

Thomas Philips Vokes

Source: - "Recollections of an Irish Police Magistrate"

By Henry Robert Addison. Published by John and Robert Maxwell,
London, 1862.

The title of Major given to Vokes was a comparative rank in the table of social precedence laid down as between civilians and military men.

He was known commonly as Tom Vokes.

He boasted himself of a descent from an old French family called Vaux.

He claimed that his grandfather Sir Richard Vokes changed the spelling of his name to Vokes.

Addison's first story says Vokes, while still an unpaid magistrate, (prior to 1822) chased down and captured Captain Rock, who had waylaid and robbed Mrs Vokes just outside Patrickswell on her way to Limerick from the Vokes small paternal Estate held on lease from Vokes relative, the Earl of Carberry. (Kilcolman ?)

Capt. Rock's real name was FitzMaurice. Within two months of his capture Rock was tried, convicted and executed in Limerick City. Vokes was shortly after appointed Chief Magistrate of Police. (1822)

Quote from The Illustrated London News after the death of T.P. Vokes

"In our obituary of last month we recorded the death of Thomas Phillips Vokes, for upwards of thirty years the chief magistrate of police in Limerick, a post conferred on him for his daring courage and extraordinary exertions in putting down the rebellious attempts which threatened the south of Ireland in 1820 to 1822. Mr. Vokes, at that period a country magistrate residing on his paternal estate, single-handed and unarmed, seized the notorious Captain Rock, the terror of the whole district. During three days and nights he pursued him through the mountain fastnesses of Limerick, and at length having captured him, brought him in and lodged him in the county jail. He was soon after tried, convicted and executed. When Munster was paralysed by the murder of Major Going and others - when magistrates shrunk in natural terror, well knowing the fatal consequences of activity - when harassed authorities, worn-out troops, and ill-organised police held back from a task of no ordinary danger and toil, Thomas Phillips Vokes boldly stepped forward to put down crime, and bring the violators of the law to instant and summary punishment. He claimed descent from the Vauxes, Lords of Gilsland, and in his belief he was borne out by the fact of his grandfather, Sir Richard Vokes, having originally spelt his name Vaux. Three times were the thanks of Government tendered to this officer, accompanied (on two occasions) by substantial pecuniary marks of approval. He was the last surviving magistrate under Peel's Irish Police Act. By his death a pension of £950 a year reverts to the Government". October 1852.

Chapter Two reveals that Vokes house in Rathbane was a single story building but Addison speaks of at least two bedrooms which were located, one over the kitchen and the other over the wash house.

Chapter Three mentions a stop-over at Pilltown, Co. Waterford, where Vokes wife Anne was from. It seems that Vokes resided for some time at a mansion house called Belline immediately after his marriage to Anne Walsh. It was occupied at that time by Anne's brother who was then agent for the Earl of Besborough.

Chapter Sixteen gives the true story of the Colleen Bawn, or so claims Addison.

Chapter Nineteen mentions that T.P. had a sister living in Dublin.

See Mary Vokes = Edward Mackey in St Johns on the 9th Feb. 1812. Their son James Vokes Mackey was born in Limerick in 1819 but spent all of his life in Dublin, as a politician

Check out also a Mary Vokes born 28th Dec. 1779 the daughter of a John Vokes. She was baptised in St John's parish church. Also baptised in St. John's was a John Vokes in 1749 the son of Thomas Vokes and the brother of Andrew, who was baptised 1752. Could one of these two brothers be the father of T. P.? Note the naming pattern, T.P. being named after his grandfather.

Chapter Twenty-two says that T.P. had a near relative called Sir R. F. _____ who was also T.P.'s medical adviser. Is this Sir Richard Franklin perhaps? Rebecca Vokes by her marriage with Henry Woodburne had a son also Henry who married Amelia (Jane) Franklin, Sir Richards daughter. Could Rebecca be a sister to T. P.?

Chapter Twenty-six contains the reference to Mr Woodbourne, as Addison spells it, in the context of Woodbourne signing a committal order and confining a person to the County Jail.

*Noel Murphy - ~~38823A~~
Castletroy*