




# The Irish in Latin America



An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha agus Trádála  
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

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# Irish Migration to Latin America

Irish adventurers, missionaries, soldiers and settlers appear in the history of Latin America since the time of Columbus. Irish soldiers and their families, fleeing British colonisation, went into exile in Spain. The men joined Spanish armies and fought in European wars. Irish exiles availed of patronage in the royal court of Spain and served as high-ranking military officers and administrators in the Spanish Empire. They became some of the first Europeans, who were not Spanish subjects, in the American colonies.

Loyalty to the Spanish Crown saw this generation of exiles go from being oppressed in Ireland to becoming colonial administrators in the Spanish imperial world. The next generation of Creole-Irish (American-born) supported a break with Spanish rule. In the Spanish American wars of independence (1810–25) the Irish fought on both sides, with the Spanish forces but in greater numbers with Bolívar's patriot armies. Some left their mark as revolutionary heroes; others became diplomats or merchants taking advantage of economic opportunities in the new republics. There were also Irish individuals who stood out as advocates for subjugated peoples in Latin America, particularly African and indigenous Americans and women. The largest flow of migrants to leave Ireland for Latin America took place in the nineteenth century, with smaller numbers arriving through the United States. Attracted to Catholic South America, the promise of land and new opportunities, ordinary Irish emigrants joined a growing immigrant work force as artisans, farm-hands, labourers, railroad workers, seamstresses, and

washerwomen. As settlers in frontier regions, they became part of the increasing European population, particularly in Cuba and in Argentina. The sons and daughters of Irish immigrants made substantial and lasting contributions to the economic, political, social and cultural life of society in Latin America. The greatest legacy has been in Argentina. This exhibition describes the complex, varied and shared history of Ireland and different countries in Latin America, connected through migration over the centuries. In telling the life stories of Irish people, each panel reflects the diversity of experiences in different historical periods and in different countries. Most of the important characters who appear in the dramatic political and economic events on display here are men. On the centenary of Irish independence, we have arrived at a more balanced understanding of events by including the equally important role of Irish women. Their place in the history of Irish migration to Latin America needs to be told, as do the stories of thousands of emigrant lives yet to be uncovered.



# Shared Histories Independence & Nationhood

I have come to South America to practise  
the art of war in order that I might use my  
new-found skills in the liberation of  
Ireland from British rule.

*Francis Burdett O'Connor to Simón Bolívar*

**2016 marked the centenary of the rebellion of Easter 1916 in Dublin, an event that led to an independent Irish Republic in 1922. Men and women involved in the 1916 Rising believed that national democracy through self-determination and government by consent could only be achieved through full independence from Britain.**

The leaders of the Rising declared a free Irish Republic in the words of the 1916 Proclamation, which "guarantees religious and civil liberty, equal rights and equal opportunities to all its citizens". The events of 1916 set in train an unstoppable process culminating in the War of Independence and ultimately an independent Irish Republic in 1922, with six counties in Northern Ireland remaining part of the United Kingdom.

In Latin America, a fifteen-year cycle of bicentennial commemorations began in 2010, marking the processes of independence in the ex-colonies of the Spanish Empire. It will continue in

different countries throughout the region up to 2025. Coincidentally, in July 2016 Argentina celebrated the bicentenary of national independence with the signing of the Declaration of Tucumán in 1816. Ireland and the countries of Latin America share a history of European colonialism and subsequent revolutionary and independence struggles. There is much to learn by comparing common experiences of decolonisation: their positions in relation to processes of globalisation; and the entanglements of diverse ethnicities, cultures, and languages as a result of colonial histories.



# William Lamport

(1611 – 1657)

## Guillén de Lampart The Irish Zorro

William Lamport found his way into the Spanish military service, but had to leave Spain after a scandalous affair with noblewoman Ana Cano Levia, with whom he had a daughter, Teresa. The Crown sent him to Mexico with a brief to spy on Creole insurgents, but soon after he arrived Lamport took up the cause of indigenous, black and Creole populations. He began to preach radical ideas about racial equality, the abolition of slavery, and the restitution of land to the Indians and wrote what is described as the first Declaration of Independence in the Indies. Lamport was thrown into prison, accused of plotting rebellion as well as dabbling in astrology and

consorting with witch doctors. He escaped seven years later, but he continued to criticise the Spanish Inquisition and was returned to prison for a further nine years. Despite the degradations of prison brutality, Lamport railed against the Inquisitors, resisting them at every turn. He took up the cause of fellow prisoners, Crypto-Jews (Portuguese merchants of Jewish origin, living as Christians) who were also persecuted by the Inquisition. He spent his time writing revolutionary pamphlets and also left behind a remarkable collection of 918 religious psalms entitled *Regio Salterio*.



William Lamport from Wexford arrived in New Spain (Mexico) as a member of the Spanish Court in the 1630s. Accused of plotting against the state, he was imprisoned by the Spanish Inquisition. He escaped but was ultimately found guilty of heresy and burnt at the stake in 1657. Lamport is celebrated as a precursor of Mexican independence, and his statue is among a pantheon of patriots in the Monument to Independence (*Ángel de Independencia*) in Mexico City. Some biographers claim that this seventeenth-century Irishman has been immortalised by Hollywood in the fictional character of *Zorro*.



# Juan O'Donojú

(1762 – 1821)

Born in Seville to Irish parents in 1762, Juan O'Donojú, known as the "Last Viceroy" of New Spain, was in fact the Jefe Político Superior of the Viceroyalty of New Spain. Celebrated in Mexico, he was regarded as a traitor in Spain for his role in the final arbitration of Mexican independence.

Napoleon's occupation of Spain and the constitutional crisis in Madrid led to the outbreak of independence wars in Spanish America in 1810. The leaders of independence in South America came largely from the aristocracy, inspired by Enlightenment ideals. In Mexico the initial revolt came from indigenous and peasant masses, led by Catholic priest Father Miguel Hidalgo. He issued the *Grito de Dolores*, a revolutionary tract that called for an end to Spanish rule, endorsing racial equality and the redistribution of lands. Hidalgo was executed and his popular movement crushed by a coalition of royalists and Creoles refusing to share power with the lower classes.

O'Donojú arrived in August 1821 with a mandate to introduce a liberal programme to the Viceroyalty. Just weeks later he signed the Treaty of Córdoba with the conservative Mexican army officer Agustín de Iturbide. The treaty approved the Plan of Iguala, making Mexico an independent constitutional monarchy. It also gave Creoles equal

status with pure Spaniards, and Mexicans of pure or mixed Indian blood were ascribed lesser rights. O'Donojú saw this as a pragmatic solution to achieving a bloodless separation from Spain. On 28 September 1821, Mexico became a sovereign state ruled by conservatives under the self-proclaimed Emperor, Agustín de Iturbide. The empire was short-lived and in 1823 General Santa Ana set up the first Mexican republic.

O'Donojú played an extraordinary role in the achievement of Mexican independence. He became *persona non grata* in Madrid and died two months after his arrival in Mexico at the age of 59. His Spanish wife, Doña María Josefa Sánchez-Barriga Blanco, and her three sons paid the price for her husband's treason. Forbidden to return to Spain, she was left destitute once her pension of 12,000 pesos a year from the Mexican government dried up, and she died in 1842. Juan O'Donojú's body was embalmed and laid to rest in a vault under the magnificent Altar of the Kings in Mexico City's cathedral.

PLAN OF  
IGUALA

"LAST VICEROY" OF NEW SPAIN

CONSTITUTIONAL MONARCHY

TREATY OF CÓRDOBA



# The San Patricio Battalion

(1846 – 1847)



PLAZA SAN JACINTO

CLIFDEN  
JOHN RILEY

MEXICAN  
AMERICAN WAR

CHURUBUSCO

A plaque in Plaza San Jacinto, San Angel, Mexico honours the *Batallón de San Patricio* as martyrs who gave their lives for the Mexican cause. The San Patricio Battalion was made up of Irish, Scottish and German soldiers who changed sides in the Mexican–American War 1846–47.

They deserted the American army and fought in defence of Mexico. In the US they were branded as vile traitors, and those who were captured after the war were executed. The US declaration of war against Mexico satisfied a belief in “manifest destiny”, or the right of the US to take lands from Mexico and the American Indians. The war resulted in the capture of more than two-fifths of the territory of the newly independent state of Mexico. In the US it played into ethnocentric ideas of Anglo-Saxon superiority by Nativists who professed anti-Catholic, anti-foreigner sentiments. These events coincided with a massive influx of Famine migrants from Ireland who helped to swell the lower ranks of the US army. They earned seven dollars a month and the promise of citizenship. Irish and German Catholics were treated with contempt by the Anglo-Protestant officer class. Subjected to brutal forced marches, excessive punishments and the death sentence for minor infringements of army discipline, foreign soldiers began to desert. They slipped into the Río Grande and swam across to the Mexican side. General Zachary Taylor ordered deserters to be shot on sight. Irish soldiers had no stake in the US war against Mexico. Many of them identified with Mexico, seeing this as an unjust war against a Catholic nation, echoing their experience in Ireland. Promises of higher pay and land in Mexico also enticed them to switch sides.

John Riley, an experienced soldier from Clifden in Galway, was one of the first to desert. He organised the *Batallón de San Patricio*, a company of more than 200 soldiers, and turned it into an elite artillery unit. The *San Patricios* are particularly remembered for their last stand in the battle of Churubusco, the final battle before the US army entered Mexico City, when they refused to surrender to a far superior army. Many died in combat but eighty-five were captured and tried. Forty-seven men found guilty of treason were publicly whipped, with the letter “D” for deserter branded on their faces with red-hot irons. They were later hanged, sixteen in Plaza San Jacinto in San Ángel and thirty in the village of Mixcoac. Riley escaped the death sentence because he deserted before hostilities began. He was publicly whipped and branded with a “D” on both cheeks before being thrown into prison for the duration of the war.

There are annual remembrance ceremonies in Mexico for the San Patricios in Saltillo, Monterrey, Churubusco and Plaza San Jacinto; and in Clifden, County Galway. On 18 September 1997, the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the US–Mexican War, the Mexican government honoured the San Patricios by inscribing in gold letters on a plaque on the Wall of Honour in the Mexican Congress: *Defensores de la Patria 1846–1848, Batallón de San Patricio*.



# Painters, Muralists, Writers, Media



## EDMUNDO O'GORMAN, 1906 – 1995

Edmundo O'Gorman, brother of Juan, was a historian, writer, and philosopher. He taught at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM) and worked at the National Archive of Mexico from 1940–70. Among his many works, the best known is a pioneering work of Latin American post-colonial studies, *La Invención de América* (1958), which discredits the concept of “the discovery of America” by Columbus.



## JUAN O'GORMAN, 1905 – 1982

Juan O'Gorman, architect, painter and muralist, was born in Coyacán, Mexico City in 1905. His father was

Cecil Crawford-O'Gorman from Dublin. Juan graduated from the University of Mexico's School of Architecture. He designed a strikingly modern house and studio for muralist Diego Rivera and painter Frida Kahlo. Influenced by the great Mexican muralists Rivera, Orozco and Siquieras, Juan O'Gorman moved between architecture and painting murals. His first major mural, *The History of Aviation* in Mexico City's airport, was removed in 1939 for its anti-clerical, anti-fascist references. O'Gorman used indigenous motifs in his murals and mosaics, depicting Mexican culture and history. The most famous example is the library of the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM), covered with natural stone mosaics. It is in a group of landmark buildings that make the UNAM campus a World Heritage site.



## PHIL KELLY, 1950 – 2010

Phil Kelly was an Irish expressionist painter with a passion for Mexico.

Born in Dublin in 1950, Kelly arrived in Mexico City in 1982 as a penniless artist and quickly absorbed the colours, light and exuberance of life in Mexico in his new work. He is famous for his vibrant and colourful cityscapes of Mexico City, paintings of Oaxaca and Dublin, as well as seascapes of Mexico and Cornwall.

In 1990 he married Ruth Munguía and they had two daughters. In 1996 his major exhibition *Babel Descifrada* at the Museo de Arte Moderno received critical acclaim in the Mexican press. Phil Kelly's paintings can be seen at the Museum of Modern Art in Mexico City and the Museum of Modern Art in Oaxaca.



## RÓMULO ANTONIO O'FARRILL, 1917 – 2006

Rómulo O'Farrill Jr., born in Puebla in 1917, was one of Mexico's most powerful media barons. He was a descendant of Joachim O'Farrill, originally from Longford. O'Farrill Jr. and his father, Rómulo O'Farrill Silva (1897–1981), set up the first commercial television station in Mexico in 1949. The O'Farrill family built and still manage a newspaper chain with *Novedades* and *The News*, one of the most widely distributed English-language dailies in Latin America. Rómulo O'Farrill Jr. was Honorary Consul of Ireland in Mexico for over twenty years. His wife, Hilda Ávila Camacho, was a niece of the former President of Mexico, Miguel Ávila Camacho.



### Ricardo O'Farrill y O'Daly, c.1680–1739

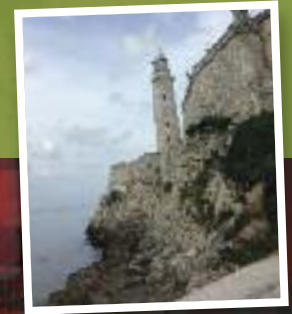
Born in the Caribbean island of Montserrat, Ricardo O'Farrill was descended from Catholic nobility in Longford, Ireland. He arrived in Havana in 1715 as the first agent to Havana for the English South Sea Company, with exclusive rights to sell slaves to the Spanish colonies. Wealth and position through prestigious military appointments, noble titles and advantageous marriages made this dynasty of Irish origin one of the most powerful and influential families at the heart of the Spanish-Cuban aristocracy. The O'Farrill name has been connected to slavery and sugar production in Cuba since the eighteenth century.

In the twentieth century the O'Farrill name continued in the medical, legal, and music professions. Arturo "Chico" O'Farrill (1921–2001) became a Jazz musician in the Afro-Cuban tradition. His compositions were recorded by Dizzy Gillespie and Gato Barbieri. His son Arturo is a pianist and the director of the New York Afro Latin Jazz Orchestra.

### Marshall Alejandro O'Reilly, 1723–94

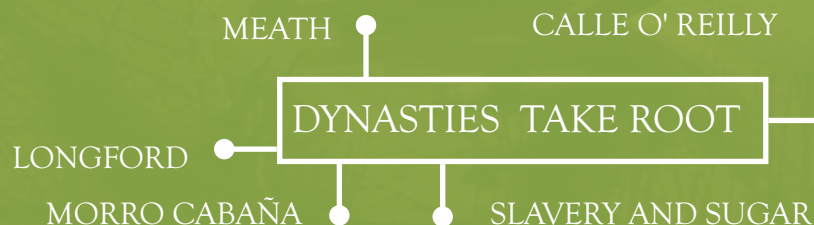
Alejandro O'Reilly from County Meath was educated in Zaragoza, Spain. He joined the Hibernian Regiment at the age of eleven and rose quickly through the ranks of the Spanish military. After the British occupation of Havana in 1763, O'Reilly was sent to Cuba as field marshal. The capital was in ruins, the dockyard destroyed and every wooden structure burnt to the ground. As the second military authority on the island General O'Reilly is most remembered for his role in strengthening the island's defence installations and planning the construction of the Morro Cabaña fortifications at the entrance to Havana harbour. He radically reformed the army, recruiting the officer class from the Havana oligarchy – including the O'Farrills. O'Reilly also raised the first Black and Mulatto militias.

Ennobled by the Spanish Crown in 1771, Count Alejandro O'Reilly married Rosa de las Casas, sister of Luis de las Casas, who was Governor of Cuba 1790–96. Their son, 2<sup>nd</sup> Count Pedro Pablo O'Reilly de Las Casas, married María Francisca Calvo, 3<sup>rd</sup> Countess of Buenavista. Pedro Pablo, a plantation owner, occupied the post of *regidor alguacil mayor* (permanent alderman) on the Havana city council. His son Manuel O'Reilly y Calvo de la Puente, 3<sup>rd</sup> Count O'Reilly, inherited the post in 1861 until his death in 1882. Calle O'Reilly in Old Havana is named in his honour.



Ricardo  
O'Farrill y  
O'Daly  
c.1680-1739

Marshall  
Alejandro  
O'Reilly  
1723-1794



Up to the twentieth century, Irish emigrants could be found at all levels of Cuban society. They have made important contributions to the economic, cultural and political evolution of the island. Some profited from slavery and loyalty to the Spanish crown. Others supported abolition and a break with Spanish rule.



# Padre Félix Varela,

## 1788–1853

Félix Varela was a leading educator, philosopher and patriot. Born in Havana and orphaned as a child, he went to live with his maternal grandparents in St. Augustine, Florida. Father Michael O'Reilly, a parish priest from Ireland, became his mentor. Varela's connection with Ireland in St. Augustine continued in New York, where he ministered to impoverished Irish immigrants.

Ordained a Catholic priest in 1811, Félix Varela held the Chair in Philosophy in San Carlos College, Havana until 1821. Despite independence wars throughout Latin America, Cuba remained loyal to the Spanish Crown. Varela advocated for sovereignty and the abolition of slavery at the Spanish Court, and for this he was condemned to death by the conservative King Ferdinand VII. He became a political exile in the United States in 1823 until his death in 1851.

As parish priest of Five Points in Manhattan, the Cuban priest set up the Church of the Immigrants. His parishioners were some of the first Irish Catholics in New York. Varela supported a rapidly growing diocese, opening schools for young immigrants. With an estimated 40,000 Irish in the city by 1830, he began to publish the *New York Weekly Register and Catholic Diary*. The opening editorial promised that it would be "purely republican, inflexibly impartial, and thoroughly Irish".

In the midst of anti-Catholic hostility and xenophobia, Varela, a fearless defender of immigrant rights, religious tolerance and social justice, was enormously popular with Irish immigrants. He worked tirelessly, providing humanitarian aid to famine refugees from Ireland. In 1851, suffering from asthma and exhaustion, he returned to his boyhood home in St. Augustine, where he died prematurely, alone and in poverty. In 1911 his remains were repatriated to Cuba.



*Félix Varela*

NEW YORK

IRISH IMMIGRANTS

INDEPENDENCE

EXILE



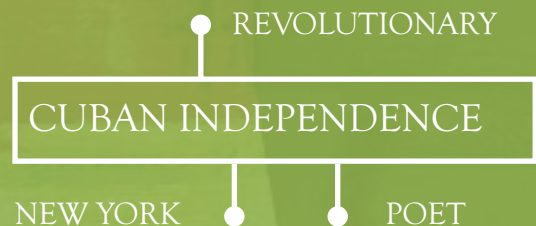
# Jose Martí

## 1853-1895



José Martí, poet and revolutionary, is known as the *Apóstol* and founding father of Cuban independence. Exiled from his native Cuba in 1881, he spent fourteen years in New York as a writer and political activist. He was a prolific writer and the most important Cuban poet of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. Martí was named provisional president of the *Comité Revolucionario Cubano de Nueva York*, and by 1890 he was the undisputed leader of Cuban independence activists in the city.

Martí does not have Irish roots, but as a journalist in New York he wrote about Ireland, Irish America and the struggle for independence. One article about the Irish Land League appeared in *La Opinión Nacional*, Caracas, in January 1882. Drawing parallels between Irish and Cuban colonial histories, Martí also wrote about Irish figures he met in New York, such as Michael Davitt, Charles Stewart Parnell and O'Donovan Rossa. In the literary sphere he wrote about Oscar Wilde, John Boyle O'Reilly and Jonathan Swift, and he translated *Lalla-Rookh*, an Oriental romance, by Thomas Moore.





# IRISH

## RAILROAD WORKERS

### *Los irlandeses* 1835-1845

A sixteen-hour day of backbreaking, dangerous work on meagre food rations and returning at night to filthy, over-crowded camps soon made life unbearable. When an outbreak of cholera threatened their survival, workers fled the railroad. "Deserters" were caught and thrown into prison, only to be returned to the tracks, this time as prisoners. The Irish and Canary Islanders began to riot, and armed forces were brought in to quell the unrest.

Many did not survive the railroad debacle and ended up in unmarked graves along the tracks. The lucky ones were repatriated to the United States or remained on as overseers on the railway. *Los irlandeses* were imported as an experiment in "free" labour. They resisted the coercive regime and clashed with the authorities, who responded with the same violence used to control slavery.

Hundreds of Irish railroad workers recruited in New York in 1835 went to Cuba to build the Havana–Güines railroad. Experienced in railroad construction, *los irlandeses* were unskilled labourers with a few artisans, carpenters, seamstresses, washerwomen and cooks. They joined with Canary Islanders and with enslaved Africans to form the biggest labour force outside the sugar plantations. In the first year, 800 to 1,200 workers were of Irish origin.

### White settlers and The O'Bourke Family (1820-1898)

Irish families were some of the first settlers in the founding of the port city of Cienfuegos. At a time of expanding slavery in Cuba, the authorities wanted to increase the white population to defend the slave owners against slave revolts. The new *Council for White Population* recruited hundreds of Irish families in Baltimore, New Orleans and Philadelphia to join settlers from France and the Canary Islands in the new "white colony" of Cienfuegos.

John O'Bourke from Limerick arrived in Cuba in 1820 and married Nicolasa Palacios. They had ten children. He bought a sugar plantation in Cienfuegos and called it *Nueva Hibernia*. It was sold after Juan died in 1842 and the name was changed to *San Esteban*. His son Juan O'Bourke Jr. continued to invest in the plantation and he also worked as the administrator of *La Carolina*, a large plantation with 2,000 acres worked by 500 slaves. The O'Bourke family profited from sugar production and slavery into the nineteenth century, but Juan O'Bourke Jr. supported a break with Spanish rule. He joined the anti-colonial forces in the War of Independence (1868–87). In July 1897, his son "Juanico" O'Bourke Palacios, fighting alongside his brother "Perico", was fatally wounded in combat in Cienfuegos.

### The O'Bourke Women

Marina O'Bourke, daughter of Irishman Juan O'Bourke, supported the abolition of slavery. She was the owner of a domestic slave, Matilde O'Bourke, and in 1871 Marina helped Matilde to buy her freedom. Matilde continued her association with the O'Bourke family, borrowing money from them to buy property. She quickly became one of the wealthiest property owners in Cienfuegos. In turn, she lent money in 1897 to the *Cabildo Real Congo*, a black mutual-aid society. Matilde used her connections with white society to support the African diaspora in Cienfuegos.

Barrio O'Bourke, a neighbourhood on the west side of Cienfuegos, marks the presence of Irish immigrants in the history of the city.





Ernesto Guevara de la Serna is not an Irish name. Yet Che Guevara, a global icon of revolution who belongs to Cuba and Argentina, has Irish roots. He is descended from the "Tribes of Galway" through his paternal grandmother, Argentinian-born Ana Isabel Lynch.

She was a descendant of Patrick Lynch, who settled in Buenos Aires in the 1740s and married Rosa de Galaya de la Camera, a wealthy heiress. Their great-granddaughter, Ana Isabel Lynch, Che's grandmother, was born in 1851. She married Roberto Guevara Castro, and their eldest son Ernesto Guevara Lynch, Che's father, was born in 1900. Ernesto married Celia de la Serna in 1927, and their first child, Ernesto, was born in Rosario, Argentina, in 1928.

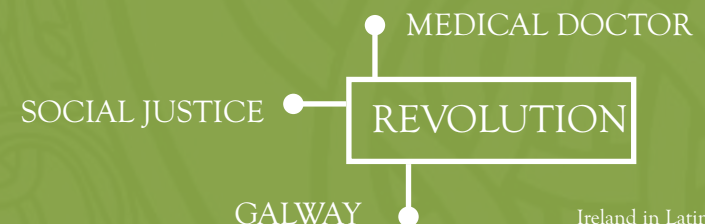
Ernesto Guevara de la Serna was the eldest of five siblings. After he graduated as a medical doctor, Ernesto Junior spent the rest of his life fighting against poverty and injustice in Latin America. He was

a hero of the Cuban revolution that overthrew the dictatorship of Batista in 1959, and was one of the most celebrated rebels of the twentieth century. Che's father once commented, "the first thing to note is that in my son's veins flowed the blood of Irish rebels". After six generations, Patrick Lynch's descendant would die at the age of 39, executed in Bolivia for revolutionary activities in 1967. Dr. Aleida Guevara, Che's daughter, visited Ireland in 2012 to launch the book *Remembering Che: My Life with Che Guevara*, written by her mother Aleida March.

In 1968, Irish artist Jim Fitzpatrick produced the iconic black-and-red screen print poster image of Che Guevara called *VIVA CHE*, based on a photograph taken by Cuban photographer Alberto Korda. The artist never sought copyright for the image, taking pride instead in his creation of a global symbol for resistance to oppression. His wish is to reclaim copyright and hand over all rights, in perpetuity, to the Guevara family in Cuba.

# ERNESTO Che Guevara

(1928 – 1967)





Between 1817 and 1824, thousands of Irishmen enlisted in Simón Bolívar's patriot armies in South America. John Devereux of Wexford and Thomas Eyre of Galway led recruitment drives in Ireland and England.

Some had seen service with Napoleon's armies and supported the cause for independence, but most were driven by poverty or a spirit of adventure. The Irish Liberator, Daniel O'Connell, in support of Bolívar sent his 16-year-old son Morgan and his nephew Maurice to fight in the Irish Legion.

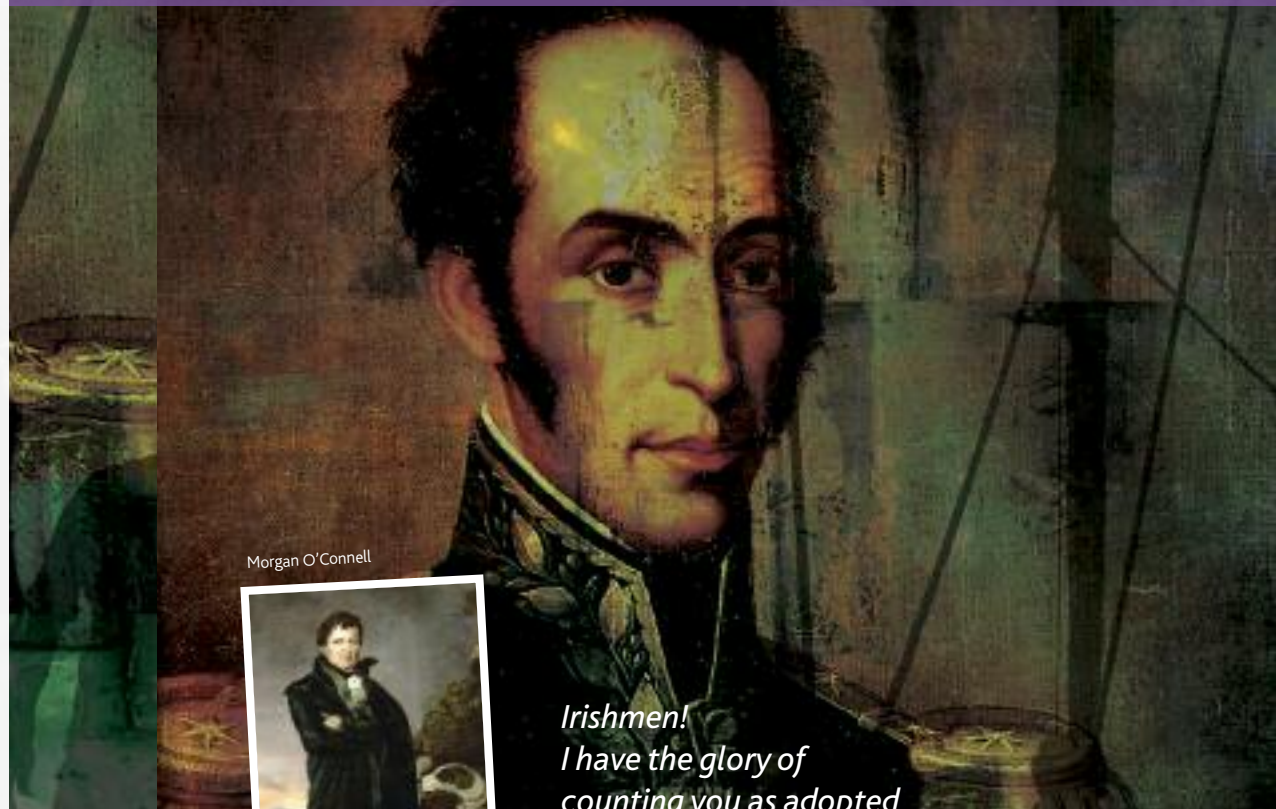
Up to 1,000 soldiers, some with families, crossed the Atlantic in six ships, landing first on the Island of Margarita, off the coast of Colombia. Some regiments made their way through tropical jungle to Angostura (now Ciudad Bolívar) on the banks of the Orinoco River. Arriving into scenes of destruction and misery, with hundreds of soldiers dying of war wounds and yellow fever, Irish soldiers feared for their lives. Many deserted

when they saw that promises of land and riches would come to nothing. They returned to Ireland and launched a campaign in the press against Bolívar's patriot cause.

The remaining soldiers joined the expedition in March 1820 to attack the Spanish-held towns of Riohacha and Maracaibo. Surrounded by desert, mountains and marshland, the Irish Legion marched through inhospitable and hostile territory. Worn out by hunger and thirst, and after months without pay, once they returned to Riohacha discipline fell apart and foreign troops mutinied, setting fire to the town. On 13 May, over 500 men, women and children were transported to Jamaica, leaving a much-reduced Irish regiment.

Branded as "vagabonds", "cowards" and "mercenaries", the Irish deserters were bluntly dismissed by Bolívar as disloyal to the cause of South American independence.

# Irish THE Legion

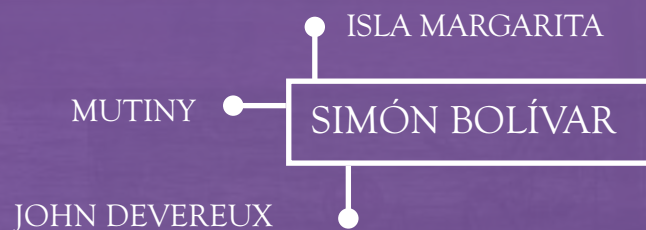


Morgan O'Connell



*Irishmen!  
I have the glory of  
counting you as adopted  
Sons of Venezuela, and as  
defenders of the Liberty of  
Colombia.*

—Simón Bolívar





# Francis O'Burdett Connor

(1791 – 1871)

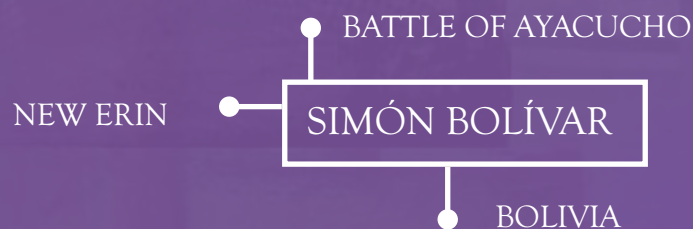
O'Connor joined Bolívar's army in 1819. He became assistant chief-of-staff to Bolívar and later Minister of War in Bolivia. A province in the Department of Tarija, Bolivia, is now named after him.

O'Connor was born in Cork city to a well-to-do Protestant family of political radicals. His older brother was Chartist leader Feargus O'Connor, and his father, Roger, was imprisoned for taking part in the 1798 United Irishmen rebellion. His godfather Sir Francis Burdett, a radical member of the English Parliament, financed him to raise a regiment for Bolívar's patriot army.

Colonel Francis O'Connor arrived with the ill-fated Irish Legion, and after the debacle at Ríohacha he led the remaining loyal Irish troops, the Irish Lancers, on the celebrated march across the Andes in 1819 and in the decisive battles of Boyacá (Colombia) and Carabobo (Venezuela). He played a decisive part under Antonio José de Sucre at the battle of Ayacucho, liberating

upper Peru. In 1826 Francisco Burdett O'Connor was appointed military governor of Tarija to the south of the new Republic of Bolivia.

In 1827 O'Connor married Francisca de Ruyloba. In June 1827 he published a proclamation encouraging Irish people to settle in the "New Erin" of Tarija. His memoir, *Independencia Americana: Recuerdos de Francisco Burdett O'Connor* (1895), was published by his grandson Tomás O'Connor d'Arlach. Once retired from military service O'Connor dedicated himself to farming in Tarija, until his death in 1871 aged eighty-one. He had one surviving daughter, Hercilia O'Connor d'Arlach.





Simón Bolívar had a succession of Irish aides-de-camp, of whom the most prestigious was Cork-born Daniel Florence O'Leary. O'Leary became Bolívar's aide and chronicler. O'Leary was born at the turn of the century (c. 1802) to a family of butter merchants. His father, Jeremiah, was a friend of Daniel O'Connell, the great leader of Catholic Ireland and an admirer of Simón Bolívar. In 1817, Daniel Florence, aged sixteen, set sail for South America as a commissioned officer with the Irish Legion.

He served as staff officer in the epic "Campaña Libertadora", in which Bolívar marched his army across the Venezuelan and Colombian *llanos* (plains) before moving high up into the Andes. Decisive battles in Pantano de Vargas and Boyacá in 1819 decimated the Spanish army and liberated central New Granada. O'Leary was decorated with the Order of the Liberator for distinguished service in battle. In 1828 he married Soledad Soublette, Bolívar's niece, and settled in Bogotá. At the end of 1830, after Bolívar

died, O'Leary was forced into exile for three years in Jamaica with his wife and children. After retiring as a soldier, O'Leary enjoyed a long diplomatic career and spent six years in Europe serving the Venezuelan government. He made one return visit to Cork. In 1841 he became British consul in Caracas, and in 1851 on behalf of Britain he signed a treaty outlawing the slave trade. O'Leary was given access to Bolívar's papers, out of which he compiled a monumental thirty-two-volume account of the wars of independence. O'Leary's son, Simón Bolívar O'Leary, published the first edition of *The Memorias del General O'Leary* between 1879 and 1888. The Colombian writer and Nobel laureate Gabriel García Márquez used it for his fictionalised account of Bolívar's last days in *El General en su Laberinto*. A recognised hero of Venezuelan independence, Daniel Florence O'Leary died in 1854. In 1882, by order of the Venezuelan president Antonio Guzmán Blanco, his remains were interred in the National Pantheon in Caracas near those of Bolívar.

# O'Leary

Daniel Florence  
(1800 – 1854)



MEMORIAS DEL GENERAL O'LEARY

CORK

INDEPENDENCE

SIMÓN BOLÍVAR



Roger Casement, a revolutionary and pioneer of international human rights, is celebrated in Ireland for his contribution to the struggle for Irish freedom. In the words of the President of Ireland, Michael D. Higgins, at the 2016 state centenary commemoration: "Roger Casement was not just a great Irish patriot, he was also one of the great humanitarians of the early twentieth century – a man who is remembered fondly by so many people across the world for his courageous work in exposing the darkness that lay at the heart of European imperialism."

Over two decades with the British Foreign Office in Congo and in South America, Casement exposed crimes against humanity by the rubber industry in the brutal exploitation of Indigenous peoples and devastation of their ecologies. Though he was knighted by the British for his service, Casement's support for Irish nationalism and his critique of imperialism led him to become actively involved in the cause of Irish independence. For this he was found guilty of treason and executed by hanging in Pentonville Prison, London in August 1916.

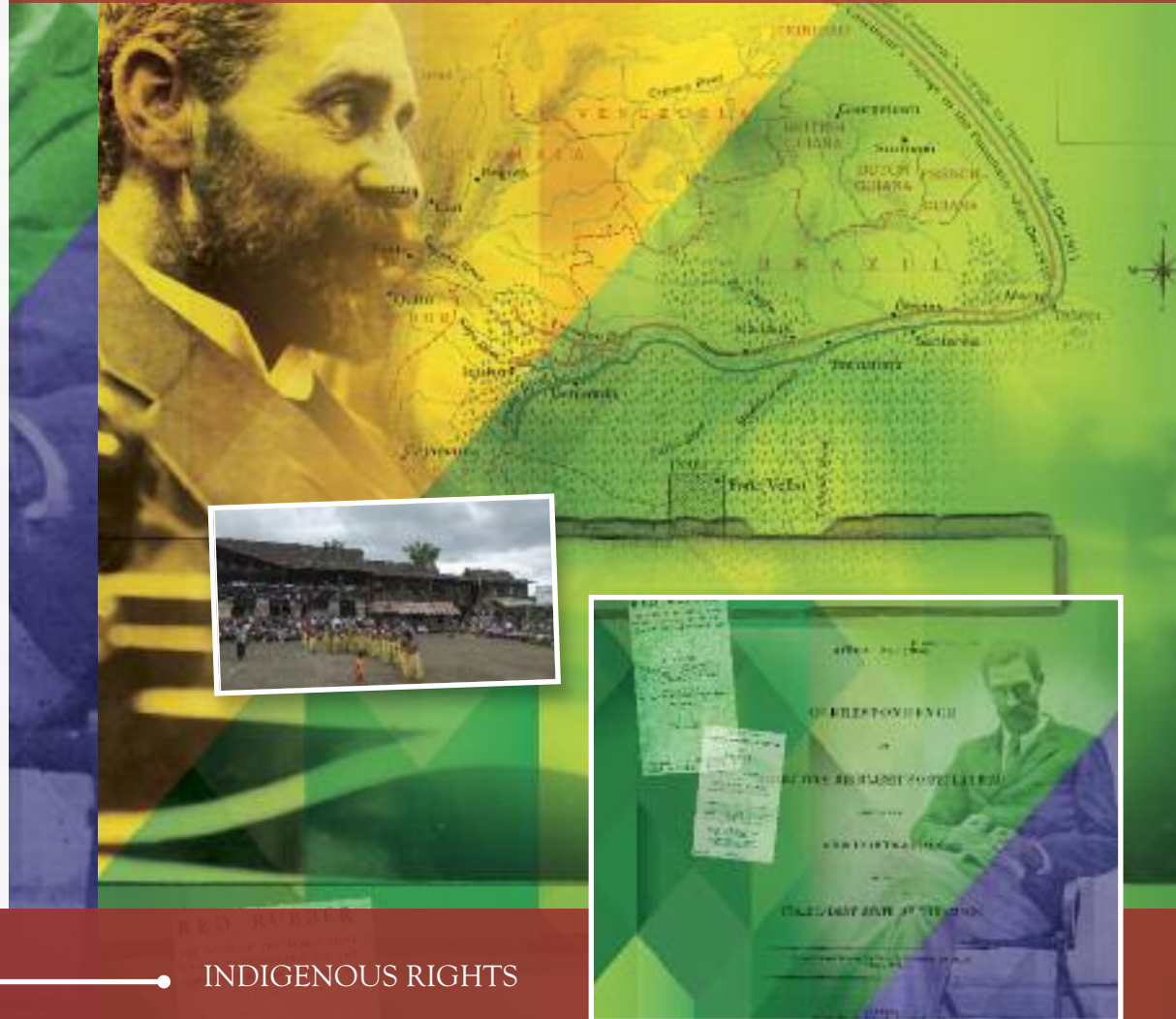
From 1910–13, as British consul general in Brazil, Casement investigated the atrocities in the

Amazon by an Anglo-Peruvian rubber company. He travelled on the Putumayo river extending across Brazil, Colombia, Peru and Ecuador. His harrowing accounts in *The Putumayo Journal* highlight the impunity of a profit-making system of forced labour, debt peonage and inhumane treatment of Indigenous peoples. He made the connection between the exploitations of colonialism and global capitalism. In a brutal world order there was no change since colonial times in the violent coercion of labour under "new slaveries" of the early twentieth century.

Roger Casement's work, trial and execution attracted huge international attention. The Crown prosecution, intending to undermine the campaign for a pardon, made public Casement's private journals – in particular sections with homoerotic content. Known as *The Black Diaries*, the controversy has, for far too long, overshadowed and distracted from his important legacy as a humanitarian. One hundred years later, Casement's life, moral courage and pioneering work are a source of inspiration to human rights and environmental campaigners, scholars, and writers including Peruvian Nobel laureate Mario Vargas Llosa, who wrote a novel called *The Dream of the Celt* based on Casement's Putumayo journal.

# Roger Casement

(1864 – 1916)



PUTUMAYO

HUMANITARIAN

INDIGENOUS RIGHTS

RUBBER INDUSTRY

HUMAN RIGHTS PIONEER



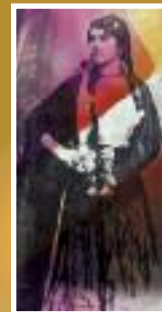
Elizabeth Alice Lynch was born in Charleville, County Cork, on 3 June 1835. Eliza became the unofficial “Queen of Paraguay”, or “Madame Lynch” as she called herself. From humble origins in Ireland, she became the mistress of Francisco Solano López, Dictator of Paraguay (1826–70). Eliza was fifteen when her family moved to Paris, and at sixteen she married a French army officer. Divorced by age twenty, Eliza met the son of the Dictator of Paraguay in 1853. They never married, though she bore him seven children. For this “La Lynch”, as she was known in Paraguay, was snubbed by high society as a courtesan and consort.

She used her Parisian connections to import educators, musicians and artists to contribute to the intellectual and cultural development of Asunción. She promoted education for all, especially women, and supported advances in medicine. Solano López inherited power in 1862, and two years later he brought his country to war against Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay – the War of the Triple Alliance. After five years of war Paraguay was in ruins, with ninety percent of the male population annihilated.

Eliza supported López unto death, even when others tried to stop the war. She remained by his side and buried him

and their son with her bare hands on the battlefield. To avoid prison, she left for Paris with her children. She returned to her adopted country Paraguay to lay claim to extensive properties which had been confiscated. She was *persona non grata* and finished out her years in Paris, where she died in poverty, aged 51, in 1886. Before leaving Latin America Eliza Lynch published *Exposición y Protesta* in 1875, a document defending herself against her many detractors. Seventy-five years after her death she was reclaimed as a national heroine and her remains repatriated to Paraguay by another dictator, General Alfredo Stroessner, in 1961. The Catholic Church objected to his plan to inter her remains in the National Pantheon in Asunción beside López, and Lynch was laid to rest in a tomb in the national cemetery.

Eliza Lynch's great grandson, His Excellency Miguel Angel Solano López, Ambassador of Paraguay to Ireland in 2014, visited her birthplace in Charleville. Author Anne Enright, Ireland's first laureate for Irish fiction, wrote about the life of the heroine in *The Pleasure of Eliza Lynch*. The film *The Unofficial Queen of Paraguay*, by Irish filmmaker Alan Gilson, is based on the more recent book *The Lives of Eliza Lynch: Scandal and Courage* by Michael Lillis and Ronan Fanning.



# Eliza Lynch

(1835 – 1886)



SOLANO LÓPEZ

PARIS

THE UNOFFICIAL QUEEN OF PARAGUAY

WAR OF  
THE TRIPLE  
ALLIANCE



## Ambrose O'Higgins (1720-1801)

Ambrose O'Higgins, the Irish-born viceroy of Peru, is one of the most celebrated Irish immigrants, having reached the highest ranks in the Spanish colonial imperial service.

Born in Ballynary, Sligo, he moved to Spain in his early thirties. On his first trip to South America in 1756 he built commercial contacts for his employers, the Butler family of Cádiz. He returned in 1763, this time as a military surveyor. On both occasions he made the arduous journey from Buenos Aires to Chile by trekking across the Andes to Santiago on foot. He had a strong character, with steely determination, ambition and unusual physical resilience. His military achievements and unflinching loyalty to the Crown saw him rise rapidly through the ranks to become commander of the forces stationed on the frontier between the Spanish Empire and Mapuche territory. O'Higgins won the respect of the Mapuche people through his enlightened policies of abolishing the *encomienda* system of tributes and forced Indian labour, introduced by the Spanish. The Crown recognised the political and territorial autonomy of the Mapuche, and governance was negotiated through the institution of *parlamentos* or peace-conferences. O'Higgins famously organised the largest *parlamento de Negrete* in



1793. He was rebuked by government officials because he tried to "support these forsaken and early owners of the territory and their rights to their lands and property".

Despite O'Higgins' pro-Mapuche stance, the early creation of centres of population paved the way for a strategy of dispossession and settlement in contested indigenous lands. In 1786 O'Higgins became governor of Concepción, and in 1796 he was appointed viceroy of Perú, where he remained until the age of eighty, a year before his death. He became the first Marquis of Osorno, a ruined city to the south, and installed his compatriot Juan Mackenna as governor. The viceroy looked for immigrants to settle the colony, among them Irish and English artisans and labourers.

## Juan Mackenna (1771-1814)



Juan Mackenna, Irish-born general in the war of independence in Chile, came from County Tyrone. He went to Spain as a youth under the care of his uncle General Alejandro O'Reilly.

In 1795 he was promoted to captain in the Royal Regiment of Engineers, and a year later sailed to South America. Fellow Irishman Viceroy Ambrose O'Higgins appointed Mackenna as governor of Osorno, a ruined colonial city at the southern tip of Chile. Mackenna set about rebuilding the city, and as a highly

skilled engineer he also constructed fortifications along the coast to protect against invasion from France. In 1810 he joined the revolutionary party led by Carrera, and later as brigadier general he fought against the royalists. When Bernardo O'Higgins supplanted Carrera, Mackenna joined him. He married a Chilean, Josefina Vicuña, and their son Benjamina Vicuña Mackenna (1831–86) became a distinguished Chilean writer and historian. Mackenna lost his life, caught up in the fierce political rivalry between *careristas* and *o'higginistas*.



# Bernardo O'Higgins

(1778 – 1843)

**Bernardo O'Higgins, son of Viceroy Ambrose O'Higgins, led the Independence Army and is celebrated as the Father of the Republic of Chile. He was born in Chillán to Isabel Riquelme, the eighteen-year-old daughter of a local landowner. Ambrose, now sixty years old and desperate to prevent a scandal interfering with his ambitions, put his son into the care of foster parents. He removed Bernardo from Chile as a boy and sent him to Lima, Peru under the care of Irishman John Ignatius Blake. Bernardo was then sent to London, where he became close to the Venezuelan revolutionary Francisco de Miranda.**

Scandal finally reached Ambrose O'Higgins, and through his son's association with an enemy of the Crown the viceroy was forced to resign. Bernardo returned to Chile a year after his father's death in 1801. Finally reunited with the Riquelme family, he lived with his mother and half-sister Rosa and managed his inheritance, a huge cattle-ranch in Southern Chile. Now a wealthy landowner, Bernardo reclaimed the O'Higgins name that his father had denied him. He became the voice of a radical minority calling for a complete break with Spanish rule, and by the time the royalist forces were ousted in 1810, O'Higgins stood out as a revolutionary

leader. When José Miguel Carerras took power, civil war broke out, weakening patriot forces, and royalists took control of Chile again. Following defeat at the Battle of Rancagua, the patriot army, including Bernardo and his family, marched into exile across the Andes, taking refuge in Argentina. Juan Mackenna was killed by Carerras' brother in a duel. Bernardo had lost his closest friend and ally and everything he owned in Chile. After the declaration of independence by the United Provinces of South America at the Congress of Tucumán, O'Higgins planned the invasion of Chile with General José de San Martín. In January 1817,

accompanied by Irishman John Thomond O'Brien, San Martín's Army of the Andes, with Brigadier O'Higgins in command of the 2<sup>nd</sup> division, crossed the Andes. They defeated the royalists on 12 February and O'Higgins was appointed Supreme Director of Chile.

Founder of the Chilean Navy and Marine Corps, O'Higgins also oversaw improvements in public works, education, farming and the military. Despite his achievements, his commitment to liberal republicanism in the Americas alienated the church and

the *criollo* elite. Opposition to his rule grew, and in 1823 General O'Higgins resigned and went into exile in Perú, where he remained until his death. He wished to live in Ireland, "the country of his fathers", but he fell ill in Callao in 1823 and never made the journey. In October 1842, the Chilean government officially reinstated him as a commander-in-chief, but before he could return, he died in Lima on October 23, 1842. O'Higgins' remains were ceremoniously repatriated to Chile in 1869.





## Ireland's Son, Argentina's Hero

Admiral William Brown, or Guillermo Brown, native of Foxford, County Mayo, became Admiral of the Argentine Navy leading the battle to achieve independence from Spain.

# Admiral William Brown

(1777 – 1857)

There are few records of his childhood, but he left Ireland as a youth and did not return until he was sixty-one. His remarkable naval career began as a midshipman in the British navy. By the time he arrived in Buenos Aires in 1810, his formidable naval skills and reputation as a "Master Mariner" brought him to the attention of the Buenos Aires government. He settled in Buenos Aires in 1812 just as the *criollo* rebellion against Spanish rule was gaining momentum. By then, he was married to Englishwoman Elizabeth Chitty, daughter of a British shipping magnate, and they had two children. In 1812, as an established commercial trader, he became adept at running the Spanish blockade of the River Plate.

The continuing blockade was choking trade in Buenos Aires, and in 1814 William Brown was asked by the patriot government to lead a small Argentine fleet with his flagship *Hércules*. Demonstrating extraordinary tactical skill, they defeated the Spanish squadron off Montevideo, breaking the blockade and effectively ending the Spanish stranglehold on the new independent state. Brown's courage, discipline and concern for the welfare of ordinary seamen became the founding principles of the Argentine Navy.

Brown continued his campaign and sailed on board the *Hércules* to the Pacific, rounding the Cape of Good Horn in treacherous storms. Accompanied by two other ships they

wreaked havoc on Spanish military and commercial ships. Brown was detained in Barbados in 1816 by British colonial officials, accused of infringing international trade rules. He entered into a long and torturous appeal process that ultimately succeeded. But when he eventually returned to Buenos Aires in 1818 he was arrested and court martialled. He was found guilty of disobeying orders and was stripped of his rank and his earnings from the naval campaign. At his lowest ebb, ill with typhoid and accused of being a traitor, Brown attempted to take his own life. In 1819, on appeal, the civil government restored him to the rank of retired colonel. In 1825, when the Brazilian blockade of the River Plate threatened the economic foundation of Argentina,



Brown returned to command the Argentine fleet and defeated a far superior Brazilian navy. He was a hero once again and returned to become governor of Buenos Aires. In 1841 he led the navy for the last time against the British and French blockade in the war against Uruguay. General Garibaldi on the losing side considered Brown the greatest naval leader of all time. He made one final trip to his native

Foxford, accompanied by his daughter, and witnessed the horrors of the great Famine in 1847. Today there is a museum in a reconstruction of the Yellow House originally built by Brown in the famous Boca district. Named in his honour are several ships of the Argentine navy, an Argentine naval base, three towns, 320 schools, six football clubs and about 1,100 streets.



## John Thomond O'Brien 1825-1886

General John Thomond O'Brien of Baltinglass, Wicklow arrived in Argentina in 1814 and fought in the siege of Montevideo. He was appointed aide-de-camp to General San Martín, and took part in all major actions of the independence struggle in Chile, Bolivia, and Perú.

The new government gave him a grant of the Salcedo silver mine near Puno, and with pioneering spirit he undertook the construction of a railroad across the Andes. O'Brien returned to Buenos Aires and became involved in persuading government officials to implement an immigration scheme from Ireland. In 1826 he returned home to recruit "moral

and industrious" immigrants. Though unsuccessful in his attempts, this first effort sowed the seed of Irish emigration to Argentina from the Westmeath–Longford–Offaly area.

In 1847 O'Brien was appointed special envoy of the Uruguayan Republic to the United Kingdom. He returned to Ireland and died on 1 June 1861 in Lisbon, on his way back to South America. His remains were repatriated to Argentina in 1935 on board the gunboat *Rosario*. At an official ceremony the Minister of War gave an oration, as did the president of the Comisión Irlandesa–Argentina in Buenos Aires, Dr. Humberto Ennis.

## Miguel O'Gorman 1736-1819

Michael O'Gorman, a doctor from Ennis in County Clare, was appointed the first *Protomédico* (Royal Physician) in the new viceroyalty of Río de la Plata in 1798. He established the Academy of Medicine in Montevideo and the first medical school in Buenos Aires, and is regarded as the founder of modern medicine in Argentina. He studied in Paris before working as a medical officer for ten years with the Hibernian Regiment in Spain under General Alejandro O'Reilly. He arrived in Buenos Aires at the age of sixty-two. He initiated public health measures to control the spread of disease and introduced the latest methods of vaccination against smallpox.





The Lynch dynasty in Argentina began with Patrick Lynch from County Galway, who arrived in Buenos Aires via Cadiz in Spain in the 1740s with a licence to trade in the Spanish colonies. He became a substantial landowner, a *regidor* (royal representative) and captain of the militias. He married Rosa de Galaya de la Camera, a wealthy heiress. Their son Justo Pastor Lynch and grandchildren became well-known names in Argentina supporting the patriot cause.

## Patricio Lynch, 1825-1886

Patricio Lynch, a great-grandson of Irishman Patrick Lynch, and the great great-grandfather of Che Guevara, had a highly successful career in the Chilean navy. He fought in the War of the Pacific between Chile and the Allied Powers of Perú and Bolivia (1879–84), in which Bolivia lost its only access to the sea and Chile annexed large areas of the Pacific coast with valuable nitrate deposits. Patricio's father Estanislao Lynch y Roo arrived in Chile as a colonel in the Patriot army led by Bernardo O'Higgins and San Martín. He settled in Valparaíso and became a wealthy merchant. Patricio married Carmen Solo de Zaldívar y Rivera, and their first son Patricio was born on 18 December 1825. He entered the Chilean navy aged twelve and went on to join the Royal Navy for a time. On returning to Chile, he was appointed Minister for the Marine. During the War of the Pacific he was promoted to military governor of occupied Perú, and later to rear admiral. In 1884 Patricio Lynch was appointed Minister Plenipotentiary to Spain. He died on a return journey to Chile in 1886.



# The Lynch Dynasty



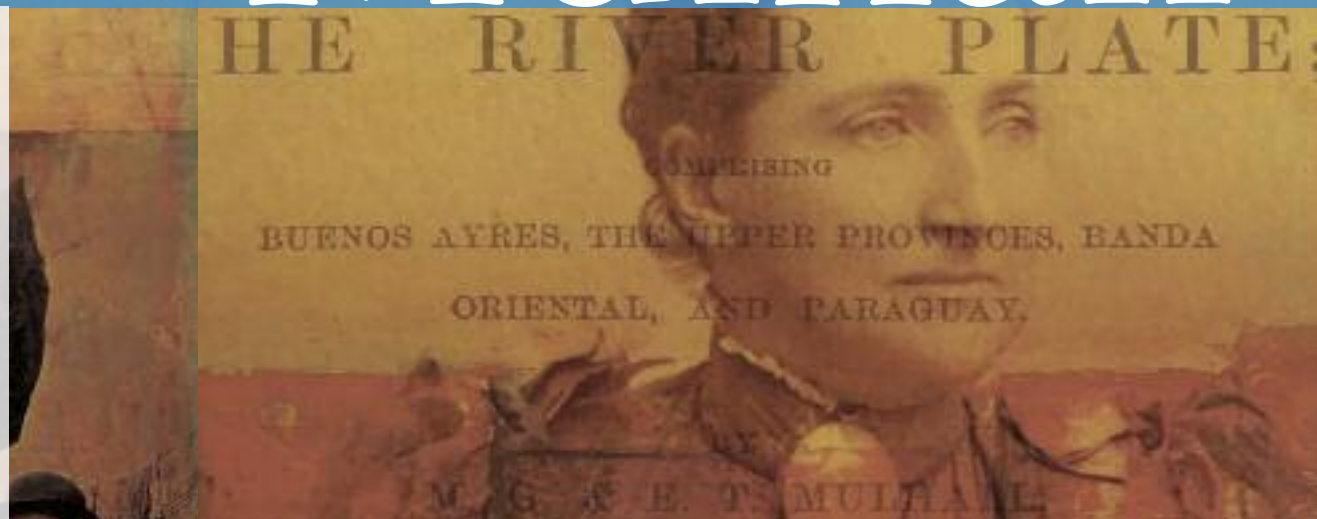
Argentina attracted the largest number of Irish emigrants outside the English-speaking world. As a result of private settlement schemes throughout the nineteenth century, it is estimated that more than 50,000 Irish immigrants landed in Buenos Aires up to 1929. The majority found work as sheep farmers and cattle ranchers and settled largely in rural areas of Argentina on frontier lands or in the Pampas. Smaller numbers became factory workers in Buenos Aires, or owners of small businesses. A handful who arrived before the Irish Famine became very wealthy and influential landowners and merchants.

The first generation laid the foundation for a flourishing multi-generational and layered Irish-Argentine diaspora contributing to all aspects of life in Argentina. They maintained a strong sense of identity and became prominent in education, the Catholic Church, banking, sport, industry and railways, the armed forces, politics and the press.

## Eduardo Mulhall, 1832-1899

Edward Mulhall (1832–99) settled in Buenos Aires in the mid-1850s. He set up *The Standard* daily newspaper (1860–1959) with his brother Michael (1836–1900) as co-editor. Michael was a journalist, author and statistician. As the first English-language newspaper in Latin America, *The Standard* appealed to a diverse readership of English-speaking settlers in Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay. The Mulhall brothers, despite being natives of Ireland, identified as *ingleses* and promoted support for Home Rule, with Ireland remaining in the United Kingdom. The Nationalist editor of the *Southern Cross* criticised *The Standard* as “the mouthpiece of English commercial enterprise and interests”. In 1875 the Mulhall brothers published *The Handbook of the River Plate* as a guide to prospective European settlers.

# The Family Mulhall



## Marion Mulhall, 1847-1922

Marion Mulhall, née Mc Morrough, an author in her own right, married Michael Mulhall. She wrote about her experiences as “the first English woman to penetrate the heart of South America”. These travel accounts by a white female explorer of *terra incognita* reflect the European discourse about indigenous peoples as seen through nineteenth-century “imperial eyes”.

Marion Mulhall also wrote an account of the devastating 1871 yellow fever epidemic in Buenos Aires in which up to 25,000 people died. Widowed in 1900, Mulhall resettled in Kent in England until her death in 1922. Her published works include *From Europe to Paraguay and Matto-Grosso* (1877) and *Between the Amazon and the Andes* (1881).





## The Dresden Affair

The Argentine government set up a scheme to recruit emigrants in Ireland. In 1887 John Steven Dillon (Fr. Dillon's brother) and Buckley O'Meara became the agents managing the scheme. In one disastrous recruitment drive, the *SS Dresden* carried some 1,500 Irish emigrants. There was nothing in place for their

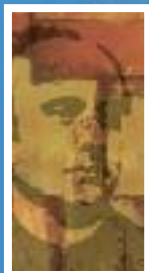
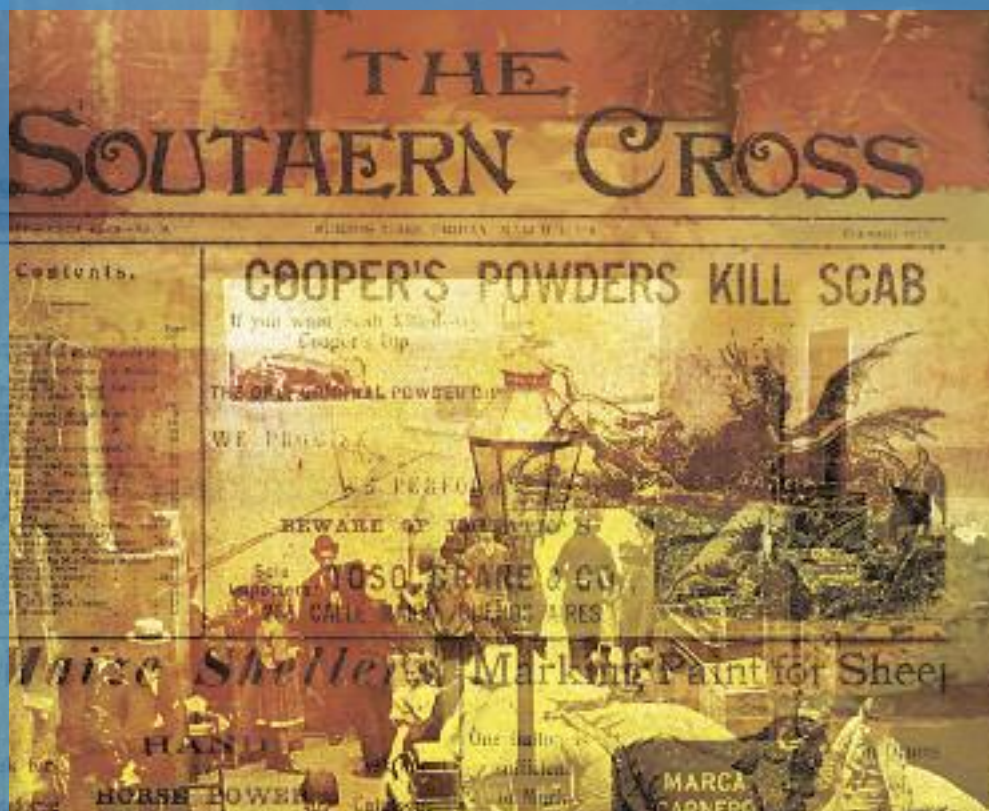
reception, and most of them, left at the hands of unscrupulous agents, ended up destitute in the streets of Buenos Aires. Up to 800 travelled on to the colony of Napostá, started by Irish-American David Gartland. After two years of misery living under canvas in harsh weather on lands that were unsuitable for agriculture, more than 100 people died. The surviving group eventually returned to Buenos Aires on foot, a distance of 700 km. This marked the end of mass migration from Ireland to Argentina.

## Father Anthony Fahy, 1805-1871

Father Anthony Fahy from Galway ministered to a growing Irish diaspora until his death from yellow fever in 1871. Fahy travelled the length and breadth of the Pampas, supporting the Irish Catholic community. He acted as consul, financial adviser, judge, employment agent interpreter and matchmaker and founded the Irish Hospital in Buenos Aires. The Fahy Institute for

boys and St. Brigid's College for girls, providing free education to the children of poorer Irish immigrants, were set up in the 1890s.

Marriage outside the Irish-Argentine community was rare until the twentieth century. The diaspora retained a strong sense of Irish ethnicity, and later generations spoke English with accents of the early settlers who came from Counties Meath, Westmeath, Longford and Offaly in the midlands, and from Cork, Clare and Wexford. In a country with a strong British influence in the nineteenth century, it was easier to identify as *ingleses*, but as Irish-Argentine communities grew and moved from rural to urban areas they began to speak Spanish.



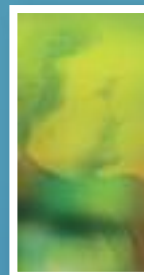
## Monsignor Patrick J. Dillon, 1842-1889

Father Patrick Dillon, also from Galway, arrived in Buenos Aires in 1863 to serve as chaplain to the Irish in districts outside Buenos Aires – Merlo, Cañuelas and the Falkland Islands. With the support of Irish Catholics, he set up the *Southern Cross* newspaper in 1875. This was the first English-language, Catholic and Irish periodical, and it contributed to separating Irish identity from the wider English-speaking population.



# Cecilia Grierson

(1859 – 1934)



Cecilia Grierson was Argentina's first female physician. Her mother, Jane Duffy, was Irish, married to John Robertson Grierson, son of a Scottish colonist. After her father died, Cecilia, still a young girl, helped her mother run a country school in the province of Entre Ríos. She later graduated as a teacher in 1878 but went on to study medicine, despite the legal exclusion of women from educational institutions.

Secondary education for girls did not exist until early in the twentieth century. Cecilia was recognised as an exceptional student but also for her voluntary work in treating patients during the 1886 cholera epidemic. Despite successfully defending her thesis on gynaecology and becoming the first woman in Argentina to graduate with a degree in medicine, it was not legal for her to practise because of her gender.

Grierson was academically prolific and innovative in her work. She went on to develop training programmes and founded Argentina's first school of nursing in 1891. It was called the Municipal Nursing School or "the Dr. Cecilia Grierson". Dr. Grierson was the director of the school until 1913. She was a pioneer of the practice of kinesiology, a massage technique which she taught at the School of

Medicine in Buenos Aires. She founded the National Obstetrics Association and the *Revista Obstétrica*, a journal for midwives.

Cecilia was a feminist and became politically active in the struggle to achieve civil, legal and political equality for women. She was vice-president at the second meeting of the suffragist organisation the International Council of Women, held in London in 1889, and she subsequently set up the Argentine Women's Council. As part of the events marking the centenary of Argentine independence, Dr. Grierson presided over the first International Feminist Conference of Argentina. Today several medical institutions bear her name, as does a street in the district of Puerto Madero in Buenos Aires.



FEMINIST

ARGENTINA'S FIRST FEMALE PHYSICIAN

SUFFRAGETTE

DIRECTOR OF NURSING SCHOOL



# Eamon Bulfin

(1892 – 1968)

**He was born in Buenos Aires in 1892 to parents William Bulfin of Birr, County Offaly and Ann O'Rourke of Ballymore, County Westmeath. Eamon's parents met while working on a cattle ranch in the Pampas. When they moved to Buenos Aires, William wrote short pieces about the Irish-Argentine diaspora in the *Southern Cross*, a weekly English-language newspaper. In 1896 he became the editor and owner of the paper, publishing articles about politics, Irish language and sports, and the cultural revival in Ireland.**

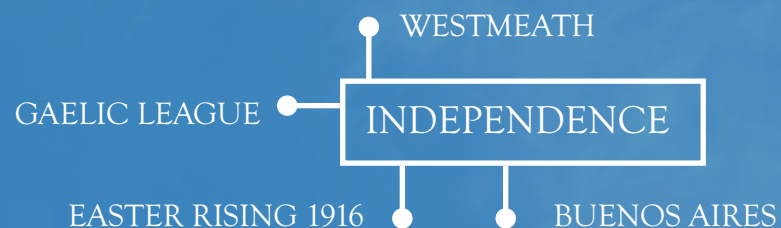
In 1896 he became the editor and owner of the paper, publishing articles about politics, Irish language and sports, and the cultural revival in Ireland. William supported the Gaelic League in Buenos Aires and maintained close contact with Irish nationalists such as Douglas Hyde, Arthur Griffith and Patrick Pearse. His first book, *Tales of the Pampas*, described life in Argentina for the Irish, and his book *Rambles in Erin*

(1907) was a guidebook for the diaspora on the Irish landscape and geopolitical events in Ireland. The family returned to Ireland in 1908. Eamon Bulfin arrived in Ireland age 10. He was the second boy to enrol in the Irish language school St. Enda's, founded by revolutionary leader and poet Patrick Pearse. Eamon's father died in 1910, the same year he began his studies for a science degree at University College

Dublin. In the summer of 1912, he was sworn into the Irish Republican Brotherhood. He worked closely with Patrick Pearse in planning the Easter Rising. In late 1915 they began to make and store munitions at St. Enda's school. Eamon played a significant part in the insurrection. Under orders from Pearse, he held a position as sniper on the roof of the GPO and he hoisted the Irish flag along with a second green flag with the inscription "Irish Republic" over the GPO. Bulfin was among those condemned to be shot, but like Eamon De Valera, his sentence was commuted on account of his foreign birth. He was imprisoned with the Irish rebels in Frongoch internment camp in Wales. The Argentine consulate intervened and Bulfin was deported to Argentina in 1919. Following the election of the first Dáil, or parliament, in January 1921, Eamon De Valera appointed Bulfin as the consul of the Irish Republic in Buenos Aires. Although it was an unofficial meeting, an important step was the decision a year later by the Argentine Foreign Minister to receive Sinn Féin representative Laurence Ginnell as the first Irish Ambassador in Argentina in August 1921. They worked to rally political and financial support in Buenos Aires among prominent and wealthy members of the Irish-Argentine community for the new Irish Republic. Support was fractured once the 1921 Treaty partitioning Ireland was signed. Eamon returned to Ireland in 1922, settling in Birr, County Offaly, until his death in 1968.



**The Irish flag was first raised over the General Post Office (GPO) during the Easter Rising of 1916 by Eamon Bulfin, an Irish-Argentine rebel.**





# Ireland

Dublin

Mexico

Cuba

Venezuela

Colombia

Ecuador

Peru

Brazil

Bolivia

Paraguay

Uruguay

Chile

Argentina

