, reflecting the large number of childless couples and single people who emigrated. Of those families who did emigrate with children, the average size was 3.4 children, below the national average. However, the number went as high as 9 (and 22 families had total reported households of more than 23). The modal household size was also 3 with 59 families of that size reporting.<sup>1298</sup>

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<sup>1298</sup> See Appendices for graph of distribution of family sizes

When examining the destinations of differing family sizes, we can note that single individuals were more likely to make for the urban centres of Enniskillen, Irvinestown and Lisnaskea. In all of these cases the proportion of single persons moving to the urban centre was higher than the general proportion of migrants going there.

Table 6.2 – Household Size Distribution in Cooper Census



Note: Household size includes servants and governesses in family as well as grandparents, unmarried uncles and aunts etc. Two-person households are almost entirely childless married couples although there are a number of siblings living together.

In terms of employment among those censused, the most common occupations were those that we would expect to find. Farmers, labourers, domestic servants and shop assistants are most frequently given as answers.

Unsurprisingly given their experience during the revolutionary period, policemen were over-represented here making up 6% of the total occupations listed in the census.

This number is split between 58% of policemen registered as retired and 42% as active members of the R.U.C. This proportion of former R.I.C. and D.M.P. men would be even higher had Cooper focused more on canvassing them. As he himself noted in his cover letter on the census: ‘The list does not deal with the special constabulary [sic] and only contains a small percentage of the ex-R.I.C. men who, are now in the Royal Ulster Constabulary.’<sup>1299</sup> This deliberate neglect of members of the B Specials and R.U.C. had a significant impact on the point of origin of Fermanagh migrants. The connections between membership of the Ulster Volunteers or other armed Protestant organisations and membership of the B Specials suggests that had they been included, migrants from the three counties would have been in even greater preponderance. In our chapter on revolutionary violence we have already seen the movement northward of Protestant men to join the B Specials.

Other large groupings of occupations include those from professions where we would expect workers to be reassigned northwards such as railway officials and bank official. In both these cases we cannot discount the possibility that the individuals worked for Northern companies and were therefore obliged to cross the border to keep their job.

We can now compare the occupational profile in the census to the general national profile from 1911 to see which groups are over and under-represented. For this examination we shall use the hierarchical system of occupational types, orders and classes used by the census itself. However, the sixth occupational class ‘Persons not producing’ will be discounted as this grouping will always be underrepresented in a census where stating your occupation was optional and in which the role of the broader family in production (ie on a farm) was not clearly defined. The only meaningful group in the Cooper census we can categorise as ‘not producing’ would be those who say they are retired, who make up a very small proportion of the total, and children, whose age we cannot determine in the census. Instead we should focus on the profile of those in the active workforce.

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<sup>1299</sup> Statement of James Cooper, Fermanagh County Council Evidence (T.N.A., Boundary Commission files, CAB/61/65).

Table 6.3 – Occupation Breakdown of Cooper Census (excluding those not working)

Class	Order	1926 %	1911 %	Diff
<b>1: Professional</b>				
Class	1: General/Local Govt (incl. police)	7	2	5
	2: Members of Navy and Army (incl. pensioners)	1	2	-1
	3: Professionals (Teacher, Physician, Engineers, Clergy etc)	6	4	2
<b>2: Domestic</b>				
Class	4: Domestic Servants	6	9	-3
<b>3: Commercial</b>				
Class	5: Merchants, Auctioneers, Accountants, Bank/Insurance Workers	4	3	1
	6: Engaged in Communication Networks (railways, roads etc.)	4	3	1
<b>4: Agricultural</b>				
Class	7: Pastoral Workers (incl Farmer, farm workers, labourers etc.)	40	42	-2
	8: Animal Workers (incl. animal dealers, gamekeepers etc.)	1	1	0
<b>5: Industrial</b>				
Class	9: Persons Working in Books and Prints	0	0	0
	10: Workers in Machines and Implements	1	1	0
	11: Workers in House, Furniture and Decorations	2	3	-1
	12: Coachmakers, Sadders, Bicycle Makers	1	0	1
	14: Chemists and Druggists	0	0	0
	15: People Working in Tobacco and Pipes	0	0	0
	16: People Dealing in Food and Lodging	2	3	-1
	17: People Engaged in Production and Distribution of Textiles	0	6	-6
	18: Workers in Dress (milliners, tailors, cobblers etc.)	2	5	-3
	21: People Working in Mineral Substances	1	2	-1
	22: Workers and Dealers in General or Unspecified Commodities	21	11	10
<b>Total:</b>		<b>100</b>	100	

We can now turn to the orders that experienced proportional growth in the Cooper census. The greatest overrepresentation can be seen in 22 (general workers and dealers) but this was at least partially a consequence of numerous individuals in the census failing to specify the nature of their business: 1 was made up predominantly of policemen; 3 was

primarily teachers and clergymen; 5 was primarily bank workers and merchants (general). The greatest proportional decline was seen in 4 and 7: domestic and agricultural workers. This is unusual as agriculture and domestic service were two of the largest employers in Ireland in 1911. This decline can be explained partly by the increased difficulty for those connected to specific plots of land to move. 85% of all the unskilled labourers in Cooper's census emigrated from one of Cavan, Monaghan, Donegal and Leitrim.<sup>1300</sup>

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<sup>1300</sup> No distinction is made between general and agricultural labourers in the census, the only specifically agricultural job included here is 'herd' or 'herdsman'.

## Origins

When looking at where these migrants came from, we are struck by how heavily Fermanagh drew in its immigrant population from the border region. We have no equivalent censuses for Derry or Tyrone for comparison but for Fermanagh nearly a quarter of all emigrants came from Cavan alone. While Monaghan was the next largest contributor the third ‘southern’ Ulster county of Donegal was not next on the list. Rather it was Leitrim, with whom Fermanagh also shares a border. We look at the specific points of origin within Cavan and Monaghan in the section entitled ‘cross-border migration’.

Map 6.1 – Counties of Origin of Individuals Recorded in Cooper Census

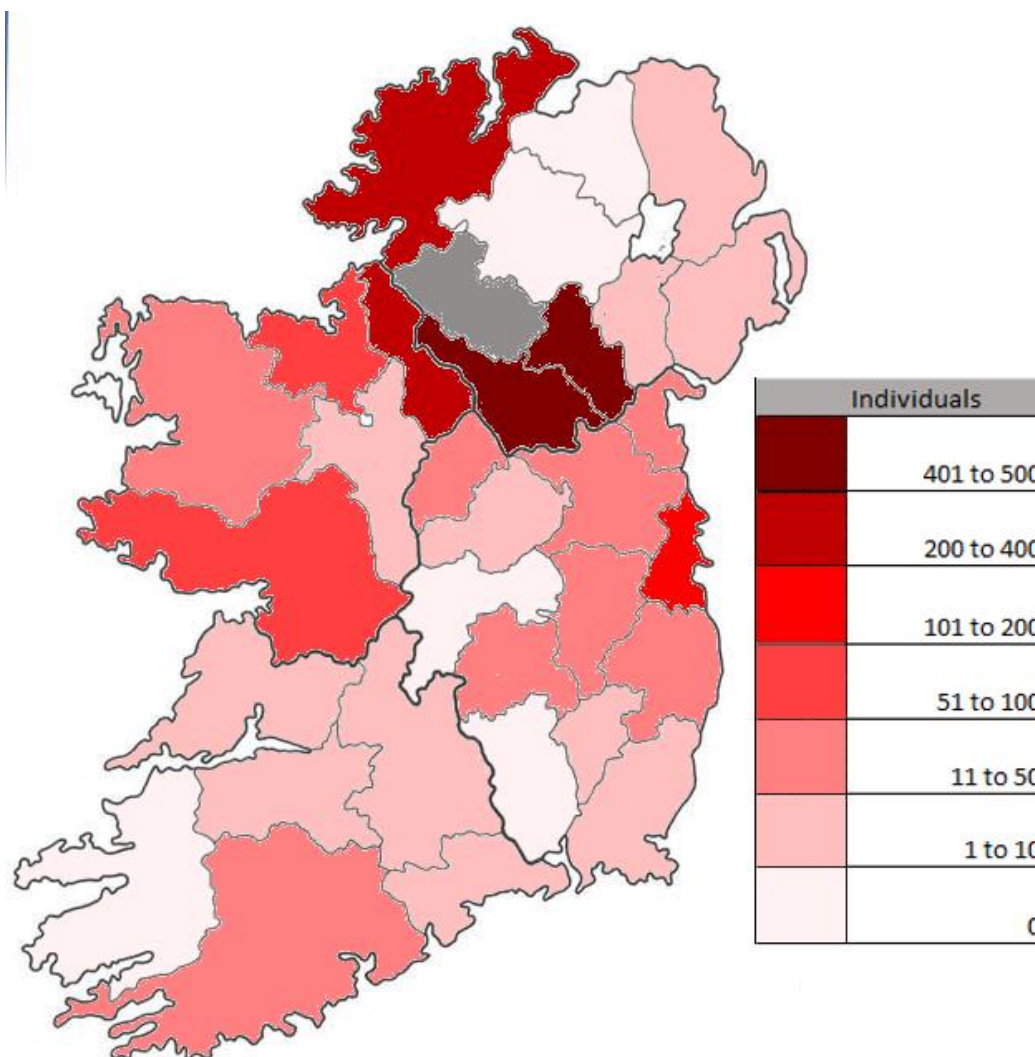
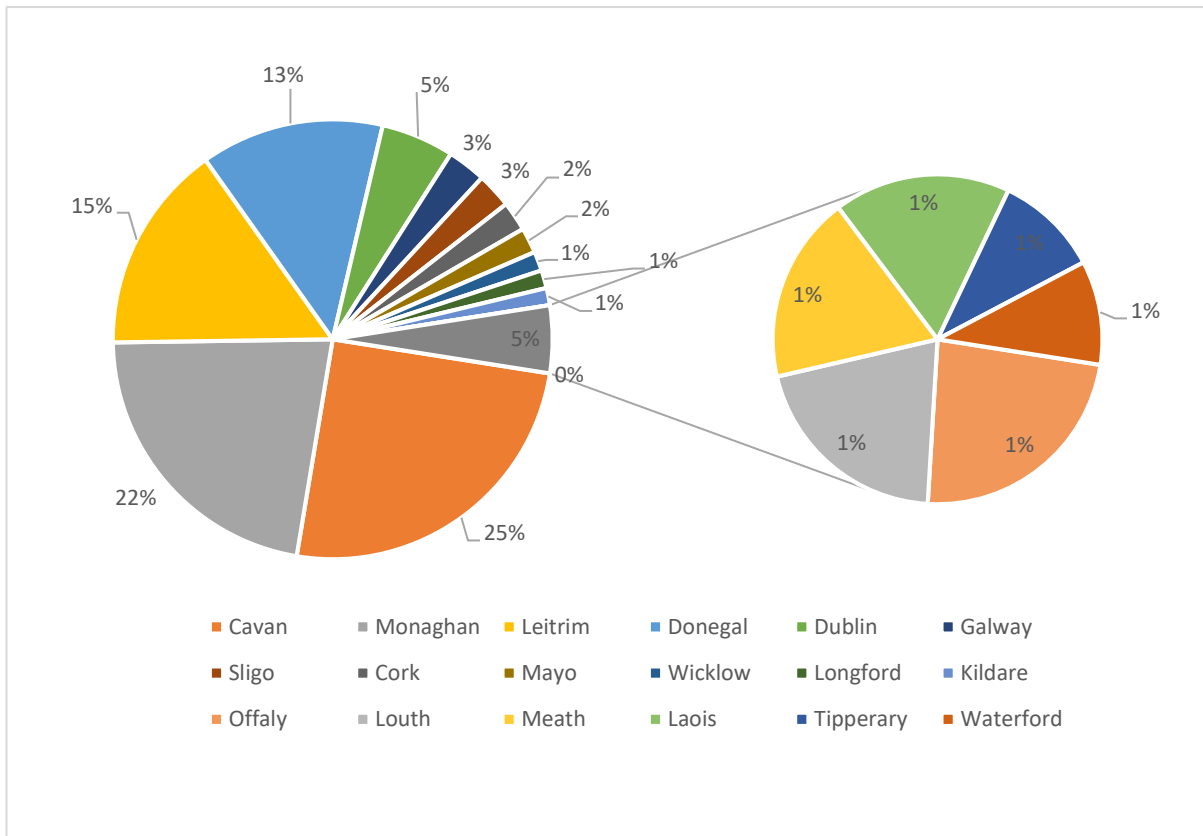


Table 6.4 – Distribution of Counties of Origin of Individuals Recorded in Cooper Census

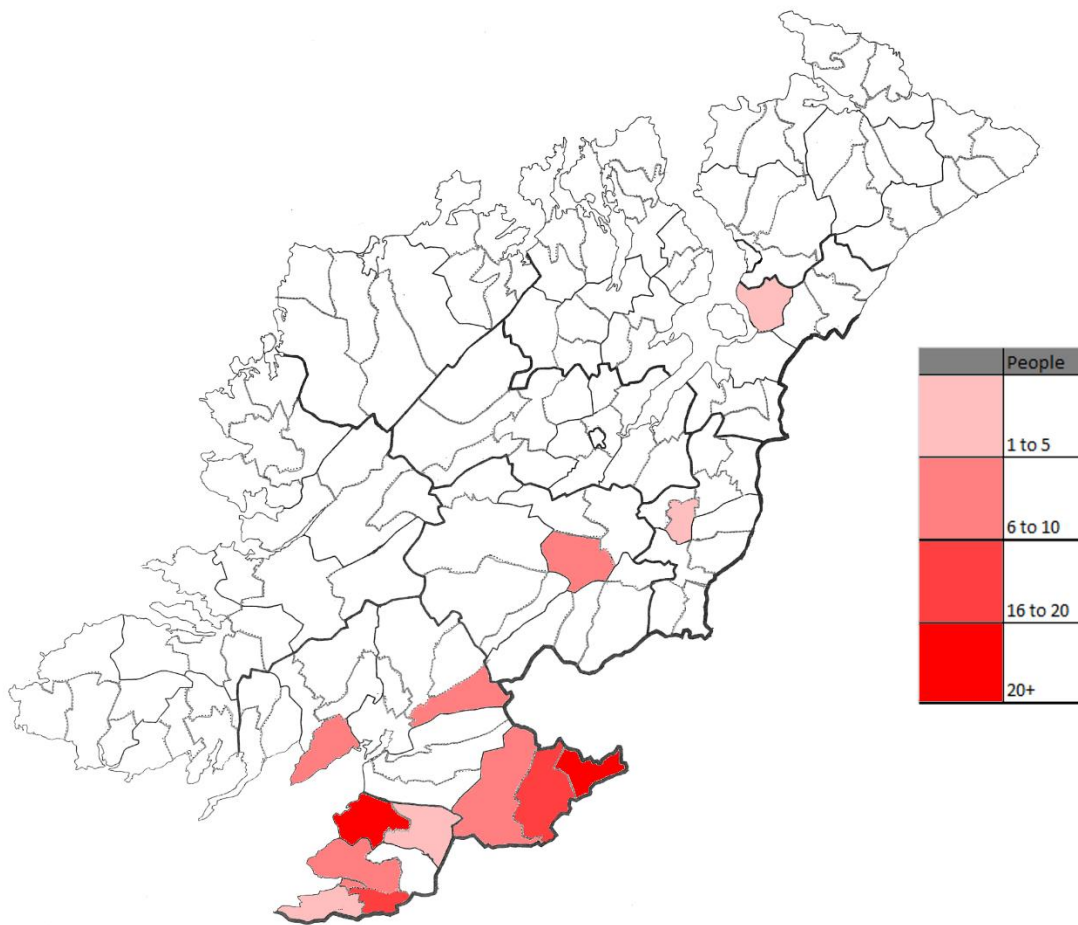


Note: Counties that supplied less than ten migrants were excluded for sake of clarity. These were Tipperary, Waterford, Clare, Roscommon, Carlow, Down, Limerick, Tyrone, Westmeath, Wexford and Antrim. Percentages were rounded to nearest whole number.

This echoes our earlier examination of Presbyterian emigration into Fermanagh from Donegal, these figures perhaps reflecting the superior and easier options available to Donegal Protestants elsewhere. Those from Donegal recorded in the census again came overwhelmingly from the area of the county south of Donegal town. Pettigo contributed 41 individuals (15% of total). The largest group of people to come from an area north of Donegal town were a collection of 10 from Ballybofey, approximately midway up the county. In total, 60% of all Donegal emigrants came from south of Donegal town. There is no clue in their occupations to suggest why people came to Donegal from further north, an examination only reveals the usual collection of Farmers, Labourers and Domestic Servants.



Map 6.2 – Distribution of Cooper Census entries from Donegal by District Electoral Division



Note: Individuals from Donegal who could not be traced to a specific D.E.D. were excluded.

Geography was the fundamental feature of Protestant in-migration to Fermanagh. Those individuals that selected Fermanagh as their destination were largely doing so on the basis of familiarity and proximity. It was not a high-value Northern destination such as Belfast or Derry. As an area with a majority Catholic population and the Boundary Commission looming it may not have been very Northern for very long and thus did not represent an attractive choice even for those living nearby. Familial and social connections were the most important factor in determining movement into the county.

In those cases where we are able to locate individuals in the 1911 census, we were also able to determine their county of birth. In two thirds of these cases these were the

same but in those where they were not, we are given a further insight into factors that would cause someone to choose Fermanagh as their destination. We will be using only the named individuals in the census, discounting the additional population numbers of the broader household. This is because in most cases where the children have been born is not verifiable and it is the origin of the heads of household, the presumed decision-makers in whom we are most interested. We can note that while 145 named individuals were found to have been born in different counties to those from which they emigrated, with children the total number migrating rose to 271.

38% of those in Cooper's census coming from a non-native area were born in Fermanagh. This movement can be characterised more accurately as a return home than a minority feeling the Free State. This Fermanagh diaspora did not return home from far afield and in many cases only made a jump across the border. This information complicates Cooper's own claim of a Protestant exodus into Fermanagh brought about by persecution in the south.

Table 6.5 – Counties of Origin of Fermanagh-born Individuals in Cooper Census

County	Individuals
Cavan	10
Cork	1
Donegal	14
Galway	1
Laois	1
Leitrim	6
Limerick	1
Monaghan	20
Wicklow	1
Grand Total	55

For Cavan this population of Fermanagh natives was heavily centred along the border with the three largest places of original residence being the border regions of Swanlinbar, Blacklion and Belturbet. A similar but less extreme pattern emerges for Monaghan, where the largest single point of origin is Clones, right by the border, with Kilcorran, Seloo and Drummully being other contributors (Drummully was in the

unhappy position of being surrounded by more of Fermanagh than Monaghan and lacked a road connection to the Free State). However, Monaghan also had contributions from Castleblayney and Carrickmacross, on the opposite side of the county. For Donegal this pattern was not so pronounced but nearly all movement took place in the areas south of Donegal town. While being from Fermanagh was indeed a good reason to return to it, the actual placement of Fermanagh returnees tells us that this was more due to their greater likelihood to already live close to the border.

Fermanagh-natives' destinations were evenly spread out, showing less of the tendency of non-natives to cluster around Enniskillen and Lisnaskea and instead focusing on smaller population centres like Castlebalfour and Brookhill. This was probably due to their greater knowledge of the county and an attempt to move close to their childhood home.

The occupational profiles of these returnees was not strikingly different, while their religious profile shows them to be overwhelmingly Anglican with only 5 Methodists, 1 Brethren, 1 Catholic and 1 Presbyterian recorded in a group of 55. This religious profile is also part of the answer to our earlier investigation of Presbyterian underrepresentation in the Cooper census. Fermanagh's own heavy Anglican bias and smaller Presbyterian population influenced the religious make-up of the migrant group, since a significant proportion of that group originated in Fermanagh.

Another group to consider here are those individuals settling in Fermanagh who came from elsewhere in Northern Ireland. Taken with Fermanagh, return emigration to Northern Ireland accounts for 56% of all those migrating from their non-native county and 20% of all migrants for whom we can definitively find a birth county. Taken without Fermanagh these figures remain significant at 21% and 7% respectively.

Table 6.6 – Places of Birth of Individuals in Cooper Census from Northern Ireland

County	Named Individuals
Antrim	7
Armagh	4
Belfast	1
Derry	6
Down	4
Tyrone	11
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>31</b>

Table 6.7 – Points of Origin of Individuals in Cooper Census born in Northern Ireland

County	Named Individuals
Cavan	8
Donegal	6
Dublin	3
Kildare	2
Leitrim	3
Longford	1
Louth	1
Meath	2
Monaghan	3
Offaly	2
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>31</b>

It appears that these individuals were returning from farther afield than Fermanagh natives. Only 63% of individuals in this group were migrating from counties Cavan, Monaghan, Donegal and Leitrim. The majority of this group (53%) were born in Tyrone. These ‘border region’ individuals also stayed close to the Fermanagh frontier with Ballyconnell, Blacklion, Clones and Pettigo being the largest contributors.

This group was, as expected, much more heavily Presbyterian (63%) and was less well dispersed around Fermanagh, clustering more in Enniskillen, Irvinestown and Castlebrook. The group was better represented in the non-agricultural professions with a

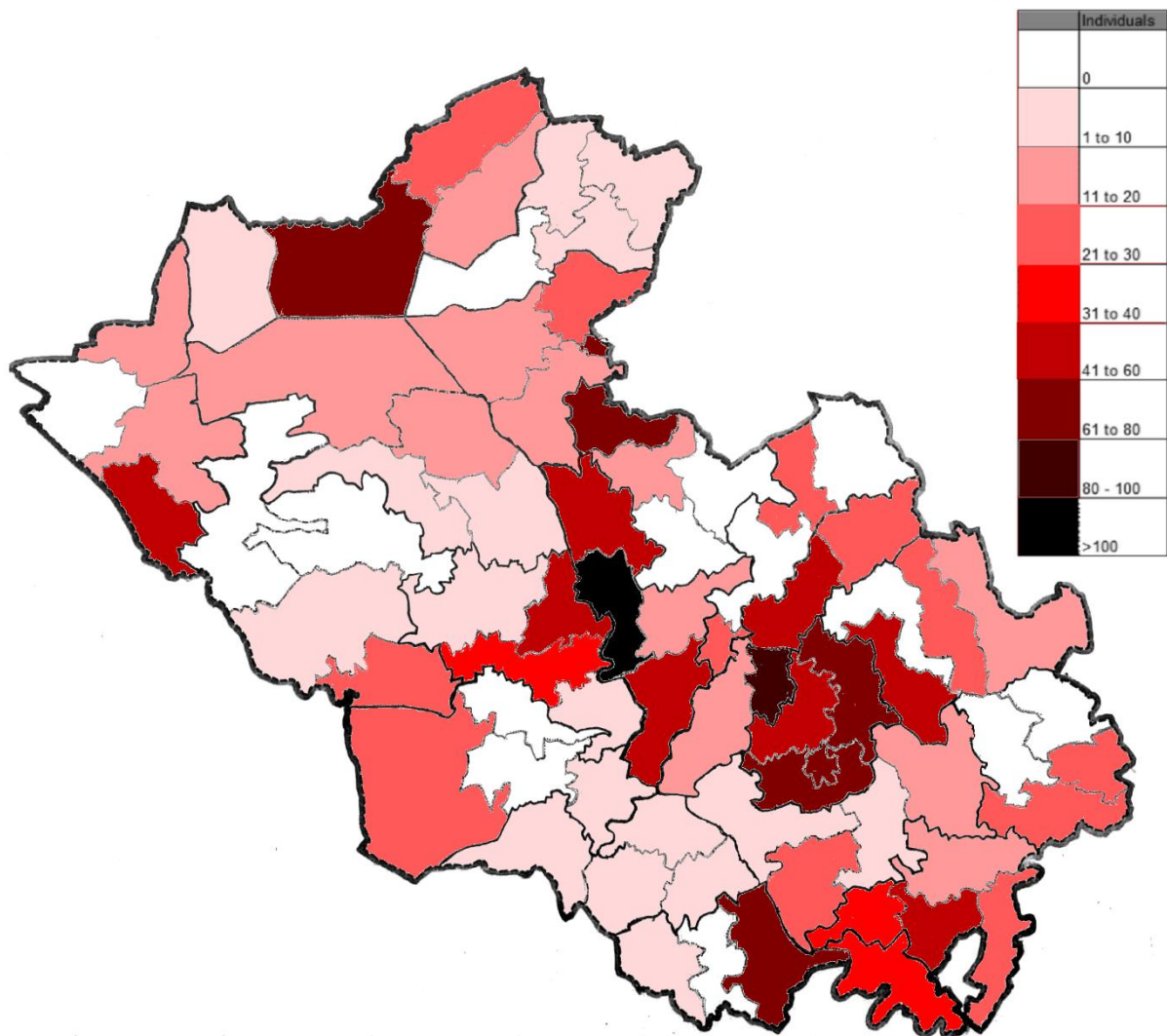
baker, a solicitor, a railway employee, three bank officials, a clergyman and two teachers noted. There were also twice as many labourers as farmers.

### *Destinations*

Having looked at the places of birth of the individuals in the census we can look at their destinations within Fermanagh. Here we must also be wary of how Cooper's own position in Enniskillen itself impacted the data he could collect. While in the 1911 census the Enniskillen D.E.D.s housed about 10% of the total population in the county, they represent 17% of all censusees. They contained more individuals in the census than the next four highest ranked D.E.D.s combined. We should note that Cooper did not make a distinction between Enniskillen Rural and Enniskillen Urban instead bundling them all under Enniskillen Rural.

While Enniskillen was dominant the two other primary urban centres in the county, Lisnaskea (and adjoining Maguiresbridge) and Irvinestown (and adjoining Ballinamallard) also held 8% and 7% of the censused population respectively. The Deerpark and Brookhill D.E.D.s held 4% and 3% respectively and comprised the largest concentrations of censused individuals.

Map 6.3 – Destination D.E.D.s of Individuals in Cooper Census



There were no major clusters of settlement along the border which would have suggested a population reluctant to move and trying to live as close to their former home as possible. There were also no significant urban centres on the Fermanagh side of the border. The greatest border settlement was in the south-eastern end of the county near Clones, while the single greatest representation of individuals in the census in one district is in Pettigo on the Donegal border.

Those individuals recorded in the census did not cluster heavily and in fact were quite evenly distributed relative to one another. To see this, we can divide the D.E.D.s into bands of density of settlement, defined by how many censused individuals were recorded there. This demonstrates a reasonably even pattern with roughly 30% of those

censused present in D.E.D.s with between 1 and 40 other censused individuals. This even spreading is even more pronounced when we exclude the distorting effects of Enniskillen:

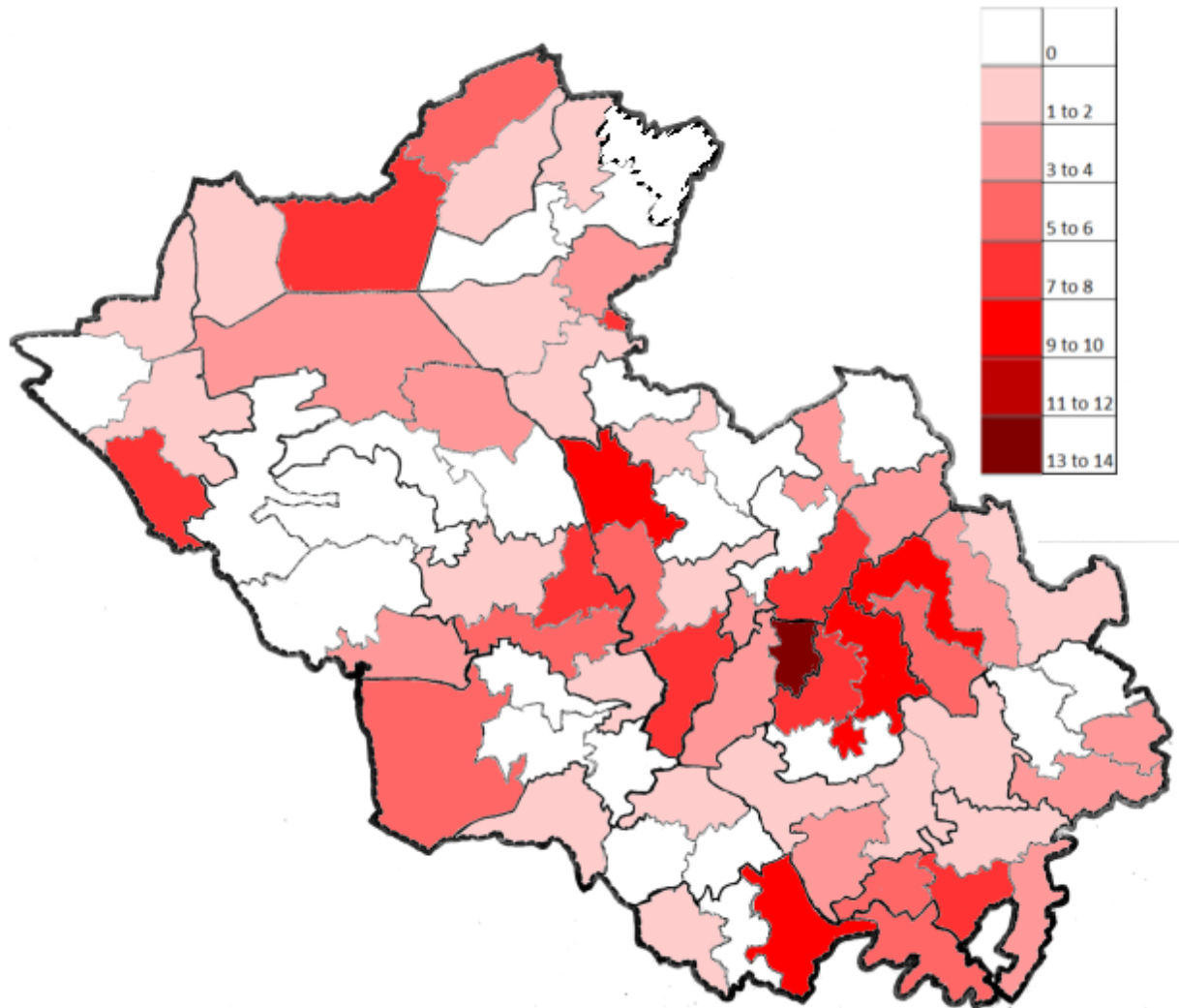
Table 6.8 – Bands of D.E.D.s by Number of Censused Individuals Present

<b>Bands</b>	<b>No of D.E.D.s</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>No of People</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>0</b>	15	19	0	0
<b>1 to 10</b>	17	22	76	4
<b>11 to 20</b>	14	18	182	9
<b>21 to 30</b>	12	15	298	15
<b>31 to 40</b>	3	4	110	6
<b>41 to 50</b>	7	9	322	16
<b>51 to 60</b>	1	1	54	3
<b>61 to 70</b>	3	4	192	10
<b>71 to 80</b>	4	5	297	15
<b>81 to 100</b>	1	1	92	5
<b>100+</b>	1	1	349	18
<b>Total</b>	78	100	1972	100

Of the D.E.D.s to contain no individuals, only Florence Court was of any significant size with 1,129 population in 1911; no other D.E.D. has more than 900. These D.E.D.s were smaller than normal and their average population was only 517. Only 6 people were in D.E.D.s where they were the only individual present in the census.

The areas with the largest increase in population relative to their size in 1911 were primarily on the fringes of larger towns. Of the areas where individuals recorded in the Cooper census made up more than 10% of their 1911 population: Ballinamallard, Ballycassidy, Derrybrusk and Maguiresbridge all bordered one of the three major towns in the county: Enniskillen, Lisnaskea and Irvinestown. The remaining D.E.D.s of over 10% increase were Brookhill which contained the Fermanagh side of the Protestant border town of Pettigo and Crum on the Monaghan border.

Map 6.4 – Fermanagh D.E.D.s by Percentage of 1926 Population made up by



Censusees

To see whether individuals were more likely to move to heavily populated areas we can look for a correlation between the numbers of individuals in the census noted in each area and the population of the area. However, before doing so we must prune our data. Firstly, we must exclude the Enniskillen area as it is so large and dominant as to utterly skew our results. Secondly, we must discount the D.E.D.s that had no censusees. This is done because of the nature of how the census was gathered. Any dataset gathered on Cooper's informal lines is going to have gaps in its coverage where there exist gaps in the social network. Rather, we should take only those D.E.D.s where we know that Cooper was present. Doing this will also force us to disregard the broader question of



why certain areas were ignored entirely. Instead when looking for correlation we are no longer asking ourselves 'did population affect an area's attractiveness to migrants' and instead 'among those areas with migrants, is population likely to impact the level of migration'. This is also the selection criteria we will take with us in our future attempts to find correlation between numbers of migrants recorded in different D.E.D.s.

Finally, we must ensure that our D.E.D.s align between 1911 and 1926. Following partition Fermanagh D.E.D.s were redrawn to allow for those D.E.D.s that had been sundered by partition and to recreate the electoral map. We must go through the 1911 and 1926 census reports and assign each individual townland its 1911 and 1926 D.E.D. This allows us to give each 1926 D.E.D. its population in 1911 as well as its religious make-up in 1911.

The correlation coefficient returned for the relationship between population and emigrant levels is very low (0.08). Heavily populated areas were no more of a draw to migrants than less populated ones. Including Enniskillen skews this statistic (raising the coefficient to 0.57 which implies mild level of correlation) so we can add as a warning that this only applies to areas outside of Enniskillen itself as the town itself was a huge draw.

We can examine the religious composition of each D.E.D. to see whether it had any impact on the destinations of those in the census. Primarily we want to ask whether areas that are more Protestant are more likely to see migration in this census. We will not initially distinguish between the different denominations of Protestant. Instead we will use the percentage Catholic population in each D.E.D. as our marker and look for an inverse correlation. This only returns a weak inverse correlation of -0.38586. Potential migrants were not simply looking for safe Protestant spaces in which to take refuge.

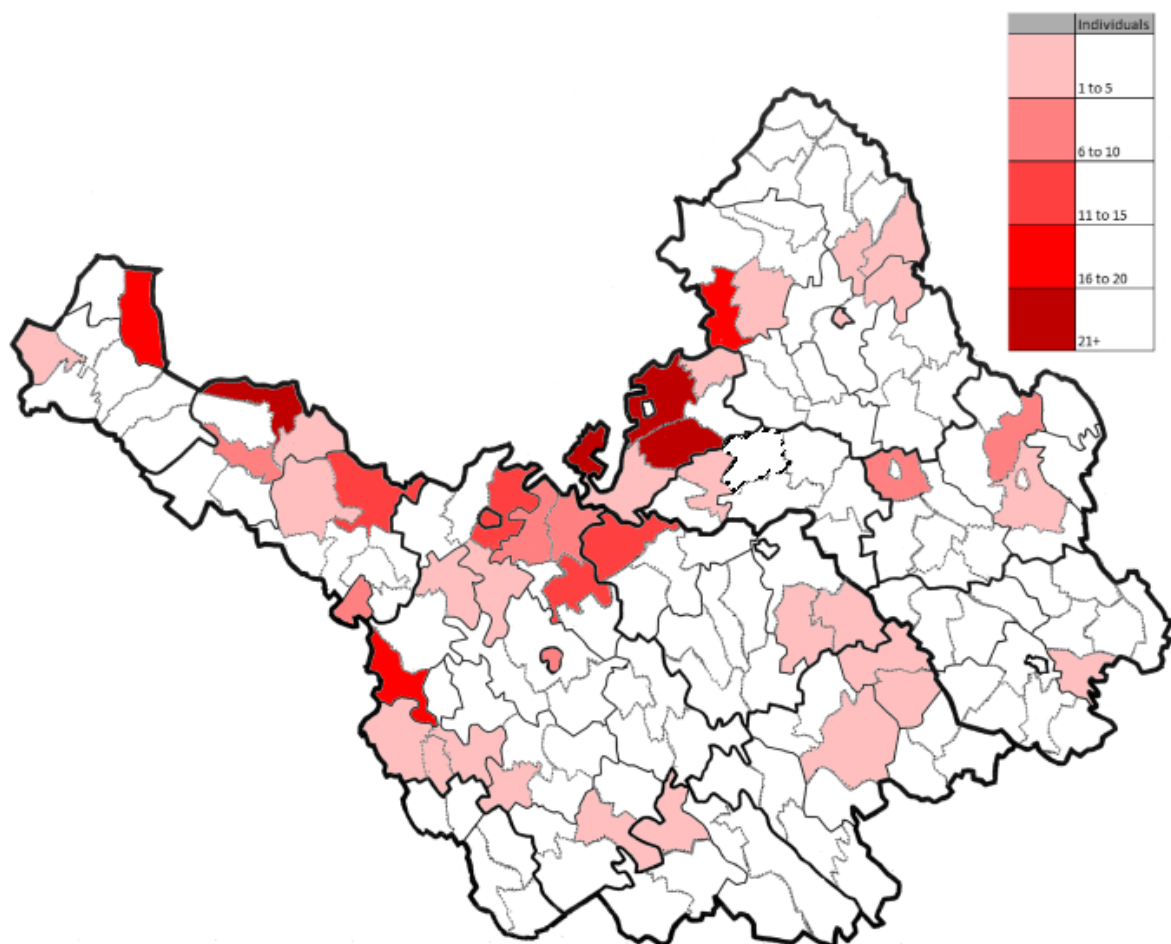
We cannot split the non-Catholic community into smaller denominations as doing so would reduce our sample size too greatly. It is safest to limit our investigation of specific denominations to the single largest group within the census, Anglicans. Here we have a sample size of 719, allowing for families but excluding those belonging to unverifiable D.E.D.s. The correlation coefficient returned here for Anglican migration and the proportion of a D.E.D.'s population that was Catholic was only -0.26533. This is very weak and is also noticeably weaker than the earlier correlation with general Protestant

migration. This implies a stronger correlation for Presbyterians and Methodists than Anglicans.

### *Migration over the border*

Finally, we will look at a group of particular interest to us – emigrants from Cavan and Monaghan, the two most significant groups contained in this census. Looking at these groups not only provides an insight into the community we have examined in our earlier chapters but also into the nature of ‘short movement’ cross-border emigration. Fermanagh was an interesting example of this phenomenon because it was an attractive, developed destination in the way that Derry or Belfast were. The majority of those migrating into Fermanagh from its bordering counties would be doing so precisely because of its proximity.

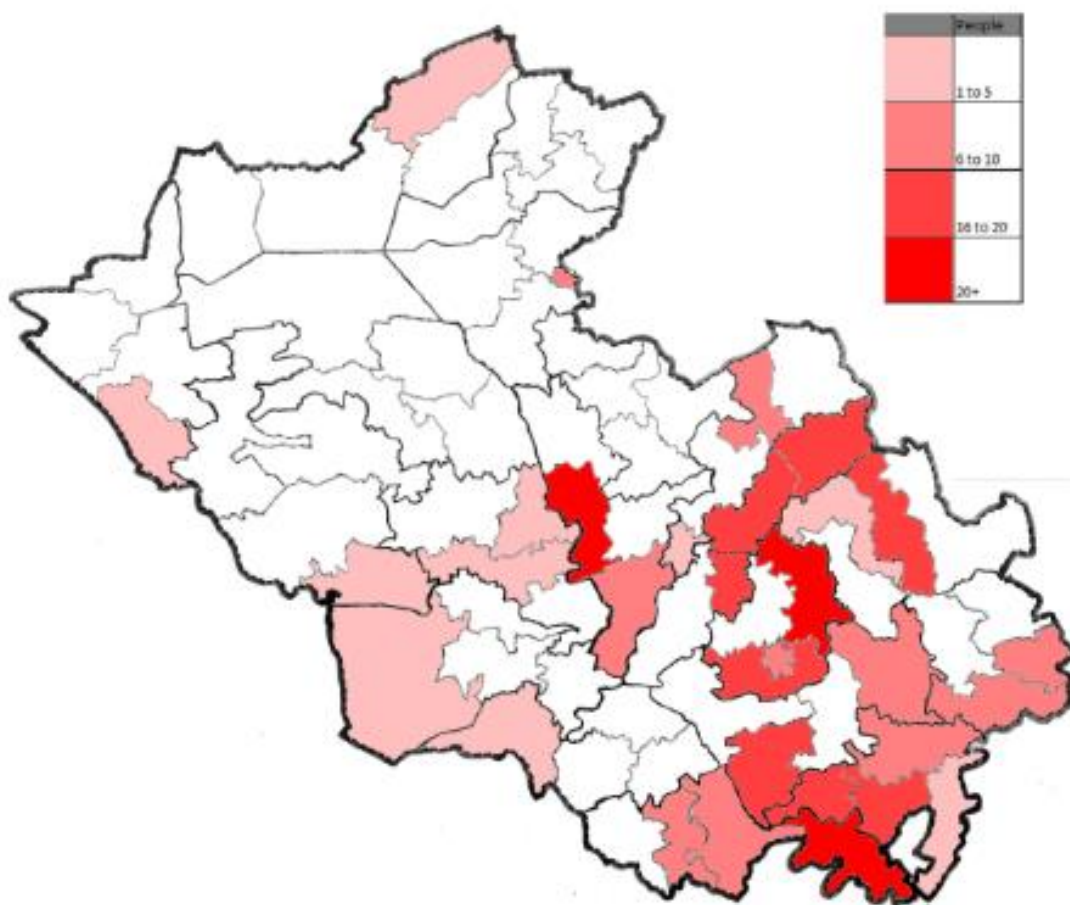
Map 6.14 – D.E.D.s of Individuals Censused in Cavan and Monaghan in 1911



The above map also demonstrates the strong role of proximity to the border in determining movement from Cavan or Monaghan into Fermanagh. Even a general survey of point of origin showed Cavan and Monaghan far overrepresented relative to their population. We have also noted the large community who originated near the border and who were more likely to migrate. This also extended to our examination of the point of origin of different occupations. Groups such as labourers, who were less able to afford a move farther afield, originated from the southern border counties far more than anywhere else.

The remainder of this section will examine the occupational and religious profiles of this group to see how they differ from the general picture. First however, we will examine quickly the rate of settlement by Cavan and Monaghan censusees in areas just over their respective border.

Map 6.6 – Individuals from Cavan and Monaghan in Cooper Census



Settlement was influenced by two factors: proximity to the border and proximity to the three towns of Lisnaskea, Enniskillen and Irvinestown.

The religious makeup of the border districts was not significant in influencing the decision of individuals to settle there. Of these five primary destinations, Mullyangowan is the only to be majority Protestant at 53%. Crum and Clonkeelan have significant Protestant minorities at 42% and 37% respectively while Derrysteaton and Rosslea both have less than 20% non-Catholic population. Nor is population too large a factor. Although Rosslea and Crum are over the average D.E.D. population of roughly 850, Clonkeelan has barely 600 people.

When looking at the demographic profile of Cavan and Monaghan individuals in the census, the first thing we notice is the higher rate of success we have had in locating individuals in Cavan and Monaghan than elsewhere in the country. 59% of Cavan and Monaghan censusees were successfully located in the 1911 census while the total average for the census was only 47%. In terms of family size, the average Cavan and Monaghan family emigrating was also just two and the overall structure in terms of numbers of children is roughly the same although we do see a spike in families of 5 children.

The distribution of religions in Cavan and Monaghan matched the general distribution of non-Catholic religions. Catholics themselves only comprised 3% of the total (18 individuals) which is a smaller proportional share than we would expect but only just. In terms of an occupational profile, farmers comprise 47% of all those from Cavan and Monaghan with identifiable occupations with labourers another 14%.

The Cooper census provides a unique insight into the shape of a marginal and heavily bordered migration, Protestants (and some Catholics) into Fermanagh. It demonstrates both the prominence of border in shaping emigration and its limitations. It also demonstrates some of the flaws in thinking in terms of borders when the boundary in question is so new and its specific shape yet to be determined by the Boundary Commission – the issue of Fermanagh Protestants returning home being registered as Free State Protestants stands out particularly. Perhaps most usefully it demonstrates the normalness of emigration. Those emigrating are not notably distinct from the general Free State Protestant population and what differences there are, are easily explained. Migration northward following partition, based on this evidence, did not disproportionately fall on any particular group.

## National Censuses

The private census described a generally Protestant movement into Fermanagh. If we expand our scope to the general pattern of migration into and out of Fermanagh post-partition, we can ask further questions about the character of this movement. We are less interested in this examination in describing the occupational patterns present or their respective origins, rather we must narrow our focus to questions of religion and the border. Does Fermanagh's Catholic population decline generally or proportionally between 1911 and 1926 or in specific areas? Do the areas closer to the border experience greater movement in or out than might be expected.

Our primary sources are the census reports of 1911 and 1926. Of these we have more material for the 1911 census, which has been released online and provides information on specific individuals and townlands, which can be tabulated to get more detail than is possible from the census reports.<sup>1301</sup> However, the 1926 censuses provide us with various unique lines of enquiry which will also aid our investigation. The 1926 Irish census continues to use the six counties of Northern Ireland as units of internal analysis (for example when noting the origin points of individuals living in each county). This allows us to track the shifting proportions of Fermanagh people in Cavan and Monaghan between the two years.

The Northern Irish census offers no such option. It categorises the twenty-six southern counties cumulatively as the 'Free State' so we cannot examine the rate of change of population in neighbouring counties. However, it does offer a detailed list of the population of each townland sorted by District Electoral Division (D.E.D.). This is useful to us as many D.E.D.s were reorganised following partition, particularly along the border. By tabulating the respective populations of each townland and grouping said

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<sup>1301</sup> An issue with using the online census as a detailed source is the imperfection of transcription and the failure to record various relevant pieces of information, primarily religion. This happened most often in cases where the head of household filled in his own religion only on the form. These blanks were not uncommon (5,125 in Co. Monaghan's 71,455 population and 546 in Cavan's 91,173 population). In most cases this was not an issue as they still presented a representative sample of the county, blanks tended to cluster around too few D.E.D.s and wherever possible subtotals present in the census reports were used instead.

However, in certain cases, where total numbers of each religion were required the issue of blanks was resolved thusly: attempts were made where possible to fill in families with the same religion by ordering the spreadsheet by surnames in each D.E.D. and applying the religion of the head of household to the children. This was only possible in cases where there was one head of household per surname or where multiple heads all shared the same religion. Names presented in Irish (a common feature of blank sheet entries) were also assumed to be Catholic.

townlands into their 1911 and 1926 D.E.D.s we can compare accurate totals for 1926 D.E.D. population in 1911 and 1911 D.E.D. population in 1926. In addition, tabulating the townland populations allows us to examine levels of population change at a very detailed, granular level.

On comparing the population of the various religious groups in Fermanagh between 1911 and 1926 we find little difference between the two populations:

Table 6.9 – Population Figures and Rates of Proportional Decline for Fermanagh Religions 1891 - 1926

	Total	%D	Cath	%D	Epis	%D	Presb	%D	Meth	%D
1891	74170		41102		26869		1312		4779	
1901	65430	12	36198	12	23099	14	1282	2	4744	1
1911	61836	5	34740	4	21123	9	1264	1	4028	15
1926	57984	6	32455	7	19496	8	1461	-16	3663	9

Note: %D means proportional decline

We might have expected to see a drop in the Catholic population as people flee over the border to the Free State either seeking to live in a Nationalist Ireland or pushed out by the burden of living in Protestant Northern Ireland. We might also have expected a small growth or smaller relative decline of the Protestant population as border Protestants travel into the county, along the patterns established in the Cooper census. These expectations are somewhat matched as the Catholic population's proportional decline is greater than it was between 1901 and 1911 while for each Protestant group it is less. Indeed, Presbyterians experienced significant growth despite their underrepresentation in the Cooper census.

Catholic proportional decline remained smaller than that of both Anglicans (a term which included all forms of Protestant Episcopalians) and Methodists. The religious make-up of the county also stayed relatively constant, as it did between 1901 and 1911.

Table 6.10 – Religious Demography of Fermanagh 1901 - 1926

Fermanagh	Cath	Epis	Presb	Meth	Other
1901	55%	35%	2%	7%	0%
1911	56%	34%	2%	7%	1%
1926	56%	34%	3%	6%	2%

In searching for any influx of individuals into Fermanagh we can also look at the number of people in Fermanagh from the 26 counties of the Free State between 1911 and 1926. This population increased between the censuses:

Table 6.11 – Places of Birth of Fermanagh Residents and, Total and Proportional Change 1911 - 1926

	1911	1926	Diff	% Diff
Fermanagh	53034	47620	-5414	-10
Northern Ireland	2509	2920	411	16
26 Counties	4962	5900	938	19
Scotland	1056	1269	213	20
Other	275	275	0	0
Total	61836	57984	-3852	-6.2

Table 6.12 – Places of Birth of Fermanagh Residents as Proportion of County Population

	1911%	1926%
Fermanagh	86	82
Northern Ireland	4	5
Southern Ireland	8	10
Scotland	2	2
Other	0.4	0.5
Total	100	100

The decline in the population of native Fermanagh-born inhabitants in the county itself is striking. Their decline of 5,414 was actually greater than the total decline in the



county's population. It appears there was some decline of Fermanagh inhabitants that was partially compensated by outsiders. Given the even nature of religious change between the censuses the nature of southern emigration into the county is undetermined.

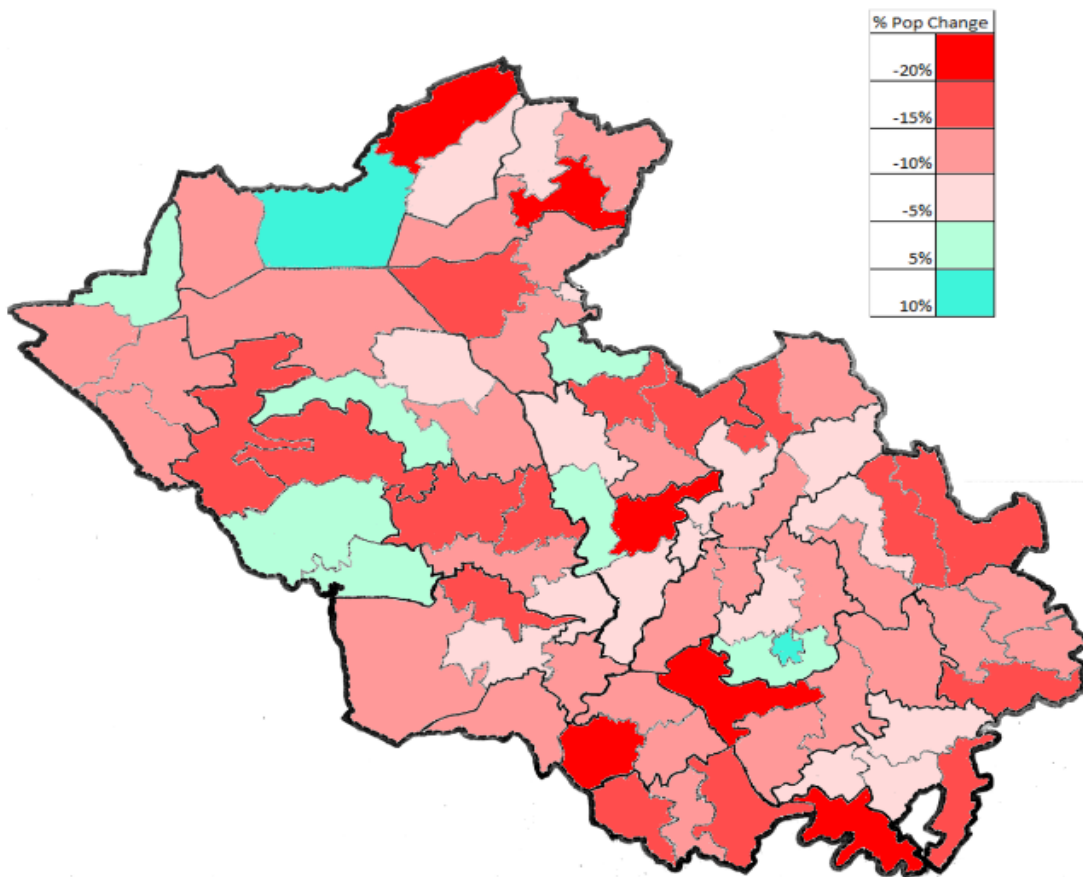
When we examine Fermanagh depopulation at a D.E.D. level there again is little distinct pattern of population change that we can map onto religious geography.<sup>1302</sup> Examining the correlation between relative population change (population change as a percentage of the 1911 total for the D.E.D.) and the Catholicism of the D.E.D. returned no significant data. We see only mild correlations between total population change in D.E.D.s and percentage Catholic population in the D.E.D. with a negative correlation of -0.33. The strongest correlation returned is between 1911 D.E.D. size and total population change with larger D.E.D.s experiencing greater population decline and smaller D.E.D.s making small gains. So, there was little relationship between levels of D.E.D. depopulation and religious composition. Enniskillen Rural and Lisnaskea, both evenly divided between Catholics and Protestants (with Catholic proportions of 55% and 46% respectively) saw greatest growth. The four D.E.D.s with the greatest proportional decline were Castlecoole and Clonelly (42% Catholic and 45% Catholic) as well as Magheraculmoney (29% Catholic) and Kilmore (77% Catholic).

If we try and add a border element to our investigation we see that the D.E.D.s that experienced the greatest depopulation clustered on the southern border while depopulation was lightest around Enniskillen and in the north of the county.

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<sup>1302</sup> Here we are using 1926 D.E.D.s for the purpose of comparison simply for ease of mapping.

Map 6.7 – Population Change by D.E.D. in Fermanagh between 1911 and 1926



It might be expected that areas which saw greater unrest and fighting when the border was established would see greater population decline but this is not particularly striking. Roslea, for example, saw a proportional decline of 7% which is not strongly distinct from surrounding D.E.D.s. Neighbouring Dresternan had a stronger decline of 11% but nearby D.E.D.s of Mullaghfad (13%) and Corralongford (11%) experienced similar declines and were not involved in the incident. Belleek, at the centre of the Pettigo-Belleek affair, even experienced a small increase of 2%.

We can now turn our attention south to the Free State census of 1926. Although the 1926 Northern Irish census has limited uses for us, its Free State cousin provides some more detail. Our investigations here will focus on two questions. Firstly, whether we see any change in the religious make-up of Cavan and Monaghan between 1911 and 1926 as a result of Protestant depopulation or Catholic influx along the border. Secondly, whether we see an increase or change in Fermanaghmen living in the south, as evidence of outward migration into the Free State.

Table 6.13 – Religious Demography of Cavan 1901 - 1926

Cavan	Total	%D	Cath	%D	Epis	%D	Presb	%D	Meth	%D
1891	111917		90508		16361		3800		1046	
1901	97541	<b>13%</b>	79026	<b>13%</b>	14112	<b>14%</b>	3220	<b>15%</b>	987	<b>6%</b>
1911	91173	<b>7%</b>	74271	<b>6%</b>	12952	<b>8%</b>	2843	<b>12%</b>	781	<b>21%</b>
1926	82245	<b>10%</b>	69383	<b>7%</b>	10102	<b>22%</b>	2196	<b>23%</b>	468	<b>40%</b>

Table 6.14 – Religious Demography of Monaghan 1901 - 1926

Monaghan	Total	%D	Cath	%D	Epis	%D	Presb	%D	Meth	%D
1891	86206		63154		11247		10876		440	
1901	74611	<b>13%</b>	54757	<b>13%</b>	9828	<b>13%</b>	9532	<b>12%</b>	371	<b>16%</b>
1911	71455	<b>4%</b>	53363	<b>3%</b>	8725	<b>11%</b>	8512	<b>11%</b>	395	<b>-6%</b>
1926	65131	<b>9%</b>	51139	<b>4%</b>	6409	<b>27%</b>	6905	<b>19%</b>	294	<b>26%</b>

In both counties the non-Catholic population is much more heavily impacted by depopulation with Cavan Methodists being worst hit and Monaghan Presbyterians the least. That Monaghan Anglicans are disproportionately more impacted than Monaghan Presbyterians is noteworthy, particularly as notions of a Presbyterian Ulsterism might have suggested a great propensity to migrate northwards. Provided below is a national version of the tables above to allow for comparison:

Table 6.15 – Religious Population Change in 26 Counties 1911 - 1926

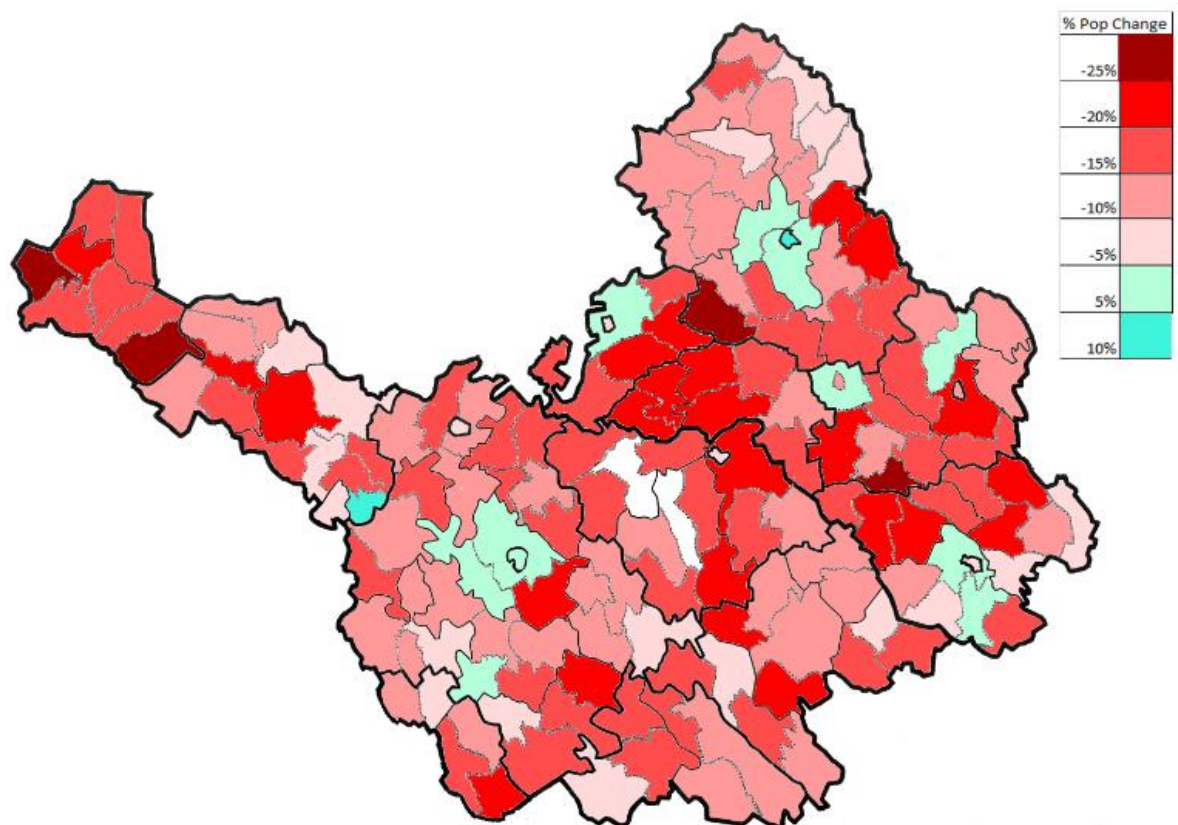
Free State	1911	1926	Decline %
Catholic	2812509	2751269	-2
Anglican	249535	164215	-34
Presbyterian	45486	32429	-28
Methodist	16449	10663	-35
Total	3139688	2971992	-5

In this comparison Cavan and Monaghan depopulation is disproportionately hard on the Catholic population. In both counties the percentage decline is higher than the

national average while all Protestant denominations (with the exception of Cavan Methodists) come under the national average. This can be explained as neither Cavan nor Monaghan were garrison counties and thus would not have experienced the additional depopulation as British administrators and army personnel left the country. However, even with this allowed for, it is surprising that those counties along the border did not experience greater Protestant depopulation given the greater proximity of Northern Ireland and the cultural connections between them. When Protestant emigration took place it was broadly not the case that they were being forced out or that their leaving was of the greatest urgency, seeking shelter across the border and certainly that ease of emigration did not increase likelihood.

We can turn our attention to population change at a D.E.D. level. These reports also record the religious make-up of the D.E.D.s in 1926 allowing us to see the relative declines of each community.

Map 6.8 – Population Change between 1911 and 1926 in Cavan and Monaghan



In Cavan decline was seen in all but five D.E.D.S of which the most significant were Cavan Urban and Rural (both of which grew by 3%). There was no strong clustering of decline although the lightly populated western D.E.D.s of Teebane and Derrynananta were most strongly affected. For Monaghan, Monaghan town itself saw significant growth of 9%. Monaghan saw stronger geographic clustering with the Clones area seeing the strongest population decline while it is noteworthy that the strongly Catholic, northern D.E.D.s were least affected. In both counties and with few exceptions rural districts around towns saw relative growth.

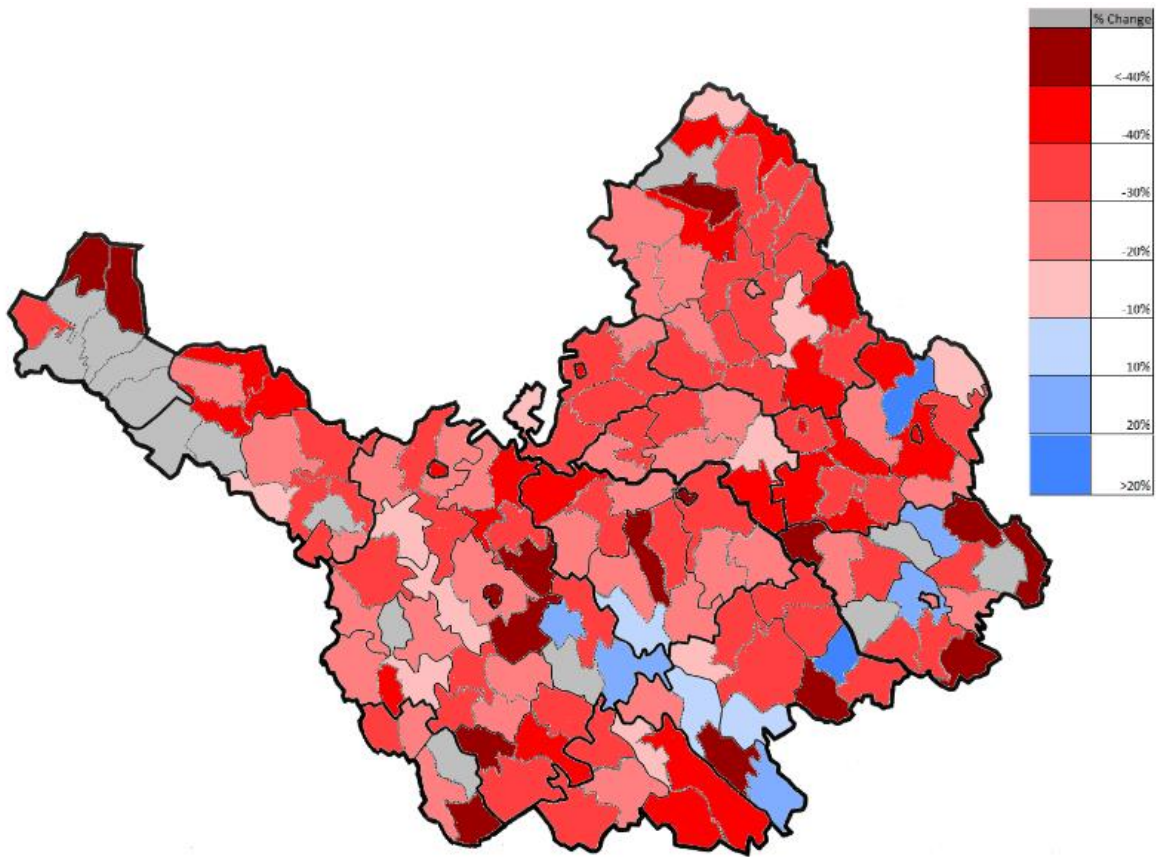
Searching for a correlation between the percentage Catholic population of a district and its proportional population change returns a very weak negative correlation of -0.16622. This tells us that Catholic areas were only slightly more likely to see lesser population decline. For Monaghan the correlation is non-existent at 0.014055.

However, when we look at Protestant proportional decline (or to be accurate non-Catholic decline) in the D.E.D.s the picture changes. In Cavan there are some D.E.D.s that see a growth in their Protestant population even if a small one. Lisagoan saw an increase of twenty-six and Killinkere of fourteen. Both of these D.E.D.s are in the south of the county. For Monaghan there is no comparable areas of growth. However, in terms of proportional decline southern Monaghan D.E.D.s like Drumboory, Corracharra and Kilmurry see the greatest decline.<sup>1303</sup> We can also note that none of the areas that experienced growth in their Protestant population were located along the border and were nearer their southern borders.

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<sup>1303</sup> This is an edited selection to prevent small populations throwing off the proportional decline, for example Bragan's decline of seven individuals representing an 87.5% decline.

Map 6.9 – Protestant Population Change between 1911 and 1926



Note: D.E.D.s in grey are those with less than ten Protestants in 1911

The difference between the Catholic populations and Protestant populations grew in the majority of urban D.E.D.s and their surrounding rural areas, particularly in Monaghan and Clones where it grew by over 500.

We see that the border D.E.D.s tended to see a stronger rate of Protestant depopulation but that this was not very strongly expressed. In Monaghan the average rate of Protestant depopulation was -22% while for border counties it was -23.4% (although if Carrickaslane which strangely gained fifty-five Protestants is excluded this rises to 25%). For Cavan these figures were more pronounced at -22% (average) and -30% (bordered) but still minor. Some D.E.D.s such as Drummully showed remarkable resilience. Its non-Catholic population declined by only thirteen in the years between the censuses. Nor along the border was there any stronger correlation between the religious make-up of a D.E.D. and its Protestant population decline. The border was of little direct significance in rates of Protestant population change.

A common and related methodology we can employ in our investigation of comparative population change is the technique known as cohort depletion in which a group within a certain age range are traced through multiple censuses and their population measured. By examining Catholic and non-Catholic populations we can determine the different rates of population change (and assuming for similar and lower mortality among the younger cohorts) we can roughly determine net migration. Unfortunately, numbers dividing county population by age group are not available for Fermanagh and this investigation is limited to Cavan and Monaghan.

As can be seen in the table below the non-Catholic population in both Cavan and Monaghan experienced far greater depopulation than their Catholic equivalents. In both counties non-Catholic population decline was far in excess of Catholic decline, in every cohort outstripping them at least ten percent. This discrepancy was largest in the cohorts aged five to nine and ten to fourteen in 1911.

Table 6.16 – Cohort Depletion of Catholics and non-Catholics in Cavan and Monaghan 1911 - 1926

<b>Cohort</b>	<b>Cavan Cath</b>	<b>Cavan Non-Cath</b>	<b>Diff</b>	<b>Mon Cath</b>	<b>Mon Non-Cath</b>	<b>Diff</b>
<b>0 to 4</b>	6	-19	-25	8	-18	-26
<b>5 to 9</b>	-12	-27	-15	11	-23	-34
<b>10 to 14</b>	-29	-46	-17	-8	-43	-35
<b>15 to 24</b>	-31	-45	-14	-21	-42	-21
<b>25 to 34</b>	-21	-33	-12	-18	-30	-12
<b>35 to 44</b>	-12	-23	-11	-5	-28	-23
<b>45 to 54</b>	-11	-27	-16	-5	-26	-21
<b>55 to 64</b>	5	-22	-27	14	-19	-33
<b>65 to 74</b>	-73	-68	5	-73	-66	7

Age Ranges relate to age of cohort in 1911 census. Figures are represented as percentage change of 1926 cohort from 1911 cohort. For ease of research distinction is only made between Catholic and non-Catholic population. Age ranges cut off at 35 to 44 to allow for primary cause of depopulation to be migration and before mortality because a large complicating factor.

While the rates of percentage decline for non-Catholics are roughly similar between Cavan and Monaghan, Monaghan experienced far less Catholic population decline than Cavan and consequently its differentials are far larger than those of Cavan. Protestants in Monaghan were far more likely to emigrate than their Catholic neighbours while Protestants in Cavan and Monaghan were equally likely to emigrate. The low level of Catholic decline, and in some cases growth, particularly in Monaghan shows that there was some influx of northern Catholics into the county. The difference between the two counties in regard to emigration then is more likely a function of their attractiveness to Catholic rather than Protestant emigrants. The differing revolutionary experiences and border situation of both counties do not seem to have impacted Protestant decline.

Next, we move our attention to the question of cross-border settlement before and after partition. Fermanagh in 1926 is noticeably more southern-facing than the other Northern counties. The 1926 census records 5,854 Fermanaghmen living south of the border – only Belfast was a more frequently cited point of origin (7,076). However, as a percentage of the county's population at the time Fermanagh's overrepresentation in the south is more obvious. Fermanaghmen in the Free State represented about 10% of the home population of 57,984. Armagh and Tyrone were the next highest at 4.7% and 4.3% respectively. This suggests this was likely a border phenomenon; however the low cross-border percentages of Down (1.7%) and Derry (2.9%) suggest that it was also tied to the absence of significant urban opportunities nearby.

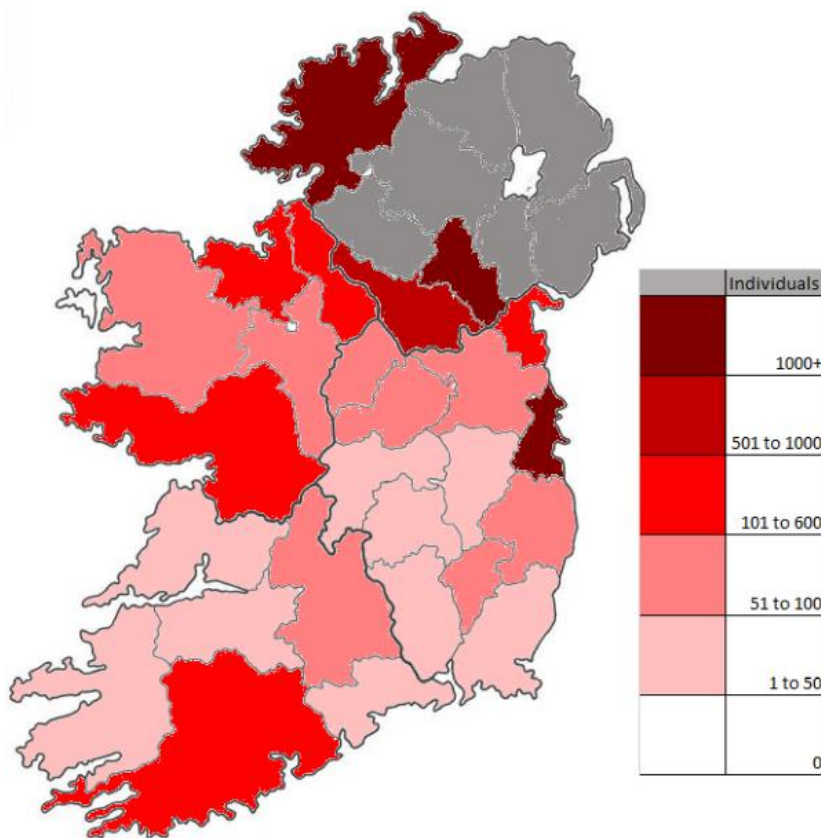


Table 6.17 – Fermanagh People Living Abroad in 1911 and 1926

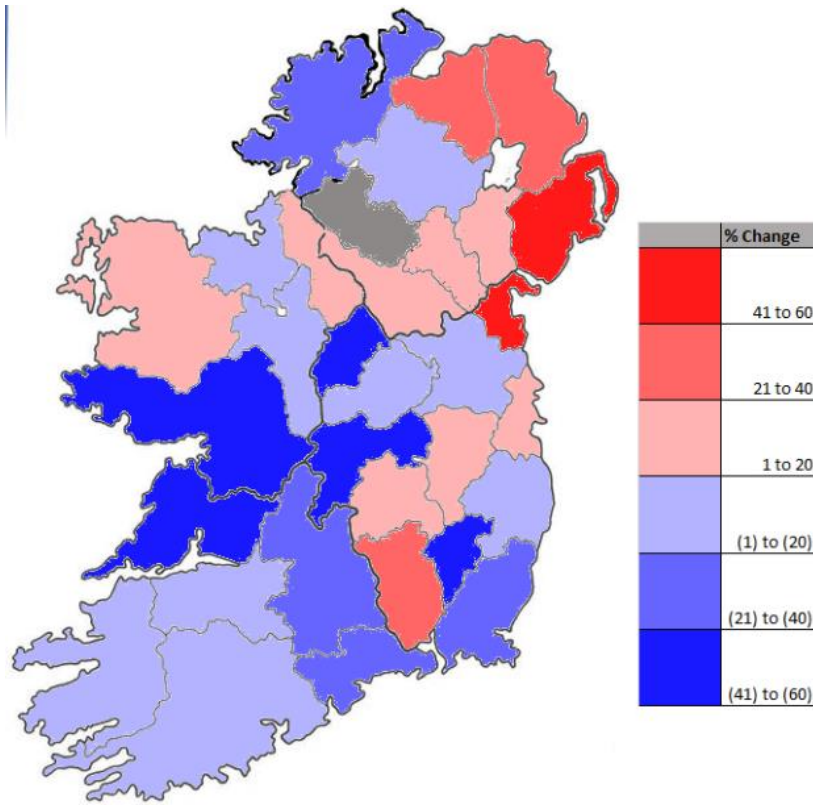
	<b>Fermanagh 1911</b>	<b>Fermanagh 1926</b>
<b>Monaghan</b>	1293	1362
<b>Cavan</b>	881	889
<b>Donegal</b>	1103	881
<b>Dublin County</b>	535	624
<b>Dublin Co Borough</b>	575	498
<b>Leitrim</b>	310	321
<b>Louth</b>	137	193
<b>Sligo</b>	154	127
<b>Cork County</b>	117	109
<b>Wicklow</b>	92	90
<b>Kildare</b>	77	88
<b>Meath</b>	80	79
<b>Mayo</b>	70	71
<b>Westmeath</b>	70	65
<b>Roscommon</b>	65	61
<b>Galway</b>	112	57
<b>Tipperary</b>	64	47
<b>Laois</b>	41	46
<b>Limerick County</b>	50	42
<b>Kilkenny</b>	30	40
<b>Longford</b>	70	40
<b>Wexford</b>	44	31
<b>Waterford County</b>	32	25
<b>Kerry</b>	25	24
<b>Carlow</b>	31	18
<b>Offaly</b>	41	16
<b>Clare</b>	22	10

If we examine the changes in the distribution and number of these southern Fermanaghmen between 1911 and 1926 we are again struck by how important the border was to any broader changes. While the total number of Fermanaghmen living in southern Ireland declined between 1911 and 1926 by only 267 people we find that with a more localised analysis this is more striking. The vast majority of this decline is located in Donegal which lost 222 individuals, over a fifth of the entire Fermanagh born population outside of Fermanagh in 1911. Given the vast discrepancy between this figure and all other changes provided it is very likely that this was impacted by the Donegal-Fermanagh border's unique position. This is meant both in terms of the conflict along the Pettigo-Belleek salient but also the relative isolation of Donegal itself and the stronger cross-border ties between Donegal and the six counties of Northern Ireland.

Map 6.10 – Fermanagh-born Populations in other counties in 1926



Map 6.11 – Change in Fermanagh-born Populations in other counties as percentage of 1911 population



While a truly accurate analysis of the religious and geographic pattern of this decline will be impossible until the 1926 census is released we can make some inferences from what we have available to us. Firstly, we can look at the pattern of Donegal Fermanaghmen in 1911. We note that they are clustered in the disturbed square of land starting on the Pettigo-Belleek line and extending to the coast incorporating Ballyshannon, Ballintra and Bundoran. The rest of the population is spread more evenly throughout the county with other clusters along the border. They are also more heavily Protestant (40%) and specifically Methodist (7%) than the Donegal average, although not than the Fermanagh average. We can also note with surprise the large increase in Louth of Fermanagh-born residents.

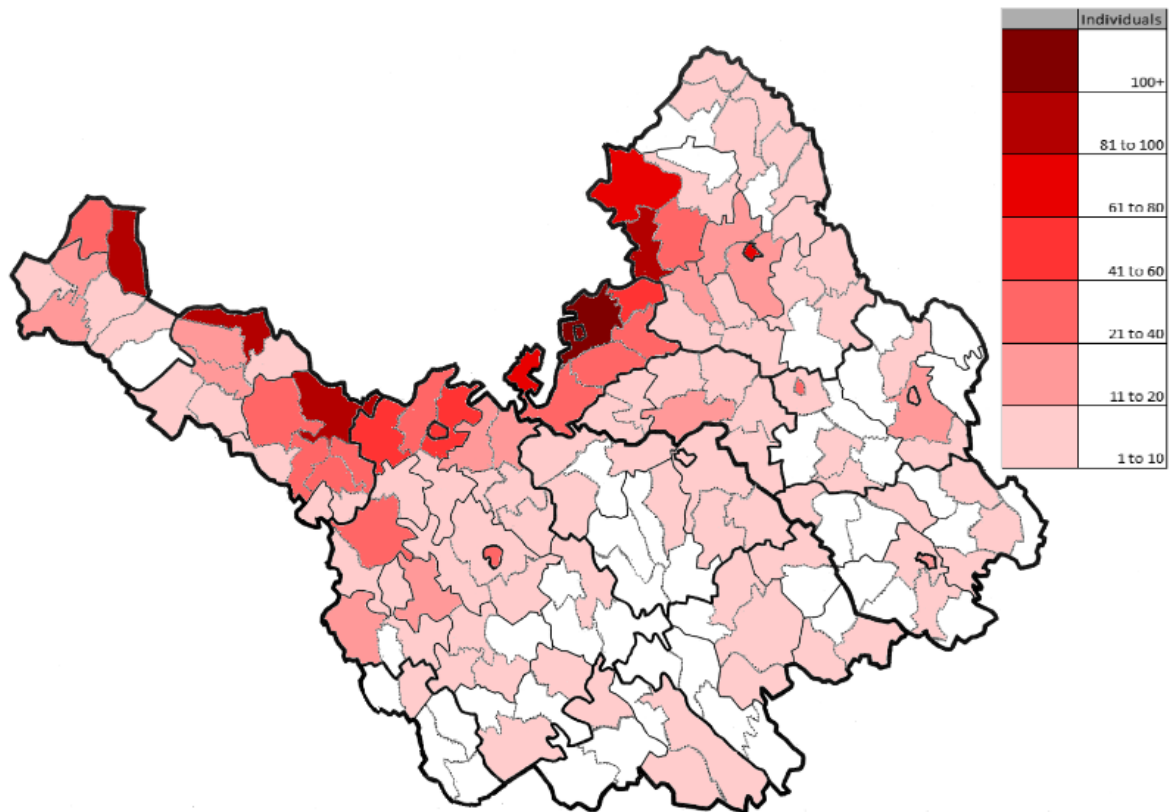
Increases elsewhere are not particularly striking on their own, but it is worth noting the simple fact that they do not experience a decline in Fermanagh population and see nothing close to the exodus present in Donegal. Looking at the decreases is more instructive.

When we compare this shift with the equivalent movement of Fermanaghmen in the six northern counties between 1911 and 1926 a more marked movement of the Fermanagh population northward appears. In 1911 more Fermanaghmen resident outside Fermanagh lived in southern Ireland than northern, 6,121 people compared to 6,071. By 1926 the number of Fermanaghmen elsewhere in Northern Ireland had increased by 826 people. Coupled with the decline in Fermanaghmen in the south this meant that there were now over 1,000 more Fermanaghmen north than south.

In both censuses these populations are centred in two most likely locations: Tyrone, with whom Fermanagh shared a border and a similar demographic and economic makeup, and Belfast City, the political and economic centre of Ulster. Interestingly the only northern county to see population decline between 1911 and 1926 is Tyrone which lost 55 Fermanaghmen in this time. The greatest increases were in East Ulster suggesting a general trend away from the Free State and towards the Ulster heartlands.

The availability of the individual forms for the 1911 census allows us to map Fermanaghmen living in Cavan and Monaghan as we did for Donegal. This can allow us to see patterns of cross-border settlement, what groups of people were likely to live across a border. The religious distribution of these individuals is roughly the same as that of Donegal. Approximately 60% were Catholic (62% for Monaghan and 63% for Cavan) while about 30% were Anglican. Presbyterians comprised around 3% of the total. This is unsurprising given Fermanagh's own low Presbyterian population.

Map 6.12 – Distribution of Fermanagh-born Individuals in Cavan and Monaghan D.E.D.s



In terms of distribution Monaghan saw strong settlement both along the border and in local economic centres. The two Clones D.E.D.s between them house 43% of the total (232 in Clones Rural and 315 in Clones Urban). Cavan has no equivalent to Clones, that is to say a large urban and commercial centre close to the border that dominates the destinations for an incoming Fermanagh population. People are spread out more evenly with mild clusters around the three most prominent border settlements – Blacklion, Swanlinbar and Ballyconnell-Belturbet

This pattern makes most sense if we view Cavan as a convenience destination. Chosen primarily because of its proximity to home, areas in the county without that appeal do not pull as many people. This model partially works for Monaghan as well although the importance of Clones as a local cross-border draw should not be underestimated.

The 889 Fermanaghmen in Cavan were over half of the total Northern Irish population in the county, three and a half times the next highest group – those from Belfast. However, Cavan’s own peripherality to the rest of Ulster is reflected in its low

total migration from Northern Ireland (only 1,692 people compared to 5,384 for Donegal and 4,514 for Monaghan). Connacht provides almost twice as many individuals to the county while Leinster provides over three times as many (although Fermanagh is still the highest contributor per head of population).<sup>1304</sup>

In Monaghan, where Fermanagh's presence is strongest, they are actually outstripped by Armagh (1,434 to 1,362) but with less than half of the population. Despite a similarly sized border region and over twice the population there are nearly twice as many Fermanagh born people as Tyrone. There are significantly fewer Connacht and Leinster migrants into Monaghan as well.

By 1926, Fermanagh-born were relatively underrepresented in Donegal with only 881 individuals to Derry's 1,813 and Tyrone's 1,842. However, we can note that this figure of 881 is only eight individuals less than Cavan's dominant Fermanagh proportion. Rather the reason for this change is partly the presence of Derry city as a large and integrated presence near the Donegal border, the extent of the Tyrone border with Donegal and the relatively poor and isolated nature of the Fermanagh-Donegal borderland, isolated as it was from the rest of the county by Lough Erne and being less populated.

Finally, then when examining cross-border populations we will look briefly in the other direction. At Cavan and Monaghan populations living in Fermanagh. By doing so we can see what factors were common to north-south movement and what factors were distinct. Unfortunately, the lack of a county specific breakdown for southerners in Northern Ireland in the 1926 census limits our examination to 1911 as a snapshot in time.

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<sup>1304</sup> Leinster 0.23%, Connacht 0.31%, Munster 0.04%, Fermanagh 1.5%.

Table 6.18 – Difference in Religious make-up of Cavan-born people in Cavan and Fermanagh

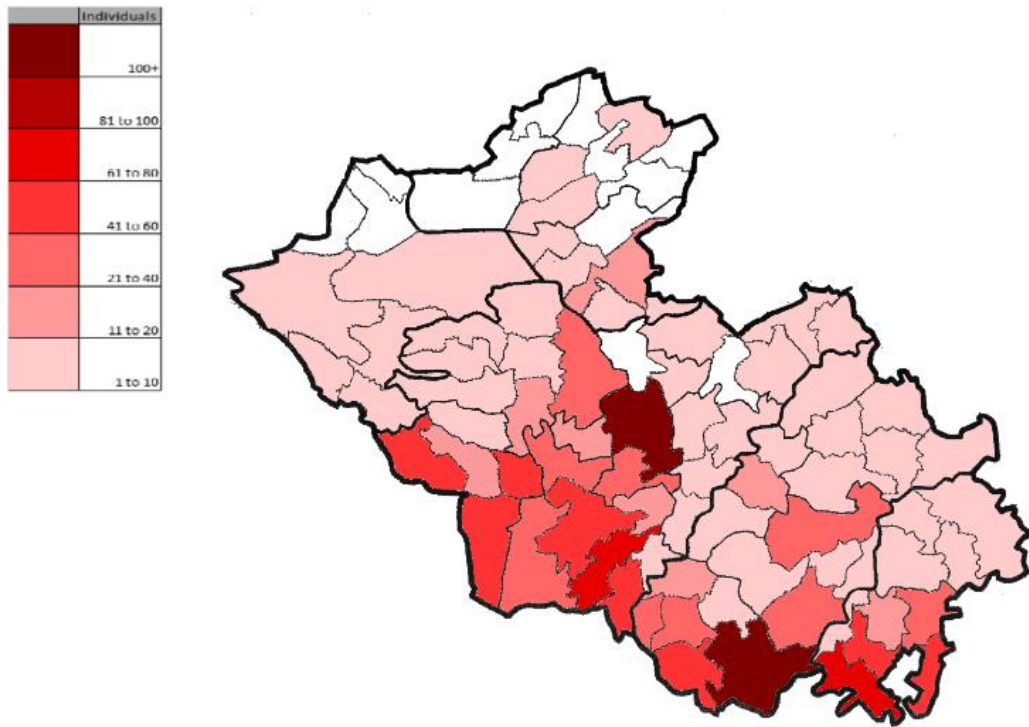
<b>Cavan</b>	<b>Home</b>	<b>Ferm</b>
<b>Cath</b>	84%	72%
<b>Epis</b>	12%	23%
<b>Presb</b>	3%	1%
<b>Meth</b>	1%	3%

Table 6.19 – Difference in Religious make-up of Monaghan-born people in Monaghan and Fermanagh

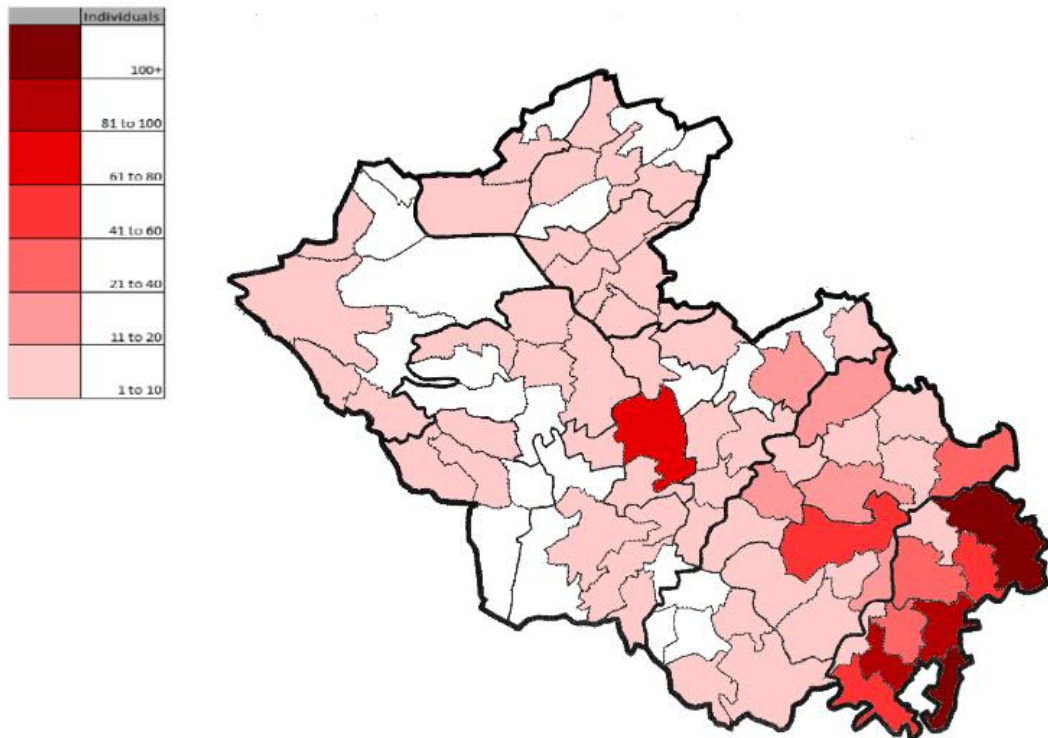
<b>Monaghan</b>	<b>Home</b>	<b>Ferm</b>
<b>Cath</b>	79%	62%
<b>Epis</b>	10%	27%
<b>Presb</b>	11%	8%
<b>Meth</b>	0%	3%

We can note here strong overrepresentation of Anglicans and a consequent underrepresentation of Catholics. This suggests stronger south to north movement over the border for Protestants than Catholics. The North's greater proportion of Protestants was more likely to attract Protestant migration. The lower level of Presbyterians moving may also have been a consequence of Fermanagh's own low Presbyterian population and implies that many of those moving northward would have had some family connection to Fermanagh.

Map 6.13 – Cavan-born Population in Fermanagh in 1911



Map 6.14 - Monaghan-born Population in Fermanagh in 1911





Moving to where in Fermanagh this community chose to live, we will again split the examination into Cavan and Monaghan populations to allow for a better appreciation of regional variation. When we look at Monaghan, we see a greater clustering in specific border D.E.D.s. Rosslea and Clonkeelan (to the East of Connell's Island) hold nearly 30% of the total population (167 and 134 people respectively). Newtownbutler and Magherveeley, adjoining townlands both just North of Connell's Island hold another 17% (88 and 85 people respectively).

Cavan has a larger Fermanagh-based population than Monaghan (1,403 to 1,026). This is perhaps surprising given the greater cultural connections between, Fermanagh and northern Monaghan and the presence of Clones in particular. However, this is probably explainable largely by the much greater length of the Cavan border allowing for more areas for immediate low-distance cross-border migration. It also suggests that the simple presence of a border is more important when examining cross-border relations than any abstract ideas of cross-border permeability or commonality.

Cavan's population in Fermanagh is also more well distributed. While Monaghan only has eleven D.E.D.s with twenty or more people, Cavan has twenty-three. The predominance of the Crum district (containing 10% of all Cavan-born individuals in the county) is probably due to the presence of Ballyconnell and Belturbet over the border and is a mirror of the Fermanagh population in Cavan. This theory is supported in that the next five D.E.D.s cluster around one of two points across the border– the Ballyconnell-Belturbet area or by Swanlinbar. Cavanmen are present in ten more D.E.D.s than Monaghanmen, while interior districts like Irvinestown, Maguiresbridge and Laragh all see more settlement.

Examining the national census reports provides us with a mixed picture. Undoubtedly, the Protestant community in Cavan and Monaghan declined between 1911 and 1926 and this was likely a 'purer' emigration than elsewhere because of the lesser presence of British army and administrative personnel in the county. However this decline does not seem to have been as intense as we might expect – certainly when we factor in that the border's proximity should have been an incentive to movement. The lack of strong correlation between the religious makeup of an area and its population change demonstrates that factors other than communal identity were important in

impacting a decline. There is more evidence that the border drew Catholics southwards than Protestants northward.

Searching for a direct relationship between border and movement is complicated and while areas on the border do see significant population change in the intercensal period our examination of 'expat' populations demonstrates this is as much a question of cross-border communal ties and returning home as it is one of migration.

### Conclusion

What this combined study has demonstrated is the important but limited role of the border in shaping emigration into the periphery of Ulster. It also throws some water on suggestions seen in the *Impartial Reporter* and other northern papers of a vast exodus of Protestants from the Free State. Indeed, movements of Catholics in Fermanagh and Protestants in Cavan and Monaghan continued during this period. It also demonstrates that the real drain on the population of Fermanagh was not the border but Belfast, now further entrenched by partition as the main destination for the county's population.

Both the census reports and the Cooper census demonstrate the importance of cross-border settlement between Fermanagh and Cavan-Monaghan and remind us that when the border fell it did not fall across an easy, natural division but across lives and social networks and that these factors can confuse our findings. The fact that so many of Cooper's censusees were, in fact, returning to their homes in Fermanagh from just over the border demonstrates that much migration immediately after partition was the consequence of previous cross-border living arrangements having been rendered impractical than that the Free State was inherently hostile to Protestants.

The Cooper census particularly has some surprises, notably the great propensity for Presbyterians to migrate northward and the failure of Cooper to vet the Protestantism of his censusees. This underlines the suspicion with which contemporary claims of 'pogroms' and religiously motivated killings should be treated. This is particularly the case in Fermanagh where proving the existence of such migration had a clear political purpose.

This investigation also underlines that both at point of departure and point of arrival, the Protestantism of an area had little impact on a migrant. Protestant areas were

no more likely to be the destination of migrants than Catholic areas, and heavily outnumbered Protestants in Cavan were no more likely to migrate to Fermanagh than Protestants in 'Orange districts'.

## Conclusion

On 4 July 1922 in Cootehill, Elizabeth Adams, a 43-year-old Protestant from the area was dragged through the streets of the town by a jeering crowd. She was filthy after three days imprisonment in a warehouse. She was brought before a court and after four hours was compelled to give bail for £1,000 and two sureties of £500 each. She was also compelled to sign a statement that she would surrender herself to the Irish Republic when called upon. As a result of this event Elizabeth Adams began to suffer from hypertension and insomnia. Her ordeal had begun four years previously when she had celebrated the victory of the Allies in the First World War by ringing the local Anglican church's bells. Following this the gates of her property were tarred with Republican slogans like 'To Hell With England', 'Up Germany', 'Up Sinn Féin', 'Up Griffith' and 'To Hell With Carson.' In November of that year she received a letter telling her that she was going to be shot and as a result she began carrying a rifle around with her wherever she went. She suffered systematic intimidation in her local community for the next three and a half years until on 1 July 1922 she was arrested by the I.R.A. Ironically the arrest occurred just after she had returned from a public meeting on how to protect oneself from Republicans. When asked in her application for compensation from the British Government why she was targeted she replied: 'After the Irish Rebellion in 1916 we noticed we were looked upon with distaste by a certain section of the country people around us. Our loyalty to England was, of course, well known locally.'<sup>1305</sup>

This thesis has asked whether cases like Elizabeth Adams' and the themes identified within: isolation, intimidation and the marking of the Protestant as an 'other'; were typical if extreme examples of the Protestant experience of the revolutionary period or very rare 'worst-case' incidents. Certainly, this thesis has made clear that the Revolution represented a profound trauma for the Protestant community in Cavan and Monaghan. The successive experiences of political isolation and revolutionary chaos led to the period being remembered in Protestant sources as one of particular crisis. Raiding, boycotting and the pervasive atmosphere of threat and victimisation represented a mortal blow struck against the community. In reality, the community underestimated their own resilience in the face of this change. Protestants in Cavan, Monaghan and Donegal

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<sup>1305</sup> Elizabeth Adams claim (T.N.A: CO 762/137/9)

persisted far beyond the period of our investigation, marching in Twelfths and electing explicitly Protestant TDs (John James Cole, Alexander Haslett and James Sproule Myles respectively) well into the 1940s.

A theme which emerges strongly throughout this thesis is the social isolation of the Protestant community from their Catholic neighbours and the unspoken mutual mistrust which had existed long before the Revolution but which would exacerbate many of the actions that took place during it. Social connections made almost exclusively within one cultural group and the subsequent lack of communication or insight between them not only generated suspicion and in turn revolutionary targeting but also increased the sense of vulnerability and loneliness once partition occurred.

We can return to the research questions we set out at the start of this thesis to see how our investigation has answered them.

1. How deep was the commitment in Cavan and Monaghan to ‘Ulster Unionism’ and to what degree was it professed as a potential means of escape from an independent Ireland?
2. How did the Protestant community in these counties react and adapt to the establishment of the Northern State?
3. What form did revolutionary actions taken against members of the Protestant community take?
4. Can we describe a ‘typical’ experience of the Revolution?
5. What motivated these revolutionary actions, and can they be characterised as sectarian?
6. Did the greater Protestant population in Fermanagh and their larger public profile change how they experienced the Revolution?
7. Did the imposition of the border following partition cause greater revolutionary violence?
8. Did the imposition of the border lead to significant migration from Cavan and Monaghan Protestants over the border?

The answer to Question 1 informs our answer to Question 2. Even had we not such strong evidence of Unionist organisation in Cavan and Monaghan pre-1920, nor the accounts of a separate and distinct Protestant community in those counties: the strength of the Unionist response to the establishment of the Northern state would convince us of

the sincerity of their Unionism. The rallies, resolutions and speeches of the community in the months following the decision of the U.U.C. in May 1920 to accept partition are rife with acid tones and wounded feelings. This conclusion is challenged by the remarkable rapidity with which the community seemed to accept their existence in the Free State and the feeble record of both counties in regard to recruiting during the War. However, such a rapid adaptation is better explained as being motivated by hard-headed acceptance and the severing of their emotional connection to the six-counties. The community's recruiting record is offset by their record of enthusiasm for the U.V.F. and Ulster Clubs. An early appeal of the Ulster Unionist movement, particularly in South Monaghan and West Cavan was not simply in its intrinsic ancestral call but in the connection it offered to a broader, more vibrant, movement. However, by the time of our examination it was pointless to try and isolate out individual motives for what had become a commonly-felt, cross-border commitment which bound its members together through their shared struggles and sacrifices. The sincerity of their connection to Ulster and the pain it caused when broken were key features in the Cavan and Monaghan Protestant experience not just of the war but of the twentieth century.

For Questions 3 and 4 we saw that the Protestant experience of Revolution fell beyond the typical narrowly drawn paradigm of raiding, arson and execution. These were important aspects of revolutionary experience and ones which heavily weighted how the period was understood and reported. However, actions such as boycotting affected a far greater swathe of the population and spread more easily and more unconsciously along religious lines as people continued to trade with co-religionist friends who were themselves targeted by a boycott. Indeed, raiding and murder were dominant experiences of revolution only insofar as they heavily informed vague Protestant fears of attack. While many Protestants were attacked, there were many more that were not but who stayed up all through the night, as John Sloan did, to protect themselves against a raid that never came.<sup>1306</sup> It was this same fear and uncertainty as to what would follow a knock on the door at midnight that could transform a relatively harmless raid for arms into seeming like an execution or burning. That there was such a strong apprehension of revolutionary violence in two counties which had such a quiet Revolution may seem overly paranoid but the fear itself, and the awareness of the Protestant community of their isolated position, led to a management of their communal relations. Restraint was shown

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<sup>1306</sup> John Mansergh Sloan claim (T.N.A.: CO 762/114/1.)

in displays of public Protestantism or in public bodies. The republican elements were given as little reason as possible to be suspicious of their Protestant neighbours. In most cases, arms were handed over; informing was rare; social engagement with British forces was minimised. This conscious meekness and management of inter-communal relations is a key reason why the counties were so quiet.

The issue of sectarianism as outlined in Question 5 remains the most salient issue in current historical debate. Cavan and Monaghan Protestants were not targeted specifically on the basis of their religion and there is little evidence for a clear-out of the sort described by Hart in the *I.R.A. and its Enemies*. However, this conclusion is only satisfying if we allow for a very narrow definition of sectarian targeting. Religious identification was not used as a justification in itself for attacks on individuals. However, the Protestant community was still disproportionately and, in certain cases almost exclusively, the victim of revolutionary actions. Additionally, those actions and positions which drew attention upon themselves were a consequence of their broader cultural identity which we can most accurately identify by the label of 'Protestant'. This included active opposition such as informing, refusing to buy Dáil bonds, or firing on passing I.R.A. patrols. More often, however, raids, boycotts and intimidation were brought on by more passive acts of Protestant identity such as befriending local R.I.C. officers, joining the organisations like the U.V.F. and Orange Order or openly celebrating events such as the end of the War. These actions held different levels of significance for both communities and led to a situation where it was quite possible for actions which, to the I.R.A., seemed non-sectarian and perfectly legitimate to appear to the Protestant community as unjustified, religiously-motivated attack. Equally important was the trend in Protestant media and public discourse to portray revolutionary outrages against Protestants as inherently sectarian and the fundamental motivations of Sinn Féin as hostile to the community. It was this atmosphere of fear that motivated many of those who did resist or flee to do so.

In Fermanagh, for Questions 6 and 7, Protestants experienced a much milder Revolution. Their greater numbers meant that were sufficiently organised and prepared to resist I.R.A. raids and to inform on I.R.A. movements. However, this numerousness, and their persistent fear that a redrawn partition settlement would see them joining three-county Protestants in the south, led to a much more active and hostile Protestantism developing in the county. Political bodies saw greater rancour and elections were more

prone to violence. This led to a magnification of the tension that had been so managed in Cavan and Monaghan and following partition led to a number of violent attacks on Catholics, focusing strongly around elections and exacerbated by the formation of the B Specials. While there had been some organised Protestant resistance in Cavan and Monaghan there was not any equivalent violent impulse against Catholics. Despite this, two of the three most significant violent events to take place in or around Fermanagh cannot be characterised as a consequence of 'internal' communal tensions disputes but rather focused on the border and have to be understood as as much an expression of national political tensions as of local communal ones. The Clones Affray came in the context of heightened tensions between Northern Unionists and Southern Republicans in which the arrival of B Specials into the town, although following a normal pre-partition route, was interpreted as an act of invasion and aggression. The Pettigo-Belleek fighting was even more so an act of invasion as southern troops recognised the impracticality of the border and seized a large salient of land that was majority Catholic and attached more strongly to Donegal than the rest of Fermanagh. The final significant act of violence the burning of Roslea, should not be interpreted as an act of invasion as much as an inevitable explosion of resentment and reprisal due to the build up of communal tensions following partition.

Question 8 we can answer more simply. The imposition of the border did not lead to a significant movement of Cavan and Monaghan Protestants over the border, as we might have expected. Far more Catholics moved south but even along the border itself, movement into Fermanagh was limited. This fits with our earlier observations about the rapidity with which Cavan and Monaghan Protestants adapted to their new circumstances. As the Protestant population in Cavan and Monaghan still declined between 1911 and 1926 it also suggests to us that migration was not approached on a convenience basis and that Protestants were more likely to move for Belfast or farther afield than they were to move down the road into Fermanagh.

There are a number of obvious avenues for further research some of which were informed by questions which arose too late in the research process to be included. The addition of Donegal to the case-study would allow for an investigation into a genuine three-county Protestant experience while the expansion of the scope farther forward in time would also allow for a greater study of the adaptation of the community in the



decades immediately following partition. In particular the electoral successes of the three candidates mentioned earlier (Cole, Haslett and Myles) merit greater attention.

This thesis was shaped by the sources it had available to it. While the main impact of this has been to shift its focus away from certain topics such as gender and the working-class even in the areas of concern to us and which have available sources our reading of the period will be influenced by those sources. Those we have available are largely those of policemen and soldiers and as such are more preoccupied with acts of violence. Because of this the most violent aspects of the Revolution have traditionally been emphasised in the historiography: ambushes, murders of informers, arson etc. While this thesis attempts to move beyond this tired paradigm to emphasise the quieter forms of revolution that comprised the bulk of individual experience: particularly boycotts, threats and non-lethal raids, however it is inherently restricted in what it can say by what is in the sources.

Three detailed case studies suggest themselves to move beyond this traditional source-dependence. Specific case studies of those boycotted using business records, their business relationships and their financial losses would provide valuable insight into who was chosen for a boycott and how the boycott spread. Detailed case studies of Protestants in public life, such as on Boards of Guardians or on local Councils would provide great insights into how this minority community tried to maintain its influence in the face of ever decreasing population numbers, as well as insights into who came to hold such positions. Finally, a discussion of the concept of 'Protestant space' and of Protestant conceptions of the identity of an area, using literary sources and testimony to the Boundary Commission would delineate often indirectly expressed ideas about the Protestant claim to live and work in their local community. This should be coupled with an analysis of Protestant population patterns using the 1911 census at a townland level to demonstrate how even areas with a strong Catholic majority can hold contiguous Protestant areas that are otherwise missed by census data.

This thesis frequently employs a general statistical approach to examine, for example, the make-up of applicants to the Irish Grants Committee or the change in townland population between censuses. However, such a process is time intensive and there were other such databases of people which were not mined in this way and which offer ample opportunity for future research. These include the delegates to the U.U.C., applicants receiving aid from SILRA from 1940 onwards, Protestant members of local

councils and the local censuses provided to the Boundary Commission in 1925. Further work on tabulating this data and visualising it geographically and chronologically would provide significant insights into the questions such as who was active in Unionism and who suffered the greatest long-term effects of the Revolution.

This thesis was a study of a community and their relationship with revolutionary violence. As such 'bordered violence' caused by and exacerbated by the border was an important element of the investigation due to the position of our countless on the border itself. However, this was just one factor among many we were considering and there is great scope to expand an investigation on 'bordered violence' to contrast, for example, physical geography with rates of violence, and the greater rates of violence along some county borders rather than others.

Similarly, when looking at Fermanagh issues of time prevented the thesis from taking a deeper look at issues of electoral malpractice and gerrymandering in local elections in Fermanagh. A great deal of material on this topic exists in the files of the Boundary Commission and would provide an attractive and engaging future research project for someone inclined to commit to it.

The role of gender and of the specific impact of revolutionary violence on Protestant women is not explored in depth in this thesis, although the impact of such violence on women in general is accounted for. This is due to the limitations of the sources – applying such an analysis would require a much deeper reading of the sources and the assembly of a specific database of incidents. Such an examination would be better served by an alternate study with an expanded focus – looking at the role of violence against either Protestant women in general or Ulster Protestant women.

## Appendices

### **Appendix 1 – Religious Distribution for Free State weighted by proportional contribution to Cooper census**

<b>Counties</b>	<b>% CoI</b>	<b>% Presb</b>	<b>% Meth</b>	<b>% Other</b>	<b>Weighting</b>
Cavan	76.6	16.8	4.6	1.9	24.4
Monaghan	46.2	45	2.1	2.4	21.5
Donegal	50.7	42.4	4.8	2.2	13.1
Leinster	81.5	7.5	4.7	6.3	12.1
Munster	82.1	6.8	6.8	4.4	3.6
Leitrim	86.6	3.4	9.4	0.6	15
Rest of Connacht	81.5	10.7	4.6	3.1	8.7
<b>Counties Weighted</b>	<b>WCoI</b>	<b>WPresb</b>	<b>WMeth</b>	<b>WOther</b>	<b>WTotal</b>
Cavan Weighted	1869.04	409.92	112.24	46.36	2437.56
Monaghan Weighted	993.3	967.5	45.15	51.6	2057.55
Donegal Weighted	664.17	555.44	62.88	28.82	1311.31
Leinster Weighted	986.15	90.75	56.87	76.23	1210
Munster Weighted	295.56	24.48	24.48	15.84	360.36
Leitrim Weighted	1299	51	141	9	1500
Connacht Weighted	709.05	93.09	40.02	26.97	869.13
Total Weighted Units	6816.27	2192.18	482.64	254.82	9745.91
T.W.U. as % of Total	69.94	22.49	4.95	2.61	100

Note: Use of W here is shorthand for weighted (WCoI = Weighted Church of Ireland Proportion). Each weighted figure was found by multiplying that proportional figure from the first row by the weighting (for example, WCoI = %CoI times Cavan Weighting:  $1869.04 = 76.6 \times 24.4$ ). The weighting itself is the rounded percentage each group made up of the Cooper census. The final percentage is of the total weighted unit of each religion in relation to the sum of the weighted totals for all religions, rounded to two decimal spaces.

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#### 4. Unpublished Research

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## 5. Oral Testimony

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