



## Decade of Centenaries grant report

Recipient name:	Aidan Doyle
Amount and year awarded:	€3,000 in 2022
Title of project:	'A Revolution in Profiles' 101 lives from Offaly's revolutionary

### Summary of project:

The creation of a free access website profiling people from Offaly or with connections to the county and detailing their experiences during the revolutionary decade. Although the two projects are not comparable in scale or ambition, 'A Revolution in Profiles' takes some inspiration from the Royal Irish Academy's 'Dictionary of Irish Biography'.

Subjects include Offaly's 1916 veterans, members of the RIC from the county who were killed elsewhere in Ireland during the War of Independence, Police deployed to Offaly during the conflict, civilian casualties of violence, members of the Cuman na mBan and the National Army.

The profiles are designed to provide concise, readable and informative accounts of a pool of individuals representing the varied political, geographical and class differences that existed. Where possible, census data was used to provide information on the background before the Revolutionary Decade and, where applicable, information included on their post-conflict lives.



### Objectives of the project:

To apply micro-history to examine the event of 1912-1923 in Offaly and beyond.

Offaly is a small but diverse county. At the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, in addition to agricultural farmland of very different quality, there were industrial hubs at Clara and Edenderry, a military town in Birr and the



## Decade of Centenaries grant report

county town at Tullamore with a prosperous Catholic business class; the profiles hope to examine the similarities and differences that existed across the county.

That the project allow other researchers a greater understanding of the varied sources available to examine the area and period.

That by making the website free access, there would be a greater dissemination of information to the general public.

To explore the role of women in society and the conflict, be that as republicans, civilians caught up in the fighting or landholders.

To examine the international dimension, in Britain, South America and Asia.

To examine organisations such as the RIC and National Army and gain a greater understanding of their membership.

The main aim is to promote future research from other scholars who can build on the modest beginnings of the website.

### Methodology used in conducting the research:

The project is qualitative in nature. The site is essentially 101 Micro History profiles which attempts to give the reader a greater understanding to the class, political, sporting and geographical background of the person being profiled and through a cumulative effort give a better picture of the time and place through which they lived.

This builds on the extensive research of existing literature published on the period by historians such as Michael Byrne, Philip McConway, Pádraig Heavin, PJ Goode, Paddy Heaney, Ciaran Reilly etc. Along with information published by county councils and historical societies of the commemorative period. There have been massive advances in the availability of source material, much of it online in the past 15 years and the project seeks to employ those advances. Oral histories such as those given to the Bureau of Military History are coupled with archival material from the Military Service Pension Collections, the 1901 and 1911 census and newspaper reports.

### Findings of research and milestones achieved:

101 individuals have been profiled.

Excluding referencing data, almost 60,000 words have been produced to profile a broad spectrum of people. With later additions, this figure will exceed 70,000 words. The subjects detailed within the biographies include:

- IRA activity throughout Offaly, Tipperary, Westmeath, Kildare and Dublin.
- Links to diplomatic missions, gun-running and the Connaught Ranger Mutiny
- The political dynamics around land, industrial relations, the Great War and religion.
- The role of women during the period in political leadership, local support groups, intelligence and justice.



## Decade of Centenaries grant report

- The death of Offaly born policemen in four provinces.
- The shooting of suspected spies in the escalation of hostilities over the course of the war, issues around the collapse of order in the run up to the Civil War and fatalities from the country in that conflict.
- Free access website profiling people from Offaly or with connections to the county and detailing their experiences during the revolutionary decade.

Although the two projects are not comparable in scale or ambition, 'A Revolution in Profiles' takes some inspiration from the Royal Irish Academy's 'Dictionary of Irish Biography'. Subjects include Offaly's 1916 veterans, members of the RIC from the county who were killed elsewhere in Ireland during the War of Independence, police deployed to Offaly during the conflict, civilian casualties of violence, members of the Cuman na mBan and the National Army.

The profiles are designed to provide concise, readable and informative accounts of a pool of individuals representing the varied political, geographical and class differences that existed. Where possible, census data was used to provide information on the background before the Revolutionary Decade and, where applicable, information included on their post conflict lives.

### Dissemination of the project outcomes:

The profiles are with Optimum Internet Solutions and will go online in the coming weeks, with the official county launch at Tullamore in late September.

### Lectures given/outreach activities:

I partnered with Clara Heritage to incorporate a presentation on Sean Robbins in January. I presented to Dunkerrin Society in April 'From Ranch War to Civil War: The Shootings of Sergeant Maguire and Cronin, the Moneygall connections'. I partnered with the Barrack Square website to write a piece on Patrick Lopeman. I gave an August lecture in Ferbane: 'October 1920: the escalation of the War of Independence and targeting the RIC.'

### Plans for furthering the project:

The six-part podcast featuring historians from around the county discussing some of those profiled will drop in the period of the official county launch. Kevin Doyle will interview me for two short prelude and prologue episodes. A series of lectures will occur around the county promoting the site. There are tentative agreements for talks at Birr and Edenderry and the possibility of lectures at local libraries. Twenty-nine extra profiles will be added to the site between September and the end of 2023.

### How the bursary enhanced professional development:

The experience of the bursary has allowed me to carry out a broad project that I honestly believe will benefit researchers going forward. From a personal perspective, I believe, in time, it will greatly improve my project management skills.