

**Martha Reilly \_ Irish Transportation Records CRF 1843 R12**

Stamped Secretary's Office Dublin

13 Apr 43

Parsonage

April 12

1843

Dear Sir,

I must have expressed myself incorrectly if I have given His Excellency the Lord Lieutenant that I believe Martha Reilly to be innocent. I did not wish to go so far, but I signed the memorial recommending the case to the merciful consideration of his excellency because I received some information which led me to doubt her guilt.

A man called Pat Brady who lived as ploughman at Cullis previous to its being occupied by Dr Canon, was desirous of being hired by me.-

In the course of conversation with my Steward He informed him that he had been induced to leave the Country by the McGuinnells lest he should give evidence against them, and he gave my Steward to understand that the McGuinnells were guilty against whom the woman swore.

As soon as I heard this I informed Dr Carson of it as the person most concerned but before my letter reached him the woman was found guilty.

If what Brady says is true, it throws a doubt on the womans guilt.

Yr ob<sup>t</sup> serv<sup>t</sup>

M G Hansford?

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*Stamped Secretary's Office Dublin*

*13 Apr 43*

Edward Lucas Esq<sup>re</sup>

Sir

In reference to the petition in behalf of Martha Reilly now in Cavan Gaol, I have to state that I do not consider her innocent of the charge of perjury.

The entreaties of her mother, combined with the fact that this was the first offence she was charged with, prevailed on me to sign in favour of commutation of her punishment to imprisonment instead of transportation.-

But on a more mature consideration I think that on public grounds the crime ought to be severely punished – It prevails to a fearful extent in this County, and if not checked by the fear of present punishment it may spread more widely.

I am Sir

Your obedient servant

Thos Carson

Cavan 12<sup>th</sup> April 1843

Stamped Secretary's Office Dublin

29 Mar 43

Ely Place

March 29 1843

Sir

In reply to your letter of the 25<sup>th</sup> Inst. Enclosing the Memorial of Martha Reilly Prisoner in the Gaol of Cavan, and requesting me to acquaint you with the particulars of the case for His Excellency's information & whether in my opinion there are any mitigating circumstances which would render the Prisoner a proper object of Mercy. I beg to state that at the last assizes for the County of Cavan three men, John McGinnell Tho<sup>s</sup> McGinnell & W<sup>m</sup> Doholme, were indicted for maliciously setting fire to a stack of Hay the property of the Rev Tho<sup>s</sup> Carson with intent to injure him, on the trial of this case, after the fact that the stack of hay had been set on fire & Maliciously and not by accident was fully established, Martha Reilly (the Memorialist) appeared as a witness and swore that on the night when the hay was burned she was returning from Naheelis? to Cavan – that she saw three men coming along the road – she got off the road and over a style close to Mr Carsons hayyard, that the three men, who she swore positively were the three Prisoners passed near her, went into the hayyard, set fire to the haystack & that John McGinnell carried a can with fire in it, - for the defence it was sworn by a woman that she lodged in the house with Martha Reilly on the night the hay was burned – that Martha Reilly (is far from having gone to Naheelis? as she swore she did) was ill & did not go out that day – that she (Martha Reilly) was in her bed very early the next morning when she heard of the burning and that on hearing it said "I suppose it is some of the Callis boys did it & that there will be a handsome reward". Samuel Moore Jun<sup>r</sup> Esqr<sup>e</sup> a gentleman of respectability (I believe the Treasurer of the County) was also produced – he swore that one of the Prisoners (John McGinnell) had been in his Service for ten or twelve years. – that on the night when Martha Reilly swore he was setting fire to the hay stack he was in Dublin with him and that he could not be mistaken, on this Evidence the Prisoners were acquitted and on the following day the Counsel for the Crown sent up Bills of Indictment for Perjury against Martha Reilly – I informed her that she had the privilege of postponing her trial to the next Assizes if she wished, but she stated that she preferred standing her trial at that time, on the production of the Evidence which I have already stated, complete with that of the three prisoners who had been charged on her Evidence and were acquitted, she was found guilty & I sentenced her to be transported for seven years, I next hastily add that taking into consideration the number of Witnesses who contradicted the solitary oath of Martha Reilly, but above all the high respectability of the gentleman (Mr Moore) who established an alibi for one of the persons charged by her, the conviction appeared to me to be unclouded by a doubt and if she were guilty of deliberately swearing against three innocent men and deposing as to facts of which she could have no knowledge the sentenced pronounced was well merited. I confer therefore I have met. with more than common astonishment the enclosed Memorial in which two clergymen of high character and station certify "that they have no hesitation in recommending Martha Reilly as a fit & proper object for His Excellency's merciful consideration " I am the more surprised as to the Revd Mr Carson is the person, whose hay was burned, who must know something of the case & who was, if I have not been misinformed present at one at least of the trials, The Case appeared to me so plain & the conviction of Martha Reilly is satisfactory that if her Memorial had been an ordinary one, signed as is too frequently the case, by persons who seek an ignominious popularity by recommending convicts to mercy without any knowledge of the facts

& circumstances. I should have passed it over without notice – but as I cannot suppose that the Revd Mr Carson & the Dean of Ardagh have recommended a mitigation of punishment under the circumstances which I have detailed without good grounds for doing it, I take the liberty of suggesting that this letter should be forwarded to them and that they should be called on to state the grounds on which they feel justified in recommending Martha Reilly as a fit & proper object for His Excellency's Merciful Consideration.

I am Sir  
Your faithful & ob<sup>t</sup> serv<sup>t</sup>  
John Doherty

E. Lucas Esq<sup>re</sup>

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Stamped Chief Secretary's Office, Dublin 24 March 43

Mr Connor written up the side

To Earl De Grey Lord Lieutenant General  
General Governor of Ireland etc etc etc  
The Humble Petition of Martha Reilly a Convict in Cavan Gaol.

Sheweth,

That Your petitioner about 6 months elapsed Lodged Examination against three persons for maliciously setting fire to a Rick of Hay, and Oats, and burning it, the property of the Revd Dr Carson, Vicar Of Cavan.

Your Petitioner was immediately after sent to the castle where she remained until a few days before the Assizes commenced, when she was sent to Cavan to Prosecute, the Trial took place before His Lordship Chief Justice Doherty, the result of which was Your Petitioner Failed in convicting the Prisoners.

Your Petitioner was afterwards was placed in the bar and convicted to 7 years transportation.

Your Petitioner Humbly implores Your Excellency will vouchsafe to take her into your merciful consideration By mitigating her sentence of transportation to a limited period of confinement.

Your Petitioner is of honest industrious Parents resident of the neighbourhood of Cavan, as the Certificate outside corroborates, nothing has ever recurred to her to hurt her character previous to what she now stands convicted for.

Your Petitioner under the deplorable circumstances she has stated humbly begs Your Excellencies benevolent humanity will grant her prayer.

In Duty bound  
Your Petitioner will ever pray

March the 20<sup>th</sup> 1843

We, do hereby certify, that we know the Petitioner Martha Reilly, now a convict in Gaol, and her family, residents of the neighbourhood of Cavan. And we have always considered them an Honest Industrious family.

We therefore have no hesitation in Recommending her as a fit and proper object to Your Excellency for Your Merciful consideration.

Thos Carson, L.L.D. Vicar of Cavan

I beg to Join D<sup>f</sup> Carson in his recommendation of Martha Reilly for the Merciful cConsideration of his Excellency.

MG Murp? D.D.  
Arch. Of Ardagh

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Martha Reilly

Perjury

Setting fire to a                7 yrs tr.

Rick of Hay

Refer to Rev Mr Carson

& the Archbishop of Ardagh

for the grounds upon which they

[.....]

Mar 31

1843

Done April 1843

Again 12<sup>th</sup> -do-

Letters annexed 13<sup>th</sup>

The law must take

its course

Ch. J

Drumsna

3<sup>rd</sup> November 1843

Sir,

We beg leave, in reply to the accompanied memorial to state, that we are of the opinion, that it is a case deserving his Excellency's clemency.

The Memorial was mislaid by the Clerk of the petty Sessions here- which occasioned the delay in replying.

We have the honor to be

Sir Your Most Ob<sup>t</sup> Serv<sup>t</sup>

H. G. Byrne

John Greevers?

To

E. Lucas Esq<sup>re</sup>

Under Secretary of State