

The Irish Civil War January 1922 to April 1923 - Robert Benninghoff

Synopsis

This exhibit shows the Political and Social turmoil in Ireland during the Brutal Irish Civil War that was fought in all of Ireland during 1922 and 1923. The Title page gives the background History. Several articles that I have written are referenced at the end of this synopsis.

The Irish Civil War was fought between *former Colleagues in Arms* in the IRA who had fought the British Army to a Stalemate from 1917 to July 1921. The Irish Republican Army (IRA) and Sinn Fein (The Irish Political party) were fighting for an ***Independent Republic of all Ireland first proclaimed by Padraig Pearse during the Irish 1916 Easter Rebellion***. Lloyd George (British Prime Minister) offered the Irish a Peace Treaty based upon a 1920 British Law called the Government of Ireland Act. The Irish people were forced to accept the British terms or face renewed assault by the British Army.

This Treaty was signed on December 6 1921 (a cover with this date is shown on page 2) by Michael Collins and Arthur Griffith and partitioned Ireland into 6 counties of Northern Ireland and 26 counties of Southern Ireland. The 6 counties would remain part of the United Kingdom and the 26 counties would become the Irish Free State, but remain part of the British Commonwealth. The Irish Parliament (Dail Eireann) ratified the Peace Treaty on 7 January 1922. However, almost half the members rejected the Treaty and walked out of the Dail, led by Eamon de Valera who had been President of the Dail since 1919.

The Stage was set for the Irish Civil War fought between the ***Pro and Anti Treaty*** members of both Sinn Fein and the IRA. The Pro-Treaty National Government eventually won the Civil War. ***The importance of this result is evidenced by the fact that the British Army would be forced to reoccupy all of Ireland with bloody consequences for the Irish, creating conflict with the USA and resulting in Chaos in a war ravaged Europe.***

I lived in Ireland for 10 years from 1965 to 1975, attending Secondary School (High School) and College. Very little was taught in school about the Irish Civil War which divided families and communities into the late 1990s. Most of the books and articles about this period were written during and after the 1980s, when the ***Irish National Archives*** began to release information about various Irish Government activities and interactions with the British Government during the 1920s.

This exhibit covers the period from January 1922, when the rift occurred within both Sinn Fein and IRA, until April 1923 when the IRA surrendered to the Irish Government. The Exhibit is based upon my research of the Irish Government daily meeting reports for 1922 and 1923 available in the National Archives, Dublin Ireland; Irish Historical Museums in Dublin, Cashel, Cork and Limerick as well as interviews with several Irish people whose families fought in the War of Independence and / or the Civil War.

Several scarce or apparently unique items are shown in the exhibit including two of eight ***Erie Post Covers*** (one shown on the Title Page, the other on page 4). Until 2020 none of these Erie Post political labels were known used, or on cover, and I own all 8 covers. Several items bear eye witness to the events including postcards shown on pages 5 and 6. I have also included a booklet that documents the communications of the British Government during the Battle for Dublin (page 5). Also Included in the exhibit are two covers used By ***Dr. C.I. Dulin*** as illustrations in his book ***Ireland's Transition*** (see exhibit Page 7).

The challenge has been to merge political and social history with the material that I have been collecting for 15 years. My exhibit format requires a bit more time to read and comprehend. I have used a green background and green text to highlight important philatelic information and I hope this helps. I look forward to your comments

Selected Readings available from The American Philatelic Society Research Library

Benninghoff, Robert: *The Provisional Government of Ireland Part 1*, Gibbons Stamp Monthly, published by Stanley Gibbons, May 2022 pages 48 to 53

Benninghoff, Robert: *The Provisional Government of Ireland Part 2*, Gibbons Stamp Monthly, published by Stanley Gibbons, June 2022 pages 52 to 59

Benninghoff, Robert: *The Irish Civil War 1922 and 1923, Part 1: The Road to War*, Gibbons Stamp Monthly, published by Stanley Gibbons, July 2022 pages 54 to 59

Benninghoff, Robert: *The Irish Civil War 19122 and 1923 Part 2*, Gibbons Stamp Monthly, published by Stanley Gibbons, August 2022 pages 74 to 85

Dulin, C.I. Dr.: *Irelands Transition*, MacDonnell Whyte Ltd, Dublin, Ireland, 1992, pages 88 and 94

Benninghoff, Robert: *Witness to the Irish Civil War & The Irish Civil War: Comments from the British Government*, Irish Philately, Journal of the Irish Philatelic Circle, August 2020 page 47

Benninghoff, Robert: *The Mystery of the ERIE Post Labels Deepens*, Irish Philately, Journal of the Irish Philatelic Circle, April 2021 page 6

Ibid page 30

Additional reading available from the APS Library, July 2021

Blake Francis M, *The Irish Civil War and what it still means for the Irish people*, Information on Ireland, London UK, 1988

Additional Reading

Benninghoff, Robert: *The Irish War for independence Continues May 1922*, Die Harfe, the German-Irish research Society- - Forschungs- und Arbeitsgemeinschaft Irland (FAI), Spring 2020 page 11

My article discusses several covers shown on page 3

Changes since the last showing of this exhibit:

(a) Changed the format of the Title Page to reorient the Celtic Cross cover to the vertical position

(b) Added a cover to page 4 (bottom right corner) addressed to the Four Courts and Postmarked 27 June 1922 ***the day before the Civil War started***. The cover is address to the Commandant in Charge of the Belfast Boycott. ***This cover is the only one I have seen addressed to the Four Courts in June 1922 and further proves that the IRA was running operations into Northern Ireland from their Four Court Headquarters***

(c) Reduced the amount of text on the Title Page incorporating the ***importance statement*** into the Brief History Section. Incorporated the overview of Sinn Fein and the IRA into the Brief History section on the Title page.

Therefore, the Brief History section becomes much more important and must be carefully read.

The Irish Civil War January 1922 to April 1923

This exhibit shows the **Social, Political and Economic** impacts on Ireland during the Irish Civil War of 1922 and 1923.

The War was fought between the Irish Republican Army (IRA) & various British military forces in the 6 counties of Northern Ireland as well between the **IRA** & the National Government of the Irish Free State (26 counties of southern Ireland). The Focus is on southern Ireland where the **Turnmoil** was greatest and where over 3000 people were killed.

Brief History

The **Irish Civil War** was a continuation of the Irish Struggle for Independence which began shortly after the failed 1916 Easter Rebellion. The British Army executed 15 of the **Rebellion leaders**, creating a political vacuum filled by the more radical survivors under the banner of Sinn Fein. In the Autumn of 1917, the militant arm of Sinn Fein -- known collectively as the **IRA** -- began attacks on the British police, post offices & trains in Ireland. This armed conflict touched all of Ireland & lasted until July 1921 when a truce was signed between **Sinn Fein & the British Government**. Eamon de Valera as President of Sinn Fein was invited to London by British PM, Lloyd George for peace negotiations. Sinn Fein wanted an **Irish Republic** for all Ireland & the British offered a **divided Ireland** with 6 counties of Northern Ireland & 26 counties of Southern Ireland. **Both would have separate Parliaments**. Furthermore, Southern Ireland would be part of the British Commonwealth, with Northern Ireland remaining in the United Kingdom. Summer talks failed & restarted in November with **Michael Collins** and **Arthur Griffith** replacing de Valera. An **Anglo-Irish Peace Treaty** was signed on December 6 1921, with the Irish delegation largely accepting the British terms.

The Stage was set for the **Irish Civil Wars** between **Pro- and Anti- Treaty** members of both **Sinn Fein** and the **IRA**. **Importance: If the Irish National Government had not succeeded in winning the Civil War, Great Britain would have been forced to reoccupy all of Ireland. Conflict with the USA and Chaos in Europe would have resulted from the new British War in Ireland.**

Each Page is a Separate Chapter with its own **Time Line** and the Exhibit is Organized on **8 Double Pages** as Follows:

- o Introduction: The IRA and Sinn Fein
- o Setting the Stage, Lloyd George versus Eamon de Valera versus Michael Collins
- o The Civil War between the IRA and various Military Forces in Northern Ireland
- o Political Divisions deepen in the 26 counties of Southern Ireland from January to June 1922
- o The Irish Civil War Begins in Southern Ireland -- The Battle for Dublin June 28 to July 5 1922
- o The Civil War Spreads to the Rest of Southern Ireland -The IRA Captures Several Cities & Attacks Railways
- o Irish Civil War Enters Guerilla War Phase - IRA Versus National Government - Raids on Post Offices & Censorship of Mail
- o Epilogue: The Civil War Ends 28 April 1923 -- The Reconstruction Begins

The Material reads from left to right on the Top Row & then left to right on the bottom row.

Scarce & interesting material is shown with a **Green Background**

- Indicates social or political information with important information shown in **Bold Black Italics**
- > Indicates philatelic information and **important information** is shown in **Bold Green Italics**

Padraig Pearse 1879 -1916

One of the Leaders of the 1916 Rebellion
He Proclaimed Ireland a Republic during the Rebellion
 President of the Republic during the Rebellion
 Executed by the British Army, 3 May 1916

- > **Padraig Pearse Shown on an ERIE Post Political Label used in Dublin Feb 12 1922**

> 8 different labels said to have been printed in ERIE PA (USA), in 1919 during Eamon de Valera, Sinn Fein fundraising USA tour.
 > Labels show de Valera, Irish Harp & 6 of 15 executed 1916 Leaders.
 > **None of the labels were known used or on Cover until 2020, when one set was found used on 8 individual covers mailed in Dublin Jun to Feb 1922. I own all 8 covers**

-- Sinn Fein did not participate in the 1916 rebellion but filled the political void in Ireland after the 1916 Leaders were executed
 -- **Both Pro- & Anti- Treaty Sinn Fein members claimed Pearse as their Patron during the Irish Civil War**

IRA Censored Cover from Belfast to the Middle East

-- The IRA raided Post Offices & Trains starting Jan 1919 looking for cash & Military intelligence.

- > **One of 5 IRA censored covers that I have seen addressed to Middle East**



Back of cover Cancelled Army Letter Office London 4 Jan 20



Introduction:

The IRA and Sinn Fein

Sinn Fein Philatelic Fundraising Post Card

> Sinn Fein founded by **Arthur Griffith** in 1905, discovered a good source of funds was to sell **political stamps to philatelists**

> Celtic Cross Postcard printed by Valentines in Scotland. The Card has the blue Celtic Cross stamp printed for Sinn Fein in 1916 & Sinn Fein, Manchester (UK) Martyrs fundraising Label.

> The address side of card says: **"This is the Genuine article... Exceedingly scarce but I am very pleased I was able to get you this one"**

-- **Arthur Griffith (1871-1922)**
 He was the first President of the 1922 Provisional Government of the Irish Free State

