

Easter Rising w/Jim Daugherty  
Ep. 10

[Lisa] Dia dhuit! (Hello!) This is episode 10 of Podcrawl Podchroal, the podcast from the McClelland Irish Library. I'm your host Lisa, the assistant librarian with Jim Daugherty, chairperson of the Irish Cultural and Learning Foundation Board of Trustees. Today, we'll talk about the annual commemoration of the 1916 Easter Rising, which Jim has been presenting every year since 2003 (with the exception of 2020).

[Lisa] What is Easter Rising, Jim?

[Jim] Well, technically, Easter Rising would be the 1916 Irish Easter Week Rebellion or Rising. That was one of a series of rebellions over the previous 200 years against the English who ruled Ireland at that time. The Easter Rising commemoration, as we present it, is 8,000 years of Irish history in about two and a half to three hours, presented with slides, 25 different pieces of music, including songs, poetry, uh, all presented in context with the historical story. If you've tried, or if you've listened to traditional Irish songs, like the Crockett Boy, Grace, Come Out Ye Black and Tans, There Were Roses, Four Greenfields, and wondered what they were about, they are a part of the story, and they'll be presented in the historical context.

[Lisa] What were the causes?

[Jim] There were a number of causes through the years. It actually started, if you disregard who all of the people were that became the Irish in say, around 800 [?], it really started with an invasion by the Welsh Normans at the invitation of one King Dermot MacMurrough uh, because he was being dispossessed of his property. So that was in the 11 hundreds. Um, and then you had things like a reformation and, uh, King Henry the 8th decided, because the English were still controlling Ireland, decided that there should be a Church of Ireland to go with the Church of England. Um, and prior to that time, they'd all been Catholic, and now all of a sudden you had Protestants and Catholics, and so that became part of the conflict.

Then you had the Great Hunger, An Gorta Mor, that decimated the population of Ireland to the point where it cut it in less than half. And so there were fewer than half the people there than there used to be, and it had a tremendous social impact. Meanwhile, the British had penal laws that prevented Catholics from owning property, from selling property, from basically getting any education, uh, for themselves or for their children, unless they decided they wanted to become Protestants as long as they stayed

Catholic, they had nothing. They were less than, than human, and that was really their perception. at the time. So, all of that ultimately led up to a whole series of, of rebellions, none of which were very successful, uh, up through, uh, 1916.

[Lisa] What are the outcomes?

[Jim] Well, the immediate outcome was one of total defeat.

The Easter Rising actually started on Easter Monday of 1916, and it was supposed to have started on Easter Sunday, but through lots of confusion and problematic of orders, etc., it didn't really start until the day after. And it lasted six days. It ended with unconditional surrender of all of the nationalists that were holding the General Post Office and any other posts in the city of Dublin and it crossed Ireland. So, itself was, if that's all there was to 1916, it was a total defeat for the Nationalists. However, because of the way the British treated the prisoners, and the number that they executed primarily by firing squad, including one of the, uh, signers of the proclamation, Um, who was confined to a wheelchair when they took him out into the courtyard to execute him. Um, the Irish people rebelled against that and they began to push to have independence from England. Um, that itself then led to the formation of the Free State because of agreements that were signed between England and, um, the Irish. Michael Collins was one of the negotiators of that. Um, however, the problem with that was that half of the people wanted to have and settle for nothing less than the Republic, and the other half said, well, if we start with a free state, we can eventually get to it [?].

The Irish being who they are, as soon as they signed the agreement to have a free state separated from England, they then started a civil war between themselves. That ultimately led, however, to the formation of the Republic. And to the Republic of Ireland as we know it now, but also the split of the six counties in the north from the other 26 counties in the south, which remains to this day. Everything that happens with the Republic of Ireland actually was a result of 1916.

[Lisa] Why is it important?

[Jim] Well, it's important because without it... Unless something else would happen after that. Without it, we would not have a Republic of Ireland. It would still be a dominion of the United Kingdom or of Great Britain.

[Lisa] Can you tell us the information about the commemoration?

[Jim] This year's commemoration will be at the Irish Cultural Center in downtown Phoenix, in the Great Hall. It will be on April 22nd [2023]. It starts at 10am. It will last until 12:30 PM or 1:00 PM, no later than that. It is, there is no admission. Donations for defraying expenses are graciously accepted and gratefully accepted. Uh, there will be drinks available.

[Lisa] If you're interested in coming, it is encouraged that you sign up online, um, on our website, [azirish.org](http://azirish.org). Also, the library will be open at 9. You can come on in and check out our 1916 exhibit that we have up on the second floor.

[Jim] I think it's important to note that in the 20 years that we have been doing this at the Irish Cultural Center everyone has volunteered their time. All of the performers, all of the people who support it, the bartenders, the people that serve the soda bread and drinks, the sound engineers, everyone has donated their time to make this happen. It is truly a labor of love for all of us. Oh, there is only one performance. It starts at 10 a. m. on that Saturday.

[Lisa] Okay, so get here right on time then. Was there anything else that you would like to add?

[Jim] No, it's all the perform all the songs are performed live, um, by local musicians. In the end, the whole reason for all of this is to remember the history so that we don't repeat the history. And the purpose of the commemoration is to pass on all of the Irish history and culture to oncoming generations.

[Lisa] Thank you so much for listening. Thank you, Jim. We hope to see you soon at McClelland Library and Irish Cultural Centre. Slán!