

Maurice Lenihan Papers

P4

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P4 Maurice Lenihan Papers

Introduction

The Maurice Lenihan Papers held by Limerick Archives consists of correspondence, Lenihan's research notes, and three scrapbooks kept by Lenihan himself, which consist of research material, newspaper cuttings, personnel reminiscences and other miscellaneous items. Additionally it includes a photocopy of Thomas Steele's *Practical Suggestions on the Improvement of the Navigation in the Shannon* (1828).

Maurice Lenihan was born on 5 February 1811 in St. Patrick's parish, Waterford. His father was a woollen draper of Waterford, while his mother was from Carrick-on-Suir, although her family was originally from Limerick.

In 1823 he was sent to Carlow College as a lay-student, where he showed great ability in the classics and in modern languages, though not in History. In 1831 he spent his summer holiday with a Mr. Hackett of Clonmel, a cousin, who was the editor of the *Tipperary Free Press*, and it was in this newspaper where he started his career as a journalist.

In 1833 he joined the *Waterford Chronicle* and eight years later, in 1841, he moved to Limerick to join the *Limerick Reporter*. The *Reporter* was a journal of liberal views started by Rutherford Brown in 1829. Lenihan was the editor of the *Limerick Reporter* until 1843, when he started working for the *Cork Examiner*.

His stay in Cork lasted only a few months, because by the end of 1843 he had moved to Nenagh and established his own newspaper, the *Tipperary Vindicator*. The aims of the *Tipperary Vindicator* included the disestablishment of the State Church and the repeal of the Act of Union by constitutional means. It was also in Nenagh where he married Elizabeth Spain in November 1843. Lenihan amalgamated the *Tipperary Vindicator* with the *Limerick Reporter*, which he purchased in 1849.

In 1853, he decided to enter public life as a member of Limerick Municipal Council, and from 1854 to 1887 (with the exception of two years in the sixties) he represented the Custom House Ward division. In 1870 he was made Justice of the Peace and in December 1883 was unanimously elected as Mayor of the city.

However Lenihan is probably best known as a historian. His most famous work is *The History of Limerick*, which was published in 1864. The book treats of the history of Limerick from the earliest times to the 1860's. Lenihan had been encouraged to write this history of Limerick by friends such as Patrick Leahy, Archbishop of Cashel, and the Gaelic scholar, Eugene O'Curry. The book was academically a success. Lenihan's merits as a historian were recognised by the Royal Irish Academy, when he was elected to membership in 1869. However the book was not a financial success, and contributed to Lenihan's financial difficulties at the end of his life. Indeed, before his death, he was forced to sell many of the manuscripts he had gathered when writing *The History of Limerick* and when planning to write histories of Clare and Tipperary. Many of his manuscripts were purchased by the British Museum.

He died in 1895 and was survived by his wife and four of his nine sons and daughters.

The collection held by Limerick Archives will be useful to those researching the life and career of Maurice Lenihan, his relationship with the clergy and nationalists, and his historical and journalistic writings. The collection will also be useful to those researching the history and development of local and national newspapers in nineteenth century Ireland. The first two sections consist of letters and historical sources and research notes, which are arranged chronologically. Of particular interest to those interested in local history of Limerick and Tipperary are the historical sources and research notes (P4/9-19) and the scrapbook (P4/20). Another noteworthy item is P4/14, which consists of notes and drawings relating to the chapel in Grange, Limerick. It also contains notes and newspaper cuttings on local history, and correspondence regarding local history sources. The scrapbook (P4/20) consists of newspaper cuttings and correspondence relating to historical sources and topics. The second scrapbook contained in the collection (P4/21) records Lenihan's personal memories of the nationalist politician Tom Steel and memories of Lenihan's own legal entanglements. This volume is useful not only for the information regarding Steele, but also for the insight it gives into Lenihan's personality. The scrapbook (P4/23) consists of interesting research material relating to the history of Killaloe, County Clare.

The British Museum, London holds much of the transcriptions of rare historical sources and other research material gathered by Lenihan during his lifetime. The Royal Irish Academy, Dublin holds the manuscript of Father James White on the history of Limerick, which was used extensively by Lenihan in writing *The History of Limerick*. The National Library also holds a collection of material relating to Maurice Lenihan including some of his research notes, correspondence, and scrapbooks Maurice Lenihan compiled relating to the history of the Lenihan Family. The Franciscan Library, Killiney, Dublin also holds Maurice Lenihan correspondence. Another useful source for researching the life of Lenihan are the newspaper articles he wrote, particularly the series titled 'Reminiscences of a Journalist' which appeared in weekly instalments over a period of three years in the *Limerick Reporter*, 1866-1869.

Sources : Finegan, Francis: '*Maurice Lenihan, historian of Limerick*', in *The Old Limerick Journal*, Nos. 17 – 20, 1984 – 1986.

Correspondence (1841 – 1862)

- 1

Undated

Letter from Maurice Lenihan to his father James Lenihan, relating to family matters.

2 pp
- 2

c. 28 March 1841-31 August 1841

File of letters from P.R. Barron(proprietor of the *Waterford Chronicle*)to Lenihan. Topics discussed include Lenihan resigning from his position of editor of the *Waterford Chronicle*, Barron’s career as a journalist, sale of *Waterford Chronicle* and the Dungarven musical band.

5 items
- 3

25 November 1846

Letter from John Fawcett (solicitor) to Maurice Lenihan, relating to an affidavit on behalf of his client ‘Mr. Birch’ who was injured by an article published in Lenihan’s newspaper.

3 pp
- 4

12 August 1847

Letter from John Marnell to Maurice Lenihan, requesting that an accompanying letter be published (not included).

1 p
- 5

14 October 1847-17 October 1847

File of letters from John Ryan (curator, [Cashel]) to Maurice Lenihan. Topics include the *Vindicator* and Ryan’s dispute with Dohenys and Lyttleton.

2 items

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|---|-------------------|--|------|
| 6 | 22 September 1856 | Incomplete letter from
[Murray] ‘the “sick” monkey-
patriot in a fret’ criticizing
John Cashel Hoey’s ‘weekly butchery of reputations’ in <i>The Nation</i> | 4 pp |
| | | | |
| 7 | 3 May 1862 | Letter from John [Dalton] to
Maurice Lenihan, related to
the editing and publication of

one of Lenihan’s books . | 1 p |
| | | | |
| 8 | 10 June [] | Letter from N [Bu...raune] to
Maurice Lenihan relating to
historical sources for Adare. | 2 pp |

Historical Sources and Research Notes (1759-1864)

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|----|-------------------|--|------|
| 9 | 19 September 1759 | Letter from [Sam]
Wyse(Waterford) to William
Walsh, Carrick regarding the
purchasing of casks. | 1 p |
| 10 | 22 January 1846 | Certificate in Latin from Fr.
Joseph M. Castellani to
Joseph Caning Brua[cawith] | 1 p |
| 11 | 28 September 1853 | Circular letter from Henry
Edward (Cardinal
Archbishop) with
instructions for masses. | 1 p |
| 12 | Undated | Newspaper cutting with
words of song titled 'Lines
written on the Liberation of
the Clergy'. | 1 p |
| 13 | Undated | List of priests of Limerick
Diocese who took Test Oath'.
Includes date of the oath, age
and name of the priest, parish and date of ordinance. | 2 pp |

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|----|---------|---|---------|
| 14 | Undated | Notes relating to the construction of new chapel in Grange, Limerick in 1838.

Includes sketch of the old thatch chapel of grange. | 4 pp |
| | | | |
| 15 | Undated | Notes for an address made to a Temperance Society. Discusses the history of Temperance in Glasgow. Author unknown. | 4 pp |
| | | | |
| 16 | Undated | Notes [for sermon?] on topic 'we have only to do our daily duties well to be saints'.

Author unknown. | 2pp |
| | | | |
| 17 | Undated | Notes sent to Maurice Lenihan with extracts from historical sources relating to Limerick. Includes extracts relating to Edmond Sexton and Limerick Corporation. | 2 pp. |
| | | | |
| 18 | Undated | Fragmented report with details of prison treatment in Waterford gaol, and types of offences committed. | 1 item. |

19 c.1864

incomplete printed draft of
preface to Lenihan's *The History
of Limerick*. Includes handwritten
alterations.

1 p

Scrapbook (1857 – 1875)

- 20 1857 – 1875 Maurice Lenihan's scrapbook containing miscellaneous notes, newspaper cuttings, articles and correspondence relating to various subjects including Patrick Leahy (Archbishop of Cashel), the Rock of Cashel, and historical sources. Correspondents include Patrick Leahy (Archbishop of Cashel), Cardinal Paul Cullen, Bishop Kirby and Father John O'Hanlon. Includes letter from Patrick Leahy regarding his appointment as Archbishop (30 March 1857), and material relating to Leahy's death such as obituaries, death notices and pictures of the burial. Includes correspondence with James Lenigan [Magistrate and Deputy Lieutenant for Tipperary] of Castle Fogarty 'the lineal descendent and representative of the O'Fogarty Family', regarding ownership of the original M.S. of the *Triumphalia* which had been deposited with the Most Rev. Dr. Bray, Lord Archbishop of Cashel and Emly in 1812. Includes letter referring to the publication of the *Fee-Book* of Dr Thomas Arthur (a Catholic physician who practised from 1619 until 1663) by Lenihan in the *Kilkenny Archaeological Journal* in 1867 (26 October 1868). Includes also newspaper cuttings such as 'Irish Families' and articles published by Lenihan in *The Vindicator* and *The Reporter*. Articles include 'The Abbey of the Holycross of Tipperary', 'A Visit to Scatterry Island' (26 August 1872), 'Contemporary Portrait of Luke Wadding'. Includes also material relating to The Rock of Cashel such as drawings, pictures, sketches, cuttings and notes, mainly dating from the early eighteen-seventies. Some documents in Latin.
- c. 75 pp

Reminiscences of Thomas Steele and of Libel Cases

- 21 Undated Volume recording Maurice Lenihan's personal reminiscences of Thomas Steele, and his memories of libel disputes with John Kempston (proprietor *Clonmel Advertiser*), John O'Donnell (attorney), William O' Brien and Francis Counihan. Also enclosed are various letters and printed items, which relate to legal cases discussed in the volume. Includes comments such as 'of Steele's opinion on politics there can be no mistake. Of his opinions on religion, I had my misgivings. I was shocked indeed to hear him at all times profess himself an infidel...'. In describing various disputes and libel cases, Maurice comments 'it is no degradation to make an apology; and there are very few journalists who, at sometime or other in their career have not made or received an apology...'. Includes letter from John Kempston (former proprietor of *Clonmel Advertiser*) to Maurice Lenihan, thanking Lenihan for not pursuing a libel claim against him for an article Kempston published in the *Clonmel Advertiser* with comment 'You have now, Sir, with the magnanimity of the man and the forbear some of the

Christian, waived your claim ... For this, Sir, you have my thanks and eternal gratitude' (20 March 1841)

c. 60 pp

Practical Suggestions on the Improvement of the Navigation in the Shannon (1828)

22	1828	Photocopy of ' <i>Practical Suggestions on the General Improvement of the Navigation of the Shannon between Limerick and the Atlantic</i> ', by Thomas Steele, published in London. It includes sketches and drawings.
		58 pp

Research Notes About Killaloe, County Clare

23	c.1867	Volume of handwritten research notes relating to the history of Killaloe, county Clare. Topics include oral traditions, St. Senan's Well, St. John's Chapel, remains of forts, inscriptions on church graveyards, St. Flanan's Cathedral, the Manor Mill, and legends of Lake Deiheen, and other topics . Includes sketches and poems, and related correspondence. Also includes loose material such as notes relating to the Bell of St. Patrick, Tara Brooch, and Chalice of Ardagh. Includes also printed circular from the Emigrants Protection Society (29 July 1852); copy of <i>The Tipperary Free Press</i> (30 July 1867); printed copy of the great speech of Richard O' Gorman at Cooper Institute. New York, (December 1863)
		c.100 pp