



The Funeral of

Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa

Introduction

The burial of the Fenian leader, Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa, drew thousands of people to Glasnevin Cemetery. Plans were at an early stage for a proposed Rising in Ireland and O'Donovan Rossa's death in 1915 presented an opportunity for republicans, young and old, to gather in Dublin.

Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa

- Born in Rosscarbery, Co. Cork, September 1831.
- In 1856 he founded the Phoenix National and Literary Society "for the **LIBERATION** of Ireland by force of arms".
- O'Donovan Rossa and the Phoenix Society were among the first to join the Irish Republican Brotherhood after its foundation in 1858.
- He was arrested in 1865 and sentenced to penal servitude for twenty years.
- He was freed in 1871 on condition that he would leave Ireland. He went to America and published accounts of his life including his autobiography, *Rossa's Recollections: 1838 to 1898*.
- Aged 83, he died in New York on 29 June, 1915.

The Funeral

On hearing the news, IRB **VETERAN**, Thomas Clarke, sent a telegram to America stating 'Send his body home at once'. His funeral took place on 1st August, 1915 and the funeral committee featured the names of many figures who would play a prominent role in events in the coming years.

On the day of his burial, special trains ran to Dublin. The funeral was overseen by Clarke and the IRB, and included the Irish Volunteers, the National Volunteers, Cumann na mBan and the Irish Citizen Army.

Patrick Pearse was chosen to deliver the graveside **ORATION**. Pearse was relatively unknown in 1915 but was chosen as part of the 'new generation'. Dressed in the uniform of the Irish Volunteers, he delivered one of the most famous orations in Irish History. It ended with the lines: 'They have left us our Fenian dead, and while Ireland holds these graves, Ireland unfree shall never be at peace.' In less than twelve months the Easter Rising would begin.

LITERACY LINKS

Write an explanation for each of the highlighted words on the right.

DISCUSS

1. What major event occurred in Irish History the decade after O'Donovan Rossa was born?
2. Look at the advertisement for 'Excursion from Belfast'. Is this a primary source? Explain your answer.
3. The Irish Volunteers, the National Volunteers, Cumann na mBan and the Irish Citizen Army were involved in organising the funeral. Based on your studies in class, write a short explanation of each of these organisations.

cumann na mBan.
Excursion from Belfast,
O'DONOVAN ROSSA FUNERAL,
SUNDAY NEXT, AUGUST 1st.
RETURN FARE, 4/6.

Tickets from "Irish Volunteer" Office and principal Newsagents, and at 30 Divis Street, Belfast.

"Thou art not conquered yet, dear land."



Photograph Study

Study the photograph carefully. What evidence is there to suggest that this funeral was seen as an important event? Refer closely to the photograph.



Connection

Connect the name with the correct information - the first one has been done for you.

- I. Was killed during the Irish Civil War.
- II. Was the second President of Ireland and served two terms.
- III. Ran a tobacconist shop in Dublin which was a focal point of IRB activity.
- IV. Founder of the Sinn Féin party in 1905.
- V. Opened a school named St. Enda's

Online

In 2015, on the 100th anniversary of the funeral of O'Donovan Rossa, there was a commemoration at his grave. President Michael D. Higgins attended and there was a re-enactment of Pearse's oration. Hear the opinions of many historians and see the footage of the commemoration here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d8t2bZAMoVw>

Teachers!

This footage lasts for over an hour, it contains interesting information and discussion points about the past, O'Donovan Rossa and the commemoration - it can also be viewed in snippets depending on your preference.

Did You Know?

The leaders of the 1916 Rising who were executed in Dublin were immediately buried in Arbour Hill. The only executed leader buried in Glasnevin cemetery is Roger Casement - you will learn more about this on your tour.