

John and Maureen Crowley from Cappanaboha told us these stories.

John William Crowley

This is a story about John's grandfather.

John William Crowley was born in 1872 in Dunmanway. He went to America because he got into trouble for making poitín and he thought he was going to be jailed for the rest of his life. While in America he worked for the Pennsylvania Steel Company.

He came back from America in the early 1900s and he married a young lady from Cappanaboha, Leap called Miss Ann French. They had a son called Thomas in 1906. John William loved reading books and was self-educated. He was well respected in the local community but the Black and Tans wanted to capture him.

Sinn Féin Courts

The Sinn Féin Courts sometimes known as arbitration courts were formed and established in Ireland in 1917 and 1918. At the time the IRA were making the decisions. Judges were picked by the local IRA and women could also be chosen as judges. The Courts dealt with civil disputes such as trespassing, fighting and debts owed. The maximum fine was £10

John William Crowley was elected as a parish judge in the Sinn Féin Courts for the parish of Kilmacabea and Glandore. The people chosen "were local men living and earning their bread within the area of their jurisdiction". They were "at risk by their judgements of mortally offending" because they knew the people who would be going to court- they were their neighbours. They were not paid for the job.

The British took over the Sinn Féin Courts in 1920 and started to prevent them from sitting. The British started to raid people's houses.

1. Commissioner Kevin R. O'Sheil B.L., 21 Ailesbury Drive,
Dublin
Bureau of Military History No. W.S. 1770.

John recalls that one night four British soldiers came to Cappanaboha to raid the Crowley house. Inside, the judge was sitting at the table mending shoes. He had white hair and he was dressed in old clothes. The British didn't realise it was John William Crowley because they thought a judge would be wearing a suit. There was a hole in the wooden table and the soldier sat at the table while he was questioning John William. He put his revolver into the hole and was swirling it around while he was waiting for John William to answer. He never copped on that the old man was in fact the judge and so John William had a lucky escape on that occasion.

John and his son Thomas were wanted by the Black and Tans so they often ran up to the hills and slept in ditches in the cold and rain. His wife and younger son went to live in safety with her relatives.

Men in Trap

People travelled by horse and trap. Two armed men arrived at the judge's house. They got fed and travelled south to the village. They shot an RIC officer by Dado's Petrol Pumps near where the bus stop is today. They went back up the road behind the village and headed towards Drinagh.

Execution of the spy

Flor the fly was from Ballydehob. The IRA had warned him several times about giving information about to the R.I.C. but he wouldn't stop. He was tried and found guilty by the Military Court. Four men came to Crowley's house to shoot the spy. They were each given a rifle. Two were live- they had ammunition in them and the other two guns were dummies. Flor was marched up to Keamore and shot dead. His body was covered over and left there. It was never buried.

Three examples of court cases with names expunged from 1921 book:

a.-----rate collector Plaintiff

-----Defendant

Process for six pounds seventeen and three pence.

Order-Decree for amount with ten shillings costs.

b.-----Plaintiff

-----Defendant

Summons for trespass of eight cows and two goats on February 15th.

Adjourned.

c. -----Plaintiff

----- and

-----Defendants

Summons for Assault

Order ----- and ----- bound to the peace for twelve months in sureties of five pounds each.



Judge John William Crowley's
house (1938)

Thomas and his wife Kathy.
Thomas was born in 1906
and was 14 when he was
sleeping in the hills whilst
hiding from the Tans..

photo - courtesy of Maurice Crowley
Cappanabaha, Leap.

Maureen's story

Maureen's mother, Mary Whooley was born in 1910. She would have been ten years of age when the Black and Tans were raiding and terrorizing the local people. Her father hid weapons for the IRA in the cow shed.

Maureen remembers her mother telling her the story of how she would hold her younger brothers and sisters tight under the table when they raided and "tore the place apart" while holding her father at gunpoint in the yard. The guns were never discovered and her father was not shot.



Kilmacabea Girls National School 1923,
photo-courtesy of Maureen Crowley, Cappanaboha, Lea



Mary Whooleys home (white part at end of building)
picture courtesy of Maureen Crowley, Capparahaha,
Leap.



Mary Whooleys mother, father, brothers and sisters.
Mary on the right hand side of the photograph.

Picture courtesy of Maurice Crowley, Cappanabohy, Leay.



Stable