

Arrest of the McNamara Brothers during the 1916 Rebellion

by John Curtin

On the Wednesday of Easter week two McNamara brothers from Knocknaboula, Loughill West, County Limerick were arrested in Mooney's Bar in Parnell Street, Dublin.¹ They were both taken away and they later alleged that money and valuables were taken from them by the soldiers who arrested them.

John McNamara was a clerk at Mr. O'Carroll's, drapers in Bray, County Wicklow² and he claimed that he was leaving on his holidays when he was arrested and was bringing home £9 10s to his father. He also claimed the soldiers took a watch, a girl's wristlet watch, and a gold medal. Following his arrest he was sent to Wakefield Prison in England where he was detained for six weeks.

Thomas McNamara was sent to Dublin by his father, on the Friday before Easter, to be educated. He was described as a boy of about 15 years.³ He claimed the soldiers took £3 10s. and a watch and chain from him when they arrested him. He was then taken to Richmond Barracks and detained there for four weeks, although he took no part in the Rebellion, and was afterwards sent home.

On 27 July 1916, Patrick Joseph O'Shaughnessy M.P. for West Limerick raised the matter as a Parliamentary Question at Westminster.⁴ He outlined the facts of how the two brothers were arrested and had money and valuables seized from them.

He asked the Secretary of State for War⁵ if the two McNamara brothers would be compensated for the loss of their money and valuables.

Mr Henry Forster, deputising for the Secretary of State for War, replied that as soon as the reports were received, the Under-Secretary of State⁶ would send a statement regarding the case.

The fallout from the general confusion that was widespread in the aftermath of the Rebellion meant that it was unlikely that the complaint by the brothers received much attention.

Both brothers emigrated to the United States. Thomas, the younger of the two, married Teresa Gilmartin and had four children. He died in New York in 1942.⁷

(Endnotes)

1. Mooney's public house is trading today as 'The Parnell Heritage Pub and Grill' at 72-74 Parnell Street, Dublin.
2. According to the *Sinn Fein Rebellion Handbook*, Carroll's Drapers traded at 114, Main Street, Bray, County Wicklow.

3. The 1901 and 1911 Census returns indicate that Thomas was between 18 and 19 and his brother John was 23 years old in 1916. The father is listed as Thomas and his wife Julia died between 1901 and 1911.
4. HC Deb 27 July 1916 Vol 84 cc1879-81W1879W David Lloyd George http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/written_answers/1916/jul/27/war-office-questions-awaiting-reports
5. After Earl Kitchener was drowned at sea David Lloyd George succeeded him as Secretary of State for War.
6. From July, 1916, the title of Civil Member of the Army Council lapsed and that of Under-Secretary of State was substituted. From July to December, 1916, and again from April, 1919, until a short time after the Armistice, the Under-Secretary of State acted as the deputy to the Secretary of State in all matters affecting administrations.
7. *Limerick Leader* 30 March 1942.



The Parnell Mooney, Dublin, where the McNamara brothers were arrested.