

Partition in Ireland: Partition of Ulster

- Antrim
- Armagh
- Cavan
- Clare
- Cork
- Donegal
- Down
- Dublin
- Fermanagh
- Galway
- Kerry
- Kildare
- Kilkenny
- King’s County (Laois)
- Leitrim
- Limerick
- Londonderry
- Longford
- Louth
- Mayo
- Meath
- Monaghan
- Offaly
- Queen’s County (Carlow)
- Roscommon
- Sligo
- Tipperary
- Tyrone
- Waterford
- Westmeath
- Wexford
- Wicklow

1919	January	Irish War of Independence/ Anglo-Irish War starts
		Early Irish Volunteer Force reorganises with others to form Irish Republican Army
	June 28	Versailles Treaty marks official end of WWI

The Great Divide

Anglo Irish War/Irish War of Independence January 1919 to July 1921



Royal Irish Constabulary badge.
Courtesy of Coleraine Museum.

The Royal Irish Constabulary (RIC) became the primary target for the Irish Republican Army (IRA). On July 17, 1920 the murder of RIC Divisional Commissioner Colonel Gerard Smyth in County Cork added to sectarian tensions. His funeral in his hometown of Banbridge led to a charged atmosphere resulting in attacks on suspected Sinn Féiners. Belfast shipyards expelled Catholics and 'disloyal Protestants', those that were identified with the Belfast Labour Party because of its alleged Sinn Féin sympathies.

Hundreds of workmen left the city and went to Dublin.

WS Ref #: 971, Witness: Officer IV, 1914, BMR WS0971.



Courtesy of Ballymoney Free Press September 2nd, 1920.



Suspects being brought into Bandon Barracks Cork after a round up, possibly following the murder of Sergeant William Mulhern of the Royal Irish Constabulary in July 1920.

Photographer unknown. © IWM (Q71694)



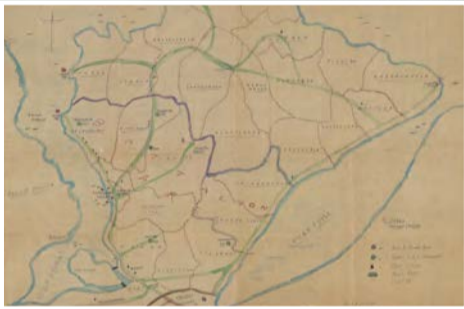
Cyclists of Royal Irish Constabulary and 1st Battalion Essex regiment preparing for a joint patrol.

Photographer unknown. © IWM (Q71699)

In Lisburn on August 22, 1920 the IRA murdered District Inspector Oswald Swanzy for his involvement in the murder of the Lord Mayor of Cork Tomas Mac Curtain. DI Swanzy had been transferred from Cork to Lisburn where his death led to hundreds of suspected Nationalists being driven out.



IRA intelligence gathering, 2 Brigade, 2 Northern Division.
Courtesy of the Bureau of Military History.



2 Brigade, 2 Northern Division, IRA Intelligence gathering across Donegal.
Courtesy of the Bureau of Military History.



Cumann na mBan War of Independence Medal.

During the War, Cumann na mBan provided support to the Irish Republican Army. There were two brigades in County Antrim.
Courtesy of private collection.



Black and Tans
© IWM Q113489

Reinforcement

As resignations began to escalate within the RIC, authorities recruited temporary constables from unemployed men, many of whom were war veterans. They became known as the Black and Tans, named after a famous pack of hounds, because the uniform was initially a mixture of two colours. Ex-Army Officers were recruited for the Auxiliary Division, a heavily armed mobile unit designed to combat the hit and run tactics of the IRA.

1920	January	Recruitment for 'Black and Tans' begins
	July	Belfast shipyard expulsions of Catholics and 'disloyal Protestants'
	August	Belfast trade boycott of British interests
October	Ulster Special Constabulary established	
November 21	'Bloody Sunday' Dublin	
December 23	Government of Ireland Act 1920	



Ulster's Prayer 'Don't Let Go' Irish political postcard depicting all nine counties of Ulster.
Photographic reproduction held in private collection.

Foundation of a Legacy

Lloyd George appointed the Irish Committee in October 1919 to draft new measures for Irish Home Rule: The Government of Ireland Act. It recommended initially that nine counties of Ulster form a separate jurisdiction controlled by a Belfast parliament and the remaining twenty-three controlled by Dublin. Partition was at this stage introduced as a short-term measure, nine counties were proposed as this was thought to make future reunification straightforward. Ulster Unionist leaders were opposed to this and stated that they would resist the bill under these terms. They negotiated the exclusion of just six of the historic nine Ulster counties.

The Ulster Specials

The Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF) was revived by the Ulster Unionist Council in June 1920, in response to IRA attacks. The Special Constables Act was requested and through this the Ulster Special Constabulary (USC) was established in October 1920: Full time A-Specials, Part Time B-Specials and Reservist C-Specials. Many UVF members joined, which led to USC being regarded with distrust by the Nationalist community.

'We, in our turn, raided the homes of both Protestant and Catholic parents whose Sons had joined, or were about to join, the Ulster Specials.'

Bureau of Military History. 1913-21 Statement document No. WS. 1363.



UVF Armband
Courtesy of Coleraine Museum.



UVF Badge
Courtesy of Coleraine Museum.



Limavady police barracks and war memorial.
Courtesy of Limavady Museum.



Inside double page illustration from Royal Ulster and Special Constabulary Christmas card. Date unknown.
Courtesy of Coleraine Museum.

Mary Alice Young née Macnaghten recalls on 1920:

'Politics were seething ... So, on Wednesday, 10 March, we all went to Belfast for the most awful meeting I ever attended. It went on and on and we were all desperately tired and hungry when Sir Edward Carson asked for a show of hands on throwing overboard the counties of Donegal, Cavan and Monaghan, because we were afraid that they might sink our little Ulster ship. I have never heard such impressive speeches as those made by Lord Farnham and Bob Maxwell. They had come from France, where our Ulster Battalion had been reinforced from these three counties, and, while the men out there were fighting and dying for King and Country, we were throwing down their homes. Mr Moles was the chief opposition, with his confounded statistics. The result was to me and many others a dishonourable business. To throw over those three counties on a show of hands was surely lacking in dignity and consideration and so puzzling was it, that James G Leslie sitting beside me said, "By Jove, Farnham won it". He hadn't and I am sure the majority was strongly for Moles, but we all left that meeting feeling miserable, like traitors.'

The Recollections of Mary Alice Young née Macnaghten (1867-1946) of Dondreeve and Galgoun County Antrim. By Dr Eilé Dunlop.
Reproduced by permission of the National Library of Ireland.

1921	May 3	Temporary partition of Northern Ireland
	June 22	King George V opens first session of Northern Ireland parliament
	July 8-11	End of Irish War of Independence/ Anglo-Irish War
December 6	Anglo-Irish Treaty signed in London	

Restoration of Order in Ireland Act, August 1920

Westminster passed the Restoration of Order in Ireland Act, 1920 to control conflict across Ireland. Martial Law was declared in eight counties. Dáil Éireann was added to a list of banned organisations which included Sinn Féin and Cumann na mBan. In Ballycastle the houses of Ada McNeill, cousin of Ronald McNeill, 1st Baron Cushendun and Roger Casement were reported as being raided by police forces.

The Government of Ireland Act 1920



First Ulster Cabinet in 1921

From L to R:

Sir Richard Dawson Bates, Minister for Home Affairs;

Charles Stewart Henry Vane-Tempest-Stewart, 7th Marquess of Londonderry, Secretary of State for Air;

Sir James Craig, 1st Viscount Craigavon, Prime Minister of Northern Ireland;

Hugh MacDowell Pollock, Minister of Finance;

Sir Edward Mervyn Archdale, Minister of Agriculture and Commerce;

John Miller Andrews, Minister of Labour.

©National Portrait Gallery

On 23 December, 1920 the Government of Ireland Act passed into law outlining parliaments for Southern Ireland, Northern Ireland and a Council of Ireland.

Ireland was temporarily partitioned on May 3, 1921 into two separate jurisdictions.

These jurisdictions would begin to function following elections to both new Parliaments. In the southern Irish elections, May 24, 1921, Sinn Féin returned a majority but not recognising the Irish Parliament of the 1920 Act, set up the second Dáil.

The Parliament of Northern Ireland



In 1921 Mr Denis Henry appointed Lord Chief Justice of Northern Ireland. In the 1918 General Election Henry had defended his South Derry Unionist seat.
Courtesy of private collection.

The Government of Ireland Act 1920 outlined the role of the executive, legislature and judiciary for the new Northern State.

Sir Edward Carson declined to lead the new Northern Ireland Government. Following the May 1921 Belfast Parliament election, Sir James Craig became the first Prime Minister of Northern Ireland. On June 22, 1921 King George V opened the first session of parliament in Belfast City Hall delivering a speech to promote conciliation between all political parties.

1922	January 7	Anglo-Irish Treaty narrowly ratified in Dublin
	June 1	Royal Ulster Constabulary established
	June 28	Irish Civil War begins Ends in May 1923

Breaking of the Ulster Covenant

The demands of the Ulster Unionists had been conceded with the exclusion of just six of the nine counties of Ulster. The Irish Unionist Alliance voiced the concerns of Southern Unionists and those from the abandoned three Ulster counties. In County Cavan, Monaghan and Donegal thousands had signed the Ulster Covenant and organised into UVF divisions. Many volunteers became part of the 36th Ulster Division commanded by Major General Nugent from Mount Nugent, County Cavan.



Burning of the Custom House (after the fire) Dublin by IRA in an attempt to disrupt British Rule. The fire which started on 25 May, 1921, blazed for 5 days and destroyed centuries of Local Government records.

Photographer W.D. Horgan. Courtesy of NLI.



Crowds around the Robinson Cleaver Building Belfast for the State Opening of Parliament in Belfast City Hall.
Photographer W.D. Horgan. Courtesy of NLI.

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Kerry

Kildare

Kilkenny

Laois

Leitrim

Limerick

Longford

Louth

Mayo

Meath

Monaghan

Offaly

Roscommon

Sligo

Tipperary

Waterford

Westmeath

Wexford

Wicklow