

the famine days sixteen years after Catholic emancipation, made a similar remark as to what caused the Famine when

county councillors (LL 10/4/04; free parking in Abbeyfeale will come as a cost) in their efforts to maintain and increase

County Council. In your paper of May 18, 2002, you carried a report by Norma Prendiville headlined: "Report highlights access prob-

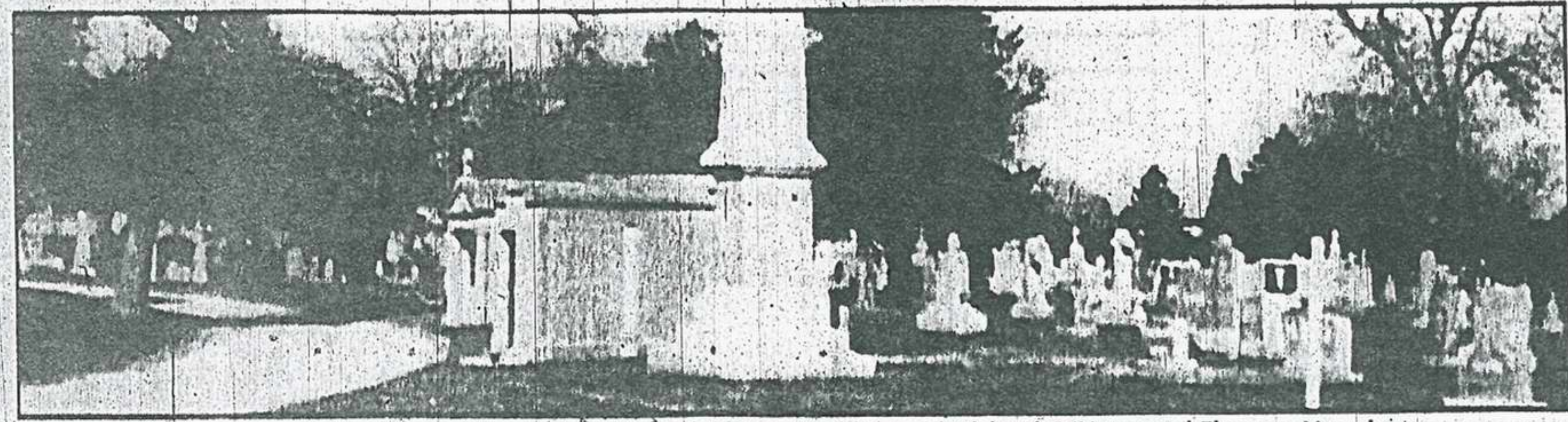
young Labour representative who claimed during the recent Labour Party conference that 'they say we are all the same, they

out at all costs, and 'Catholic' super-abortionist John Kerry. In I wonder why? This is also the line of RTE. For all his

there is a sea change for their present culture of death (and hell) policies. Political correctness does not free a party from

protected. FRANK O'MEARA, No. 2 Newline Road, Quin, Co. Clare

Limerick heroes of the Boer War remembered



The memorial in Chicago honouring Limerick's Boer War heroes, Michael O'Hara and Thomas Naughton

Run for it lads and warn the others.

THOSE were the last words of Michael O'Hara before he was gunned down in a surprise attack by the British near Bergendal Dalmanutha in Transvaal, South Africa, August 28, 1900, during the Anglo-Boer War.

Thomas Naughton from Castle Roberts, Adare, was also killed in the skirmish together with others including Michael Egan, the three men were part of the Irish American Volunteers or the Chicago Ambulance Corps, who joined Mac Bride's Brigade in the Boer War in South Africa known as the Irish Transvaal Brigade.

Thomas Naughton's mother was Hickey, and came from near the Kilmoeby area close to the home of Mlo Hara. Thomas Naughton family were evicted from their home in Castle Roberts in the 1890's, as were other families in the Adare area around the same time.

Thomas emigrated to Chicago to his sisters who were living there Tess Dicks, and Cis Peytson, first cousins of my grandfather. In the 1930's his sisters used to visit our home and often spoke of their brother who was killed in the Boer War and that his name was put on a monument in Chicago. Their parents grave was also in Adare.

In Chicago Mass, the Irish Americans were recruited by the clan na

Gael. As the Boers had no outlet to the sea the only way the Irish Americans could land in the Portuguese territory of East Africa was as an ambulance corps and by swearing they would not take up arms. It was the only way they could assist the Boers in their fight against the British.

There were about 47 men including four to five medical doctors. Some of the men had already fought in the Spanish American War.

The corps arrived March to April. The Boer War was well under way (1900). Capt. O'Connor at the helm of the Irish Americans. Most of the men took off their Red Cross arm bands and requested to take up arms. They were met by 2nd in command Col. Blake, and were presented to President Kruger of South Africa.

The Irish Transvaal Brigade were delighted with the reinforcements.

John Mac Bride toasted Wolfe Tone and his comrades at 1898 celebrations held in Johannesburg by The Irish Forrosters Association, he called all the Irish men to arms in defence of Boer freedom. To fight the English at last in a field of battle face to face. He called the Irishmen working in the mines to arms in South Africa. They all had one thing in common — they hated the British. Not all the men were Irish.

Most of these men never held a gun or rode a horse, and had little discipline. But they were experienced in the use of dynamite. The Brigade numbered about 250 men under Blake, an American 2nd in command John Mac Bride.

The Boers had been living in South Africa for two generations. Kruger

was their president, a man of the Bible. Those were people who liked the wide open spaces.

In 1886 gold was discovered on the Witwatersrand, the greatest goldmine in the world had been found. It was the quantity of gold that was important rather than the quality, and there was a shortage of gold in the world economy.

British prospectors had moved into the area, but President Kruger had control over the output of the mines. The Boers needed a certain amount of income from the mines to survive, and that is how they wanted the mines worked.

On October 6, 1898, on the anniversary of Parnell's death the Irish Transvaal Brigade started for the front. Under the green flag of the failed Connate rising 1867.

The flag of the brigade

was carried by Tommy Oates of Killarney one of the first to be killed at Ladysmith. There was great sadness at his death, he never knew he had been hit. His father later on joined up with Lynch's Brigade, the Brigade were not always present as a body, but individual members took part in the battles.

They often held up advancing forces by blowing up bridges and lines of communication. On the English side, the Dublin Fusiliers were active in the Boer War, and many men joined from around the West Limerick region. The Catholic Irish gentry were beginning to launch their sons into army careers including the Royal Irish Regiment of the British Army.

Before the battle of Colenso the Irish Brigade sent a message to the Irish fusiliers telling

them that they were anxious to meet them because they wanted to wipe them off the face of the earth. The fusiliers sent back a note in the same style. The battle resulted in severe casualties, and that week was noted by the British as a black week. It was said that some of the Fusiliers taken prisoner had been to school with members of the Brigade at Dundee.

The Boers were losing the war — the tide had turned. After Bergendal Dalmanutha, August 1900, many of the Brigade were lucky to escape with their lives unlike Michael O'Hara, Tom Naughton, Michael Egan and others. Some members of the Brigade had already been taken prisoner to Ceylon like Capt. James Laracy of Kilkenny, the Brigade had lost all their horses and disbanded concentration camps emerged. By September 1900 the

Guerrilla campaign was in full swing under another master known as de Wet whose secretary was another Limerick man named Capt. O'Donnell.

The war of the million acres came to an end with the treaty of Vereeniging, May 1902. Many of the Boers broke their rifles in protest. The Rand Mines had already started in 1901. Johannesburg Stock Exchange reopened.

The Irish American volunteers returned home to the USA. Together with CIA in Gael, they erected the monument in Mount Carmel Cemetery Chicago to the memory of Michael O'Hara and Thomas Naughton, who died in South Africa during the Boer War.

Major John Mac Bride went to Paris and met Maud Gonne. They were married in 1903 by Fr. Var Hecke, chaplain of the Brigade under the flag of the Irish Brigade. The ex-state secretary, Mr. Reitz brought the flag of the Brigade from Pretoria or it he had written:

*Though many a sigh and tear it cost,
For those who rose to freedom's call,
It was better to have fought and lost,
Than never to have fought at all.
50,000 Boers against 450,000 British soldiers.
KAY NAUGHTON
Deel Nanori-Askeaton*

Please include a daytime phone number with your letter. If using e-mail, please include a postal address.

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