

The O'Rahilly

W.B. Yeats

SING of the O'Rahilly,
Do not deny his right;
Sing a "the" before his name;
Allow that he, despite
All those learned historians,
Established it for good;
He wrote out that word himself,
He christened himself with blood.

How goes the weather?

Sing of the O'Rahilly
That had such little sense
He told Pearse and Connolly
He'd gone to great expense
Keeping all the Kerry men
Out of that crazy fight;
That he might be there himself
Had travelled half the night.

How goes the weather?

"Am I such a craven that
I should not get the word
But for what some travelling man
Had heard I had not heard?"
Then on Pearse and Connolly
He fixed a bitter look:
"Because I helped to wind the clock
I come to hear it strike."

How goes the weather?

What remains to sing about
But of the death he met
Stretched under a doorway
Somewhere off Henry Street;
They that found him found upon
The door above his head
"Here died the O'Rahilly.

R.I.P." writ in blood.

How goes the weather?

Michael Joseph O'Rahilly

22 April 1875 – 28 April 1916



*Because I helped to wind the clock,
I come to hear it strike.*

O'Rahilly Commemoration

Ballylongford, County Kerry

April 11, 2015

2 PM-5PM

Jimmy Deenihan

Kerry and the 1916 Rising

Padraig O'Concubhair, Historian

O'Rahilly - Growing up in Ballylongford

Michael O'Rahilly, Grandson

Some Impressions of My Grandfather

Ruth Sweetman, Granddaughter

Michael J. O'Rahilly - Family Man, Talented Citizen and Rebel - a biographical sketch

Dr. Mark Humphrys, Great Grandnephew, Dublin City University

The Rahilly and O'Rahilly family of Sliabh Luachra and Ballylongford

Dr. Mary McAuliffe, University College Dublin

Mná Réabhlóid - The O'Rahilly women and the Revolutionary Decade, 1912-1923

Prof. Eunan O'Halpin, Trinity College Dublin

New Sources for an Old Story: The Bureau of Military History, the Military Service Pensions and the memory of 1916

Michael Joseph O'Rahilly, universally known as "The O'Rahilly" was born in Ballylongford, County Kerry in April 1875. Educated in Clongowes College, became an enthusiastic supporter of the Irish language and was a member of An Coiste Gnotha, the Gaelic League's governing body. He traveled extensively and spent at least a decade living in America, where he married before returning to Ireland in 1909 and settling in Dublin.

The O'Rahilly was a founding member of the Irish Volunteers and its Director of Arms. He personally orchestrated the landing of Germany arms on board Robert Erskine Childers' yacht *Asgard* at Howth County Dublin in July 1914.

The O'Rahilly was not a member of the Irish Republican Brotherhood, who were planning the Easter Rising of April 1916 in Dublin. The IRB went to great lengths not to inform the leaders of the Volunteers about their plans, as they were opposed to unprovoked, unilateral action. By Good Friday O'Rahilly had realised what was afoot and drove through the night around the country informing Volunteer groups in Cork, Kerry, Tipperary and Limerick that they were not to mobilize, thus largely preventing any rising outside of Dublin.

On his return to Dublin, finding that the rising was going ahead on Easter Monday, he decided to take part and drove his car to Liberty Hall and then onto the GPO which was now in flames. Along with most of his party, he was shot as he was coming up Moore Street towards a British barricade. Wounded and badly bleeding he sought shelter in Sackville Lane (now O'Rahilly Parade).

The O'Rahilly died the night of 28th April 1916.

In the days that followed the Rising, in all that remained of the burned out GPO, the shell of O'Rahilly's car was still visible. Along with all the other rubble from O'Connell Street, it was used to build the Hill 16 terrace in Ireland's largest sporting stadium, Croke Park.