

# Was the Treaty of Limerick Signed on the Treaty Stone?

Eyewitness accounts of the 1691 siege and Treaty of Limerick state that the Treaty was signed in General Ginkle's tent in the English camp on the Clare side of the Shannon, leading to the dismissal of the tradition that it was signed on the Treaty Stone as a myth. In this article, published in pamphlet form in 1942, A.J. O'Halloran put a plausible explanation for the tradition - that the military articles of the Treaty were signed on the stone by the French commanders of the Irish army, while the civil articles were signed in the tent as described by the eyewitnesses.

## PREFACE

Of recent years there has been a marked tendency on the part of writers who have occasion to refer to the Treaty Stone, to treat the story attaching to it as being apocryphal. This attitude I, in common with many others who believed in the tradition respecting it, regretted and resented. Feeling that an effort should be made to put on record all the relevant facts that could be gleaned about the matter, I set myself to the task, and the conclusions I arrived at were published in the "Limerick Leader" in September, 1934. Since then I have devoted further thought and study to the subject, and I now present in this brochure the arguments in favour of the acceptance of the tradition. Whether I have succeeded in my object, is for the reader to judge. ...

With reference to the map of the Thomondgate district, it should be noted that while the county or shire system is a comparatively modern innovation, introduced by the English, and bearing little or no relation to the ancient territorial divisions, it is popularly assumed that the Shannon is properly the line of demarcation between the Counties of Limerick and Clare. Hence though an area of some 430 square acres on the northern shore is included in the City, and about 3,261 square acres in the County of Limerick, it is usual to regard these districts as being comprised in the County of Clare.

I desire to express my very sincere gratitude to Mr. T.F. O'Sullivan, B.E., Harbour Engineer, Limerick, not only for the invaluable assistance he rendered in the compilation of technical details, but for the very helpful interest he displayed in the matter generally. I must also thank Mr. E. Barry, B.E., Assistant City Engineer, Limerick, for the map of the Thomondgate

by A.J. O'Halloran

*district, based on that of the Ordnance Survey, and which he prepared specially for this brochure.*

A.J. O'Halloran, Limerick, March 1942.

*"At the further bank stands the so-called 'Treaty Stone,' an object of undeserved sentiment and interest. The Treaty of Limerick was signed in a house on the Clare side of the river, on a table which was long preserved. No tradition attaches to the 'Stone,' which was used as a mounting block, and which lay near its present location beside the roadway."*

I have prefaced this treatise with the above-quoted excerpt from No. 7 of the Antiquarian Handbook series issued by the Royal Society of Antiquarians of Ireland, published in 1916, and which purports to be a guide to the antiquities of Limerick. I have done so, since in thus contemptuously dismissing the claim for the authenticity of the tradition connecting the "Stone" with the Treaty of 1691, the compilers of this booklet afford us - as I propose to prove - a striking instance of how little reliance can be placed on such dogmatic pronouncements. A humorist defined a historian as "a man who knows what ain't so," and most certainly in that sense the gentlemen responsible for this very sweeping statement are deserving of the very highest academic honours as historians!

It is only fair to point out that though these booklets are issued by the Royal Society of Antiquarians, they do not carry the imprimatur of that Body, because it expressly stated that the Council of the Society do not hold themselves responsible for the statements and opinions expressed therein. It is perhaps as well that the disclaimer should appear as regards this particular publication, since within its narrow limits, the extract I have quoted contains as many misstatements as would discredit a large volume. As, for instance, when it is stated unequivocally that "No tradition attaches to the Stone." We shall see what other and more reliable authorities have to say about that matter.

In their History of Limerick, Fitzgerald and McGregor state (Vol. 2, page 373):- "This celebrated document, which decided the fate of Ireland, is said to have been signed on a large stone not far from Thomond Bridge, and in sight of both armies." This history was published in 1827, and we can rest assured that the

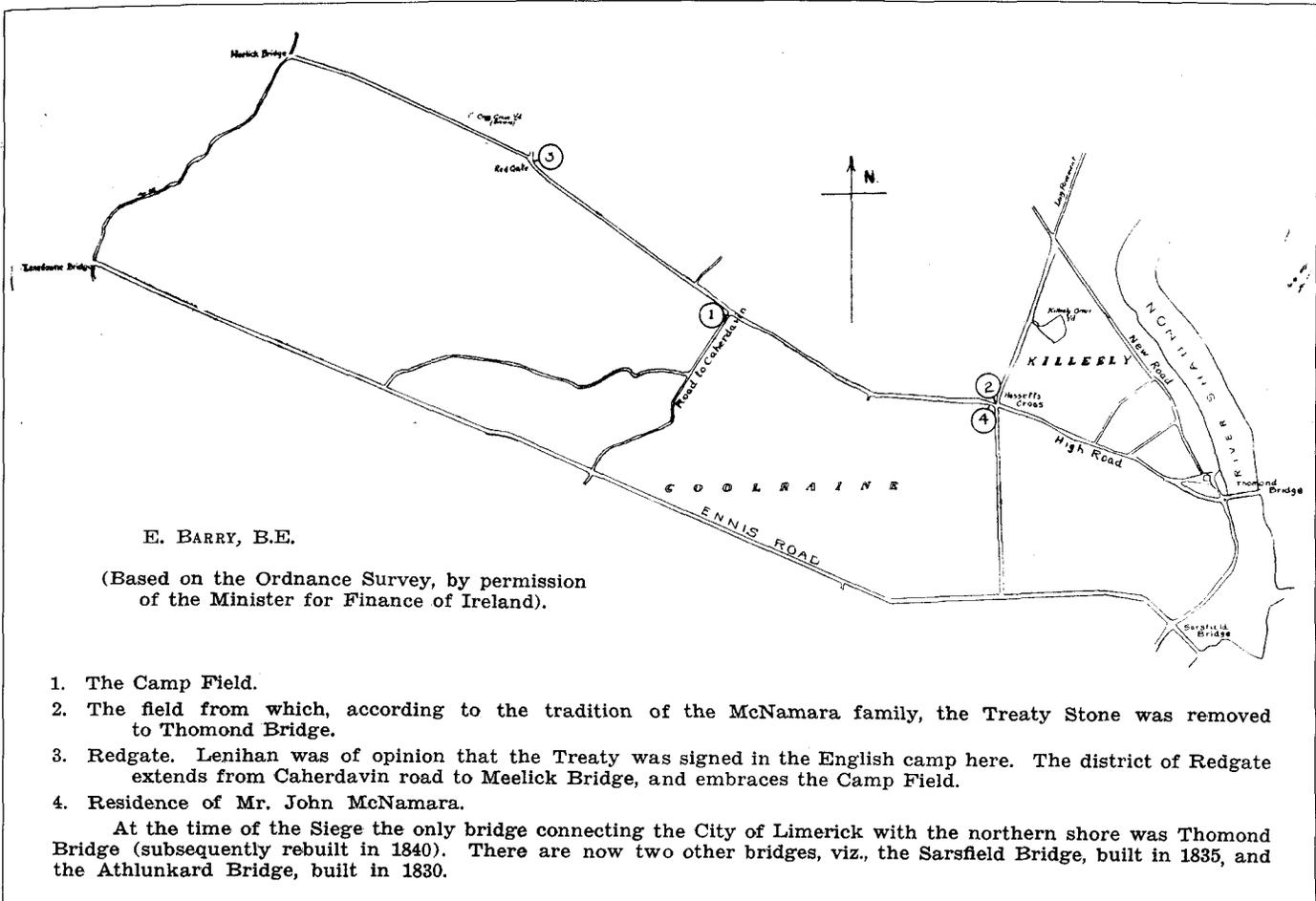
authors would not have committed themselves to this statement unless they were satisfied that there was a tradition connecting the "stone" with the Treaty. The Rev. Mr. Fitzgerald was a clergyman of the Church of Ireland, and at that time the history was written, Vicar of Cahircorney, in the Diocese of Emly. He was born near Bruff, Co. Limerick. McGregor, a native of Limerick city and a journalist by profession, would appear to have been a man of brilliant parts, inasmuch as at the age of 19 he was editor of a Methodist weekly journal, and amongst other literary works wrote a history of the French Revolution.

Lenihan's references to the Stone are still more significant. On page 271 of his history appears the following foot-note:- "The Treaty is said to have been signed at or near Redgate, within a mile from the city at the Clare side. Tradition does not admit that it was signed on what has been called the 'Treaty Stone' which occupied a place on the north side of Thomond Bridge for many years, and which was originally a stone used by country people for getting on horses when leaving the city."

Probably it was in this note that the compilers of the "Guide to the Antiquities of Limerick" relied when they made the statement quoted, but they should have pursued their researches a little further, because on page 678 of his history Lenihan has another note:- Of the Treaty Stone itself we speak with some hesitation, for this is mentioned in none of the old historical documents, and yet the uninterrupted local tradition is that the treaty was signed on it."

It is very easy to account for Lenihan's change of attitude in the matter of tradition. When the earlier sheets of his history had gone through the press he would naturally have submitted them to competent authorities for revision, and was, doubtless, advised that his previous pronouncement was not in accordance with fact. Hence his belated admission as to the "uninterrupted local tradition."

On page 525 of the history Lenihan records that on April 12<sup>th</sup>, 1863:- "In a meeting held at Thomondgate, it is resolved to enclose the Treaty Stone." I regret that the available files of any of the local newspapers for that period do not carry an account of this meeting, but I understand that the late Mr. John Goggin, who was licensee of the premises known then as the Treaty Tavern, and now as the Treaty Bar, took a prominent part in the movement to erect the Treaty monument. The following extracts from the minute



book of the Corporation of Limerick for the years 1864 and 1865 give the sequel: "At a meeting on the 3<sup>rd</sup> November, 1864, Eugene O'Callaghan, Mayor, in the Chair.

"Application from Committee of Treaty Stone to aid them in the expenses attending on railing in, etc., the 'Treaty Stone.'

"It was proposed by Alderman Cullen, seconded by T. C. Ryan, and carried unanimously:-

"Resolved-That it be referred to Mr. Corbett to report generally on the work to be done to the 'Treaty Stone,' and expenses attendant on it."

"At the meeting on the 12th of January, 1865, John R. Tinsley, Mayor, in the Chair.

"The City Surveyor brought up his report and plan for a pedestal for the 'Treaty Stone' at a cost of £85.

"The following resolution was proposed by T. C. Mulcahy, seconded by T. C. Ryan, and carried unanimously :-

"Resolved - That the plan be adopted, and that advertisements for tenders in accordance with Mr. Corbett's specification be inserted in the newspapers for the next meeting, the Council not to be bound to accept any tender."

I have set down these extracts exactly as they appear in the Council minute book, and it will be noted that apparently there was no difference of opinion amongst the members as to the authenticity of the tradition, since at both meetings the resolutions dealing with the erection of the pedestal were carried unanimously and without discussion. This is all the more significant because at that

period the members of the Corporation were elected on a limited franchise, and were generally elderly, shrewd, level-headed men of affairs, who were not to be swayed into foolish action by ill-founded enthusiasm; nor, indeed, could it be said that as a body they were animated by very extreme national ideals, inasmuch as they seemed to avail of every or any pretext to present addresses, couched in the most dutiful terms of loyalty, to the late Queen Victoria, to her son the then Prince of Wales, and to every Viceroy on his arrival in Ireland, and on his departure from our shores. Their action in this particular matter is then all the more impressive, as it proves that they accepted the tradition without question.

Here now is an instance of how the tradition was carried on orally to our own time. When I was collecting data on this subject in 1934, there lived in a house in the street called Old Thomondgate, not three yards distant from where the Stone lay previous to being placed on the pedestal, an old and respected citizen in the person of Mr. James Connery, who for many years was a member of the Corporation of Limerick. He had in that year attained the patriarchal age of 88 years (he died in 1935. R.I.P.) but his intellect was seemingly as clear as if he were but forty years old. In proof of this I may mention that when during the course of my interview with him, I referred to the contractor for the erection of the pedestal, Mr. Connery without one moment's hesitation stated that he was a Mr. J.

Connery; a fact that I was able to verify from the Corporation records. Mr. Connery was born behind the old church of St. Munchin, in a house about one minute's walk from Thomond Bridge, and having lived in the immediate vicinity all his life, was consequently in a position to speak with authority on certain aspects of the matter, as for instance the location of the 'Stone' and the use that was made of it previous to the erection of the monument. I should add that, personally, I would have the utmost confidence in any information vouched for by him, and for this reason. Some time before that I was gleaming material on another matter, and was advised by an old citizen to approach Mr. Connery "as he would be sure to know all about it." In due course I did call and explain my mission. Mr. Connery told me very frankly that he knew no more about the subject than what was common knowledge. Experience in research work of this nature has taught me that while reliance can be placed on any item of information received from such a source, one should, as a rule, have very little confidence in the voluminous recollections volunteered by a person who professes to know everything about any particular subject.

Mr. Connery expressed amazement that anyone should question the truth of the tradition. From his childhood onward he believed that the Treaty had been signed on the Treaty Stone. He had been told so by people who were old when he was a boy, and he never heard any

suggestion to the contrary expressed.

It might be mentioned at this point that until a comparatively recent period the people of Thomondgate formed a distinct community, who rarely intermarried with people from, or changed residence to any other of the city districts, so that naturally they were in a position to carry on a tradition.

The foregoing evidence, I consider, effectually disposes of the very bald statement that "No tradition attaches to the Stone."

Now let us examine the allegation that the Stone "was used as a mounting block" and "lay near its present position beside the roadway." The latter expression would convey the idea that it lay on the verge of the footpath, which, of course, would be the proper position for a mounting block. But did it?

The premises known as the Treaty Bar originally consisted of three separate dwellings, of which the one at the western end was licensed. Underneath the window of this establishment about two feet from the corner, and sufficiently distant from the shop front, as to permit a man to pass between them, the "Stone" lay. Mr. Connery indicated the exact spot, and there are old inhabitants of Thomondgate alive to-day who can confirm the statement. And so the "beside the roadway" story will not pass muster.

When I questioned Mr. Connery with regard to the assertion that the "Stone" had been used as a mounting block, he stated in the most emphatic manner that he had never known it to be used for that purpose, and expressed the view that if it had been intended for, or adapted to that use, he would surely have become aware of it. The only manner in which he ever saw it utilised was when some poor person carrying a load of heather, or agricultural produce from the Clare hills, would rest against it so as to adjust the burden. Mr. Connery pointed out that situated as it was, on the footpath, some eighteen inches from the housefront, and about twenty-four inches from the corner of Old Thomondgate, it could not possibly have been intended as a mounting block. That it may have been so used on a few occasions is quite possible, but that would not justify the declaration that it was procured or intended to that end. So I fancy that the mounting block theory will not stand scrutiny.

Before proceeding further, it would be well to consider what significance can be attached to Lenihan's original statement relative to the Stone; especially having regard to the fact that he was seemingly the first authority to express, in the printed word, doubt as to the truth of the tradition.

Though in some respects not an ideal one, Lenihan's is, perhaps, the most monumental local history ever published in Ireland or Great Britain, and it is to be recorded to his credit that it was no mere compilation, since there exists indisputable evidence that much of the matter in it resulted from original research on his

part. It must, at the same time, be admitted that he lacked to a degree the quality of explicitness.

Take, for instance, his assertion "that tradition does not admit that it (i.e., the Treaty) was signed on what has been called the 'Treaty Stone'." The Treaty Stone monument was erected in 1865, while his history was published in 1866. Now, since it was the strength and power of the tradition that caused the pedestal to be built and the Stone placed thereon, it is certain that he could not have meant what his words seem to imply. What he really intended to convey was that he did not consider that tradition worthy of credence; and in this connection it should be noted that he attributes his lack of faith in it to the absence of documentary evidence.

Now consider his statement that the Stone "occupied a place on the north side of Thomond Bridge for many years." The present bridge runs practically due east-west, as did the old one. The exact meaning then to be derived from his words is that the Stone lay in the passageway of the bridge, and at the northern side of it. But if this were to be taken as referring to Old Thomond Bridge, it would be a sheer absurdity, because, as I have pointed out elsewhere, that was a very narrow structure, so much so, indeed, that recesses were provided at intervals, in which pedestrians could take refuge to save themselves from injury by vehicular traffic. Clearly there could be no place on it for the Stone. Nor could the reference be intended for the present Bridge, because Mr. Connery stated, that from his earliest childhood, he remembered the Stone as being situated at the corner of Old Thomondgate. Obviously, then, the idea that Lenihan sought to impart was, that previous to it being placed on the pedestal, which stands near the western end of the Bridge and at its southern side, the Stone lay on the spot indicated in the photograph, and which is near the western end of the Bridge, but at the northern side of it.

There is something almost puerile in the assertion that the Stone "was originally used by country people for getting on horses when leaving the city," since at the period Lenihan was referring to, the business hub of Limerick was situated in the Irishtown, which by its nearest point of approach was more than a half mile distant from the Bridge. Thus it would be straining credulity to an extravagant extent to expect us to believe that when the Clare farmer had transacted his affairs in the former quarter, he ceremoniously led his steed through the intervening thoroughfares for the express purpose of using the Stone as a mounting block.

We now come to the assertion that "the Treaty of Limerick was signed in a house on the Clare side of the river." It would be interesting to learn from what source the compilers of this so-called Guide derived this tit-bit of information. It is curious that Lenihan, who ignored no authority on the history of Limerick, notes that: "History states that the Treaty was signed in the

camp." In this he seemingly adopts the account given by the Rev. George Story, who in the capacity of chaplain to a regiment in the English army, was present at the siege, and who in his "History of the Wars in Ireland" (page 238) states: "The 3rd October most of the Irish officers come again, and dining with the Duke of Wirtimberg, they all went afterwards to the General's tent, where he following articles were interchangeably signed." I will revert to this matter later, but in the meantime I should like to emphasise that there does not seem to be the least justification for the statement that the fateful document was signed in a house.

Then there is the question of the table "which was long preserved" (for nearly 170 years) and then vanished from mortal ken. The compilers of the Guide seem to have no doubt whatever but that the Treaty was signed on it. In all probability this was the table that Lenihan referred to as follows (page 271):- "The *Cork Freeholder* of Monday, 11th July, 1814, says that the late Miss Dobbin, of Brown Street, had in her possession the table on which the Treaty of Limerick was signed; and which was about to be auctioned off on the decease of the above lady," and he again refers to it on page 678:- "In fact a table was advertised a year ago (1865) for sale in Cork, which it was stated was the identical table on which the Treaty was signed."

We may assume that the latter table was the one put up for auction on the death of Miss Dobbin. What became of it eventually? There are always curio hunters, both dealers and collectors, who would be glad to purchase such a very interesting relic; that is, if the story attached to it by Miss Dobbin could be confirmed, but without such authentication it would only fetch its value as a table, and no more. Taking into account that it had been so "long preserved," and then vanished into the limbo of forgotten things, we must necessarily believe that proof of Miss Dobbin's claim was not forthcoming. Meanwhile it should be noted that the compilers of the Guide to the Antiquities of Limerick while flatly rejecting the tradition of an entire community, adopt without reservation or hesitation this uncorroborated story told by an old maiden lady of whom we are vouchsafed no other information than that she resided in Cork!

We will now attempt to unravel the tangled skeins of history and tradition regarding the actual signing of the Treaty. It should be premised that to a very great extent recorded history rests on tradition, so much so indeed, that if the latter were to be rejected absolutely, histories could be issued in editions of vest-pocket dimensions. Very often it would appear as if fact and tradition could not be reconciled; had completely drifted apart, but in reality they are rarely if ever divorced. Thus no person of sense would assume that this tradition originated as a mere flight of fancy on the part of some imaginative person, who beholding the



**Treaty Bar in 1942 showing approximately where the Treaty Stone stood before the erection of the pedestal.**

Stone exclaimed:- "Lo! here is a large stone; the Treaty must have been signed on it." No, we can be absolutely certain that in some manner the Stone must have been associated with the signing of the Treaty, otherwise the tradition could never have come into being.

When informed that the Treaty is said to have been signed on the Stone, people are apt to assume that the latter was at or near Thomond Bridge at the time of the Siege. Fitzgerald and McGregor fell into this error, and Lenihan (page 678) toys with the idea. When I enquired of Mr. Connery whether he had ever heard as to how, when or why it was brought there, he stated that he had been told it was carried there "by some Claremen, about the time the New line (i.e., New Road) was made." I might add that he could not remember having heard the reason for its transfer, nor could he offer an opinion as to where it had been previous to that.

A possible clue as to the approximate period in which the Stone was brought to Limerick is afforded by Mr. Connery's statement that it was "about the time the New Line was made." This refers to the New Road, Thomondgate, which was made in 1757. That there was a road of sorts along here by the river bank from time immemorial is certain, but as it could not be used at high tides, its level was raised, and built in accordance with the standards then obtaining. This work was chiefly done to facilitate traffic going by the Parteen causeway. Incidentally, the causeway was made in 1635. (This was probably a reconstruction. I think the causeway was originally built some time in the 11th century at the instance of one of the O'Brien family. I have failed, however, to trace the reference, which I read many years ago). The New Road was so called in

contradistinction to the High Road, which was made, or rather reconstructed, in 1638. If Mr. Connery's statement be accepted literally, it would mean that the removal took place between the years 1757-60, and it is possible that it did. However, I do not think we need put such a literal construction on those words, as the expression "about the time" in the mouths of an older generation might mean anything from one to ten, or perhaps more years. Still it would appear that the Stone must have been at Thomond Bridge for some considerable time before the end of the eighteenth century, as otherwise Fitzgerald and McGregor could not, for obvious reasons, have assumed that it was there at the time of the Siege.

In connection with Mr. Connery's remark that "some Claremen" brought the Stone to Limerick, it should be noted that though the inhabitants of Thomondgate are citizens of Limerick, people living immediately outside the Borough, if questioned as to their place of residence, will, even though their district is administered as a portion of Co. Limerick by the Limerick County Council, state that they are from Clare.

Here is another link in the chain of tradition. At the south-west corner of Hassett's Cross is situated the residence of Mr. John McNamara, an extensive farmer and a member of a very old and highly respected family. The postal address of this house is "Mayor's Stone," Limerick, because at or near this place was situated one of the original borough boundary marks. The house was built by Mr. Matthew McNamara, great grandfather of the present owner, about one hundred and forty years ago. Previous to that the family resided at Coolraine in a house the ruins of which were to be seen

up to a few years ago, and which was just the proverbial stone's throw from the Cross. There is documentary evidence to prove that the McNamara family were in occupation of Coolraine in 1745, and it is believed that they were living there long previous to that.

It will be recognised that this family were eminently in a position to hand on from father to son any tradition relative to the immediate locality, and Mr. John McNamara states that his father, the late Mr. Matthew McNamara, who died in the year 1936 at the age of 82 years, told him that the Treaty Stone had been taken from the field opposite their house. The greater part of this field is now enclosed as the official Rugby football playing pitch, and is known as Thomond Park. The late Mr. McNamara was a man of the highest character and most intelligent. In addition to his occupation as a farmer, he was identified for many years with commercial life in the city, where he was well known and most popular, especially in Nationalist circles.

Mr. McNamara also told his son that when the Stone was removed it was taken by way of the New Road. A glance at the map of Thomondgate will show this route to be just twice the length of the distance between Hassett's Cross and Thomond Bridge, via the High Road, and consequently there must have been some good reason influencing the men effecting the transfer to impose this extra journey on themselves. Possibly they feared that in removing the Stone they were outraging the sentiment of the people of the immediate neighbourhood. I refer to this curious fact because it affords a striking illustration of how a minute phase of a tradition helps to verify the tradition as a whole.

We shall now endeavour to ascertain whether all this evidence will help us to identify the place where the Treaty was signed. Ginkle's map of Limerick shows his headquarters camp as having been located about two miles south-west of the city. (It is probable, however, that the camp was much nearer the city, possibly not far from Rosbrien. The effective range of the ordnance of that period was little more than half a mile and the placing of the camp would be governed by that fact). But when the greater portion of his army had been transported to the Clare side of the river that camp would have been transferred with it. Where was it then placed? About half a mile west on the road from Hassett's Cross is the bohereen which leads to Caherdavin, and the field which lies immediately south-west, and at a distance of about one mile and a quarter from Thomond Bridge, is known as the Camp field. Mr. McNamara informs me that local tradition has it that the English camp was situated here.

However much the historians of Limerick in writing of the siege may have differed in some details, they are unanimous on certain points, as for example, that the French commanders and some of the Irish officers were bitterly opposed to

the capitulation of the city, and, in fact, it would appear from the *Memoirs of King James*, referred to by Fitzgerald and McGregor (page 370) that even after the disaster of the 22nd September, Sarsfield urged strongly in Council to have the struggle continued, yet in the latter stages of the negotiations it was, according to Ferrar (page 78), chiefly due to his personal influence that the Treaty was ratified. In the meantime during the truce, Sarsfield and most of the Irish officers accepted the hospitality of the English commanders. On the other hand, the French kept sternly aloof from social contact with the English. This state of affairs is quite understandable. When, and if, the terms of the treaty under discussion were agreed on, peace would reign between the English and Irish nations. It is true that it was the intention of Sarsfield and his comrades to offer their services to France, but until such time as they should have actually entered into that service, there could be no reason as to why they should not meet the English on such terms of courtesy as usage had prescribed under similar circumstances. The position of the French was entirely different, since treaty or no treaty, France would still be at war with England.

I have already quoted Story as stating that on the 3rd of October most of the Irish officers went to the English camp where, after dining with the Duke of Wirtimberg, they proceeded to Ginkle's tent and signed the Treaty. It is very significant that he states specifically that the French did not accompany them, because the Treaty consisted of two sections, namely the Civil and Military. The Civil Articles were as between Porter and Coningsby (King William's Lord Justices) and General Ginkle, on the one hand, and Sarsfield and six of the other principal Irish leaders on the other. The Military Articles were between Baron de Ginkle, Commander-in-Chief of the English army, on the English side, "and Lieut. Generals de Usson and de Tesse, Commanders-in-Chief of the Irish army, and the General Officers hereunto subscribing" on the other. Is it possible then that the French commanders were not present when a document so vital to their interests, as will appear, was being signed? And since, according to Lenihan (page 266), they actually signed these articles, the question will arise - *when, and where were these signatures subscribed?*

There were no less than twenty-nine clauses in the Military Articles, under the terms of which ample provision was made that the honour and welfare of French and Irish, officers and men, would be secured in the interval between the capitulation and their departure for certain Irish ports, and the most minute care was taken to provide for every contingency that might possibly arise during the progress of their journey to these ports of embarkation, where they were, when necessary, to be afforded free transportation overseas. No essential detail would seem to have been overlooked, and the very phrasing of the

articles suggests Gallic and Gaelic doubt of English good faith. In the attitude then of the French commanders, and some of the Irish leaders, we discover a possible clue as to how the Treaty came to be signed on the Treaty Stone.

Story tells us (page 238) that discussions relative to the Treaty continued up to midnight on the 2nd October, and though agreement had been reached, we can surmise that Ginkle would not have been altogether surprised if the morrow had brought from the beleaguered city a repudiation of the provisional bargain. Taking then into account the atmosphere of doubt and suspicion enshrouding the negotiations, what seems more certain than that both French and Irish would insist that General Ginkle should subscribe his signature to the Articles, in the light of day and in the presence of representatives of those immediately concerned. Previous to the violation of the provisions of the Civil Articles of that solemn agreement, treaties were regarded as being sacrosanct, and consequently it would only indicate mere prudence on the part of those to whom that Treaty meant so much, that it should be signed in public and in the most formal manner possible.

If that proposition be accepted, it will be a simple matter to apprehend why a certain place should have been chosen for the ceremony. As I have already explained, the Camp field is little more than one mile distant from Thomond Bridge, and the field wherein, according to the tradition of the McNamara family, the Treaty Stone stood originally, lies exactly midway between these two points. What, then, is more likely than when it was finally decided by the Irish leaders to accept the conditions offered, that arrangements would be made for delegations from the Irish and English armies to meet at this spot so as to witness the actual signing of the Treaty? This procedure would be in accordance with military usage throughout the ages.

That the Stone should have been used in the manner claimed by tradition seems capable of a very simple explanation. No one could suggest that it would have been selected of set purpose, but, if we consider all the circumstances leading up to that meeting, it will be appreciated that the arrangements for it must have been made hurriedly. Quite naturally neither side would have had the foresight to provide such a necessary adjunct as a table, and the procural of one would have entailed the dispatch of a messenger to the city or the camp. Obviously, either course would have entailed considerable delay, and so someone suggested that this stone should be utilised, and the proposal was acted on.

The chief objection to the truth of the tradition was expressed by Lenihan when he hinted that the Stone would be but a very awkward substitute for a table, and, of course, it is not easy to visualise a number of dignified gentlemen stooping one by one over this low block of stone to inscribe their signatures on the sheets of parchment whereon the provisions of the

Treaty were set out, but this objection is based on the assumption that it presented quite the same appearance in 1691 as it does now. No one, of course, is in a position to prove otherwise, but on the other hand it is possible that at the time the Treaty was signed it was more suitable for the purpose. Precious historic relics have been hacked and mutilated before and since that time, and there seems no particular reason why this Stone should have escaped the attention of the vandal. Incidentally, it is certain that some adequate motive must have animated the patriotic Claremen referred to by Mr. Connery, when they took the trouble to transport it to the city, and in all probability it was the desire to save it from further mutilation, or even, perhaps, from utter destruction. However, the size or shape of the Stone then or now does not affect the issue, and I only refer to that aspect of it as a matter of interest. (The average measurements of the Stone, which is not quite regular in shape, are: Height, 2ft. 6in.; length, 3ft.; width, 2ft.. This height compares with that of the average office or dining-room table, which is 2ft. 5<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>in.).

It is probable that there was some foundation for Story's account and in this way. Though quite a number on either side signed the Articles, there was but one name that really mattered either to the Irish or French, and it was that of Ginkle. Not only was he Commander-in-Chief of the English army, but, according to Ferrar (page 78) he had been invested with plenipotentiary powers. Hence when his name and possibly those of King William's Lord Justices had been subscribed in the manner suggested - and there is no reason to believe that he, at least, did not do so in all good faith - both Irish and French felt satisfied that the provisions of the Treaty would be honoured. de Usson and de Tesse having added their signatures, the French and those of the Irish leaders who had been opposed to the capitulation, might have withdrawn to the city, while as an act of courtesy "Sarsfield and most of the Irish officers," as Story puts it, would have accompanied the English to the camp, there to append their names under more convenient conditions.

As regards tradition generally, it should be considered what a long span of years can be covered by three lives. Thus relative to the Treaty Stone tradition, it will be realised that a man who was an actual eye-witness of the signing of the Treaty, being at the time twenty-one years of age, and who lived to be seventy years old, could have related the details to people who lived to reach the age of three score and ten in 1800. These in turn would have repeated the story to many who were to witness the placing of the Stone on its pedestal in 1865. And since scores of Limerick lives must have covered this period of one hundred and seventy-four years, it is easy to account for the strength and persistence of the tradition; a tradition so well-founded as to be practically unassailable.