

Thomas Clarke

Tomás Ó Cléirigh

Early life

Thomas Clarke was born on May 11 1858 in Co.Tipperary.His father was called James Clarke and his mother was called Mary Palmer.Thomas had three siblings and he was the second oldest.In 1865 he came to live in Dungannon, Co.Tyrone,Ireland after spending some years in Africa.That is where he grew up.

Irish Republican Brotherhood

In 1878 at the age of 20 he joined the Irish Republican Brotherhood. In 1880 he became head of the local IRB circle. In 1883 he was sent to London under the alias Henry Wilson to take part in the Finian dynamite campaign advocated by Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa one of the IRB leaders exiled in the United States. British authorities were already following those involved and Thomas was arrested in possession of dynamite.

Prison

He was tried and sentenced to penal servitude on 28 May 1883. He subsequently served 15 years in Pentoville and other British prisons.

The Easter Rising

Clarke was located at the headquarters in the GPO. Though he held no formal military rank Clarke was recognised by the garrison as one of the commanders and was active throughout the week. He was held in Kilmainham Gaol.

His death

After he was court martialed and executed by firing squad. Before his death he said 'I and my fellow signatories believe we have struck full blow for Irish freedom. The next blow which we have no doubt Ireland will hit will win through. In this belief we die happy'.