

**National Library of Ireland**

**Research Guide**

**Women in Irish History**

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## Introduction

The National Library of Ireland's holdings constitute the most comprehensive collection of Irish documentary material in the world and offer an invaluable representation of women's roles in history and heritage. Documents relating to individual women and organisations pertinent to the history of women are distributed throughout the collections of the National Library. This research guide outlines the procedure to locate sources for researching women's history which are contained in the department of manuscripts and provides a brief description and contextual background of relevant collections. It is noteworthy that sources concerning women in history may also be contained in other collections or records not specifically mentioned here and the following catalogues should be utilised for an exhaustive search.

## How to find manuscripts in the National Library

Manuscripts are catalogued and listed in a number of different places, depending on the year they were received into the library. In order to complete a comprehensive search of your chosen topic it is important that you search **ALL** of the following catalogues.

## Printed Catalogues

There are three published catalogues which can be found in the Main Reading Room, and the Manuscripts Reading Room; entries are listed by Person, Place, Subject and Date:

- a. R.J. Hayes, *Manuscript Sources for the History of Irish Civilisation*. This listing includes all of the NLI's manuscripts that were catalogued before 1965.
- b. R.J. Hayes, *Manuscript Sources for the History of Irish Civilisation – Supplement*. The supplement to Hayes includes manuscripts catalogued between 1965 and 1979.
- c. R.J. Hayes, *Manuscript Sources for the History of Irish Civilisation: Volume II*. Lists manuscripts by the institution in which they are held.

**Note:** Hayes, *Manuscript Sources* is a union catalogue and includes the holdings of a number of libraries and archives in Ireland and overseas, therefore, you will also find references to manuscripts of Irish interest that are held in other institutions. Manuscripts that are held in the NLI can be clearly identified; they are listed as follows:

**MS** and **MSS** (Manuscript and Manuscripts)  
**D.** (Deed)  
**P. and N.** (Positive and Negative Microfilm)

- d. Continuing from the published catalogues, you will need to check the card catalogue which is printed on index cards and filed in the Manuscripts Reading Room. This catalogue lists all manuscripts catalogued between 1979 and 1990 and entries are also listed by Person, Place, Subject and Date.

## Online Catalogues

Manuscripts catalogued after 1990, are all available through two online sources:

- a. Single items or very small collections are listed through the online catalogue [www.nli.ie](http://www.nli.ie) which is available remotely and in the Manuscript and Main Reading Rooms. Entries are searched alphabetically by keyword.
- b. Larger collections of manuscripts are catalogued as comprehensive collection lists. Individual lists are available to download as a pdf file online at [www.nli.ie](http://www.nli.ie) through the catalogues and databases link. Lists provide a

detailed description of the contents of individual collections and can be searched online by keyword. A complete index to the Collection Lists and printed copies of individual lists are also available to consult in the Manuscript Reading Room.

### **Other Online Finding Aids**

The Online Directory of Sources for Women's History in Ireland <http://www.nationalarchives.ie/wh/sources.html> lists material catalogued prior to 1999. The Online Directory is the result of a survey conducted by the Women's History Project and contains information and descriptions of over 14,000 collections and sources in 262 repositories in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland, including sources in the National Library of Ireland.

## **Manuscripts and Collections**

The following provides a brief description of documents pertinent to women in Irish history held in the manuscript department of the NLI. The descriptions include key themes of interest, the extent of the collections and where relevant, a further reference source for a detailed catalogue. In order to form a comprehensive list of significant collections, manuscripts relating to women have been grouped around various themes and subjects including Literature and Theatre; Music and the Arts; Politics; Religion; Academia; Diaries and Personal Papers. It is significant that the lives of many of the higher profile women are interconnected and they are often related to each other or are members of the same organisation. Therefore, when researching individual women it is worth consulting the collections of other women they worked with or are related to. Of particular interest are the Sheehy Skeffington papers which provide exceptionally valuable documentation for the history of the women's suffrage movement. Material in this collection includes correspondence from a considerable number of female activists and it is therefore useful to complete a name search in the Sheehy Skeffington catalogue if researching women from the first decades of the twentieth century.

Please note that in addition to the manuscripts department, material relating to Irish women in history can also be found in other collections and departments of the National Library, see **Other Collections of Interest** at the end of this guide.

### **Literature and Theatre**

This category contains a list of female authors, listed alphabetically by their last name. It is noteworthy that many of these women were also involved in nationalist and political movements, for example Eva Gore-Booth is possibly best known as an author and is therefore, included in this section. However, Gore-Booth was also an active political campaigner for the trade union, suffrage and nationalist movements. This section also contains a list of organisations concerned with publishing women writers.

### **Teresa Brayton Papers**

#### **1 microfilm reel: P 7663**

Teresa Brayton (1868-1943), poet, literary nationalist and author of the old Irish song, 'The Old Bog Road,' was born in Kilcock, county Kildare. She emigrated to America in 1895 and became well known in Irish-American circles. She published extensively in many American newspapers and magazines and was closely associated with the 1916 Easter Rising.

### **Helen Laird Curran**

#### **MS: 21,946**

Helen Laird was a founding member of the Abbey Theatre and close friend of W.B. Yeats and Maud Gonne. This collection contains 63 letters, mainly to George Roberts, publisher to the Irish National Theatre Society.

### **Alice Curtayne Papers**

#### **Collection List No. A13**

The author Alice Curtayne (1901-1981), was born in county Kerry and educated in Ireland and England. This small collection includes her personal correspondence, journals and press clippings.

### **Eilís Dillon Literary Papers**

#### **Collection List No. 41**

Author Eilís Dillon (1920-1994) was born in county Galway. Her mother, Geraldine Plunkett, was the sister of the poet Joseph Mary Plunkett, one of the seven signatories of the Proclamation of the Irish Republic, who was executed in Kilmainham Gaol. This collection consists of her literary papers, including preparatory notes and drafts of her novels, short stories and plays, texts of various lectures along with reviews and miscellaneous newspaper cuttings.

### **Mary Downing**

#### **McCarthy Papers**

#### **Collection List No. 102**

The collection relates to the descendants mainly in England and Wales of Daniel McCarthy of Kilfadda More, Kilgarvan, county Kerry. A portion of the material relates to McCarthy's daughter, Mary Downing (1815-81.) Downing was a poet who wrote under the name 'Christabel.' Her papers include hand-written poems, a small notebook, newspaper cuttings and an article from the Kerry Examiner concerning the tributes she received.

### **Maria Edgeworth Papers**

#### **49 microfilm reels: P 9026-9070, 9378-9381**

Maria Edgeworth (1768–1849) was an Anglo-Irish writer, known for her children's stories and for her novels of Irish life. A complete guide to the contents of this microfilm collection is held in the Manuscript Reading Room Special Collections 421. The family and estate papers are catalogued in NLI Collection List No. A40. Also see Monteagle Papers Collection List No. 122, which includes a number of letters from Edgeworth.

### **Eva Gore-Booth**

#### **MSS 21, 815 & 22, 654**

Eva Gore-Booth (1870-1926), poet, playwright, philosopher, and influential political activist in England, was born in 1870 in Lissadell House, county Sligo. There are a number of items relating to Gore-Booth held in the Manuscript Department see the Manuscript Reading Room card catalogue and the Sheehy Skeffington (No.47) and Patricia Lynch (No.79) Collection Lists.

### **Lady Augusta Gregory**

#### **MS: 19, 844 - 19, 855; 21, 381; 22, 448 & 22, 957**

Lady Gregory, née Persse (1852-1932), was an Irish playwright and folklorist. There are a number of items relating to Gregory in the NLI including two volumes of albums arranged by her concerning the Abbey Theatre (1903-1907). See the Manuscript Reading Room card catalogue.

### **Mary Leadbeater (née Shackleton)**

#### **MSS 9292 - 9329**

The author Mary Leadbeater (1758–1826), was born in Ballitore, county Kildare. She kept a journal from 1766 to 1824 which noted the daily events of Ballitore, including the horrific events of the Irish Rebellion of 1798. Copies of Leadbeater's journal and letters held in the NLI are a significant source of information concerning this period of history. This large collection is listed in the card catalogue and includes 28 volumes of journals and a large volume of correspondence between Leadbeater and her husband.

### **Sybil Le Brocquy Papers**

**MSS 24, 200 - 24, 271**

The papers of Sybil le Brocquy (1892-1973), writer, literary critic and mother of the artist Louis Le Brocquy, includes official reports and minutes from the League of Nations, Ireland (1923-1947), including membership details. Also included are various correspondence, mainly about literary matters, including the Yeats' Association and articles by her. The papers are fully listed in the Manuscript Reading Room card catalogue.

### **Patricia Lynch and R.M. Fox Papers**

**Collection List No. 79**

The personal papers of Patricia Lynch (1898-1972) and of her husband R.M. [Richard Michael] Fox (1891-1969). Lynch was a hugely popular author of children's stories, mostly set in Ireland. These papers consist of drafts and proof copies of her books, articles, short stories, some unpublished material and personal correspondence. The notes and cuttings of articles by Lynch are of particular interest because of the new light they shed on her fictional writings. Her husband, R.M. Fox was a journalist, historian and republican sympathiser. Fox published a number of books centred on the Irish Nationalist struggle and was particularly interested in the contributions women made to the movement. Fox visited many of the women he wrote about and his papers include accounts of these visits and correspondence with the women.

### **Dorothy McArdle**

**MSS 24, 830 & 24, 900**

Dorothy McArdle (1889-1958), was an author and historian, with strong Anti-Treaty views. She was a member of Cumann na mBan and the Gaelic League. She is chiefly remembered for her significant book, *The Irish Republic*, and her association with Éamon de Valera. McArdle was one of the most popular and influential Irish historians of her time as well as a journalist, playwright, novelist, political activist, and student of the occult. Her papers are listed in the Manuscript Reading Room card catalogue.

### **Máire Nic Shiubhlaigh Papers**

**20 folders: MSS 27, 618 - 27, 635**

Mary Walker (1902-1983), adopted the Gaelic stage name Máire Nic Shiubhlaigh and became an infamous actress in the Abbey Theatre. Her papers include documents relating to the history of the Irish National Theatre Society, Cumann na mBan and actresses in 20th century Ireland.

### **Charlotte Grace O'Brien**

**Papers of the Family of O'Brien of Cahirmoyle, Limerick**

**Collection List No. 64**

Papers of the descendants of William Smith O'Brien include the papers of Charlotte Grace O'Brien (1845-1909). Charlotte was an author and advocate for the rights of Irish women emigrants. In 1881 she founded a boarding-house at Queenstown (Cobh), county Cork, to protect women about to emigrate. Papers in this collection include O'Brien's personal correspondence, memoirs, published works and scrapbooks.

### **Kate O'Brien**

**MSS 19,703; 21,150; 21,578 & 36,179**

The Irish author, Kate O'Brien (1897-1974), wrote freely about women's sexuality. O'Brien prohibited the publication of any of her correspondence but typescript copies of many of her works are held in the NLI, see the card catalogue for a complete listing. Also see John Jordan Papers, Collection List No. 45, which includes letters from O'Brien, as well as interviews with her and reviews of her works.

### **Eileen O'Casey**

#### **Collection List No. 137**

Eileen Reynolds (1900-1995), was an actress and singer who adopted the stage name Eileen Carey. She married the Irish playwright Sean O'Casey in 1927. After Sean's death Eileen wrote several biographies and an autobiography; she toured internationally delivering talks about her life with O'Casey. This collection includes her manuscripts, lecture notes and a large and interesting collection of correspondence with people such as Judi Dench, George Bernard Shaw and others.

### **Edith Enone Somerville**

#### **4 Volumes: MSS 34, 394/ 1-2; 34, 951; 36, 089; 39, 937 & 41, 725**

Edith Somerville (1858–1949), was an Irish novelist who wrote in collaboration with her cousin and partner, Martin Ross (Violet Martin) under the pseudonym 'Somerville and Ross.' Together they published a series of fourteen stories and novels, documents held include two volumes of original autograph manuscript short stories, see the online catalogue for full details [www.nli.ie](http://www.nli.ie)

### **Alice Stopford Green**

#### **MSS 10, 427-10, 456; 22, 625 & 22, 835**

Alice Green, née Stopford (1847–1929), was an Irish nationalist and historian. She was the leading force in Roger Casement's reprieve campaign and documents relating to this are listed in the Casement No. A15 & 103 Collection Lists. Stopford Green's literary and personal manuscripts are fully listed in Hayes, *Manuscript Sources*.

### **Mary Tighe and Lady Sydney Morgan Papers**

#### **9 Microfilm Reels: P 10146-10154**

Mary Tighe and Lady Sydney Morgan were two of the most influential women writers at the beginning of the 19th century. Scholars of Romanticism have recently drawn attention to the significance of their surviving literary manuscripts from the NLI, with additional material for Lady Sydney Morgan from Trinity College, Dublin. A full index of each reel is available through the online catalogue [www.nli.ie](http://www.nli.ie)

### **Una Troy Papers**

#### **Collection List No. 56**

Una Troy (1910-1993), began her publishing career in 1936, using the pseudonym Elizabeth Connor. This collection includes manuscripts, contracts, correspondence and reviews of Troy's work. Also included are documents concerning Troy's two younger sisters who were also involved with the arts. The musical compositions and manuscripts of Gráinne Troy (1913-1970), who taught at the Sedgley Park Training School in Manchester, and the poetry of Shevaun Troy (1923-1993.)

### **Sheila Wingfield Papers**

#### **Collection List No. 107**

Sheila Wingfield, née Beddington (1906-1992), first published poems in The Dublin Magazine in 1937. The papers include Wingfield's personal correspondence, drawings, photographs and literary papers. Records of New Writers' Press Collection List No. 85  
A collection of literary papers, mostly poetry, connected with the New Writers' Press from 1967 to 1996. The papers include a number of letters from author Lorna Reynolds concerning her own work. Reynolds was Professor Emeritus of Modern English at the National University of Ireland, Galway.

**The Whoseday Book: *the Archive***

**Collection List No. 99**

Materials submitted by the 366 contributors to The Whoseday Book 2000, a diary published by the Irish Hospice Foundation. The book features personal contributions from Ireland's leading writers, poets, artists, philosophers, musicians and personalities.

**Muintir na Leabhar Gaedhilge**

**Shán Ó Cuiv Papers Collection List No. 57**

Shán Ó Cuiv, a journalist from county Cork compiled a collection of material relevant to the Irish language movement in the first half of the 20th century. The collection includes papers concerning Muintir na Leabhar Gaedhilge (The Irish Book Company), which was founded in 1900 by Norma Borthwick and Margaret O'Reilly.

**Edmund Downey Papers**

**Collection List No. 11**

A collection of approximately 2,300 letters, mainly to Edmund Downey (1836-1916), novelist, publisher and newspaper editor; essentially concerning literary matters. There are a number of letters from notable female correspondents.

**Sean O'Casey Papers**

**Collection List No. 75**

Correspondence of Sean O'Casey (1880–1964), and academics, writers, theatre producers, actors, friends, fans and others. The collection includes a section dedicated to correspondence with women.

**Papers of James Plunkett**

**Collection List No. 98**

A collection of literary and other papers of the novelist James Plunkett (1920-2003), author of *Strumpet City*. Includes a large number of letters from female authors and actors.

## **Music and the Arts**

Includes the papers of female artists, musicians and women involved with fashion; listed alphabetically by last name.

### **Lady Elizabeth Butler**

#### **Gormanston Papers Collection List No. 132**

These family papers include a small number of items concerning Elizabeth Butler, née Thompson (1846-1933), an esteemed painter of battle scenes. Her most famous works include *The 28th Regiment at Quatre Bras, Balaclava*, and *The Return from Inkerman*. Lady Butler's papers include correspondence concerning the exhibition and sale of her paintings, as well as income tax returns

### **Evelyn Gleeson**

#### **Augustine Henry Gleeson Papers Collection List No. A19**

The papers mainly comprise correspondence between Henry Gleeson, botanical collector and dendrologist, with his friend Evelyn Gleeson (b.1855.) Gleeson, who was influenced by the Arts and Crafts movement in England, came to Dublin in the summer of 1902 to found an establishment for the training and employment of young girls. Along with Elizabeth Yeats, Gleeson formed the Dun Emer Press in 1903 which employed and taught only women.

### **Beatrice May Higgins**

#### **F. R. Higgins Papers Collection List No. 12**

Frederick Robert Higgins (1896–1941), was an Irish poet and theatre director. His collection includes the papers of his wife Beatrice May Higgins (née Moore), a well-known harpist. May's papers include personal correspondence and notes made by her on literary and other matters.

### **Lucie Léon**

#### **Paul and Lucie Léon Papers Collection List Nos. 70**

This collection includes the fashion journalism and general correspondence of Lucie Léon (or Noel). From 1922 Lucie established herself as a guide to haute couture for English and American women. Her husband, Paul L. Léon, was killed during the German occupation of Paris in World War II and Lucie went on to serve as an interpreter with the United States Army. In 1945 she resumed her work with the *New York Herald Tribune*.

### **Sarah Purser Papers**

#### **MS 8149; 10,201; 22,282 - 22,283; 22,419 & 35,682/ 2(21)**

Sarah Purser (1848-1943) was a successful artist; in 1923 she became the first female member of the Royal Hibernian Academy. Purser was involved with establishing the Hugh Lane Municipal Gallery and founded a stained-glass workshop, An Túr Gloine, in 1903. There are a number of items relating to Purser in various collections in the NLI, most notably her own papers which comprise c.700 items listed in the Manuscript Reading Room card catalogue.

### **Elizabeth Rivers**

#### **Collection List No. 136**

Elizabeth Joyce Rivers (1903-1964) was an artist and author; she was born and trained in England, though she spent most of her adult life in Ireland. Her book *Stranger in Aran* was the last work to be published by the Cuala Press. Her collection consists of manuscript, photographic, printed and artistic material.

## **Ruth Shine**

### **Sir Hugh Lane and Mrs. Ruth Shine Papers Collection List Nos. 10 & 58**

After the death of Sir Hugh (Percy) Lane on the Lusitania in 1915, his papers were passed to his sister, Ruth Shine. This collection includes letters from a number of prominent Irish women including Ethel Melville, Sarah Purser and Susan (Lily) Yeats. There are also a number of letters to Ruth Shine from W.B. Yeats concerning fundraising for the Municipal Gallery and from Lady Gregory about efforts to establish a gallery of modern art in Dublin and the controversy over the Lane bequest.

## Politics

This category includes a list of individual women involved in political movements; including nationalist, suffrage and humanitarian organisations. The women are listed alphabetically by last name.

### **Eithne Coyle Memoirs**

**26 pages typescript: MS 28,818/ 1**

Eithne Coyle (1897–1985), joined Cumann na mBan in 1918; she carried arms and acted as a courier and was eventually arrested in county Roscommon. Her memoirs were written while she was serving with the organisation from 1917-1941. See also an account of Róisín Colbert's service with Cumann na mBan during this time (1919-1922), written by Síle Uí Dhonnchadha: **MS 28,818/ 2**.

### **Sydney Czira, née Gifford**

**MS 18,817**

Sydney Czira, née Gifford was a republican, an advocate of women's suffrage and a sister to Muriel and Grace Gifford. She published articles under the pseudonym John Brennan. Her papers comprise 13 folders which include drafts of articles, scripts of broadcasts and notes by Czira on aspects of the 1916 Rising. See also the Thomas McDonagh Family Papers Collection List No. 131

### **Maud Gonne**

**4 microfilm reels: P 9507 & 9547-9549 / MSS 29,817-29,827 & 35,976**

The Irish nationalist, Maud Gonne MacBride (1866–1953), was born at Tongham Manor, near Farnham, Surrey. Despite her lifetime of grass-roots political activism which involved, speeches, journalism, pamphleteering, and protests, Maud Gonne has been demoted to a mere muse of Yeats in the annals of history. Documents include a manuscript of an interview with Gonne, by Leslie De Barra, concerning her early political activities in France and Holland on behalf of Ireland and on the foundation of Inghinidhe na hÉireann. A full list of the contents of each microfilm reels may be viewed through the online catalogue at [www.nli.ie](http://www.nli.ie).

### **Rosamond Jacob Papers**

**Collection List No. 30**

Rosamond Jacob (1888-1960) was a key contributor to both the suffrage and nationalist movements of early 20th century Ireland. She was also a member of the Irish Women Citizens and Local Government Association and various international organisations. The collection includes Jacob's literary, personal and political papers.

### **Countess Constance Markievicz**

**MSS 10,580; 32,695/ 1(20); 33,718/ J(285) & 41,766 /1-3**

Constance Markievicz, née Gore-Booth (1868-1927), was a painter, actress and an Irish nationalist. There are a number of items of interest concerning Markievicz in the NLI, including a duplicate copy of the proceedings of her trial, 4-6 May 1916 and of an appeal for her improved treatment while in penal servitude in England. Further material can be identified through searches of the Manuscript Reading Room card catalogue, Hayes, *Manuscript Sources* and the online catalogue [www.nli.ie](http://www.nli.ie)

### **Lily Mernin**

#### **Piaras Béaslaí Papers Collection List No. 44**

The personal and professional papers of Piaras Béaslaí (1881-1965.) Béaslaí was an Irish revolutionary, Gaelic League activist, author and journalist. Of particular interest in this collection is a document, which appears to have been captured from British Intelligence entitled 'List of women Implicated in the Movement.' It includes the following description, 'Mrs. Sheehy Skeffington: a notorious Sinn Feiner. Principal dispatch carrier between England and Dublin. Member of the Cumann na mBan and friendly with M C [presumably Michael Collins] and various other noted Sinn Feiners. A Bad woman. MS 33,913/ 13. Also of importance is the correspondence between Béaslaí and his cousin, Lily Mernin, a typist in Dublin Castle during the War of Independence and one of Michael Collins most important informants there.

### **Kathleen McKenna Napoli Papers**

**MSS 22,494 - 22,496; 22,600 – 22,626; 22,736 – 22,814**

Kathleen McKenna Napoli (d.1988) was born in county Meath and played a prominent political role during the Irish War of Independence. Napoli was a key force behind the underground daily newssheet, the *Irish Bulletin* and became Private Secretary to two ministers in the First and Second Dáil Éireann. A full list of her papers is available in the Manuscript Reading Room card catalogue.

### **Elizabeth O'Farrell**

**MS 15,000/ 4**

Elizabeth O'Farrell (d.1957), was a trained nurse and midwife at the National Maternity Hospital, Holles Street, Dublin; she was also a member of Cumann na mBan and active during the Easter Rising. O'Farrell was chosen by Padraig Pearse to bring the surrender documents to General Lowe, the commander of the British Forces, and subsequently around to the Republican Army garrisons. Items relating to O'Farrell are contained in the de Courcy-Wheeler collection. De Courcy-Wheeler was staff captain to General Lowe and he accepted the surrenders of Padraig Pearse and Countess Markievicz.

### **Annie O'Farrelly**

**1 microfilm reel: n.6475 p.7655**

Annie O'Farrelly was a member of Cumann na mBan and this microfilm collection contains copies of important documents concerning the organisation.

### **Geraldine Plunkett Dillon Papers**

**Collection List No. 43**

Geraldine Plunkett Dillon (1891-1986), was the daughter of Count and Countess Plunkett and sister of Joseph Plunkett, signatory of the 1916 Proclamation. Her sister Fiona was in Cumann na mBan and was also jailed. The collection contains Plunkett's personal memoirs, notes and letters.

### **Frances Power Cobbe Papers**

**3 microfilm reels: P 9483-9485**

Frances Power Cobbe (1822–1904), writer and campaigner for women's rights, was born in Dublin. This microfilm collection includes her personal and literary papers between 1855 and 1902.

### **Hanna Sheehy Skeffington Papers**

#### **Collection List No. 47**

Hanna and her husband, Francis Sheehy Skeffington, played a central role in the women's suffrage movement and their papers provide exceptionally valuable documentation for the history of that movement in the first decades of the 20th century. Papers relating to the Irish Women's Franchise League, the Irishwomen's Reform League, the Irishwomen's Suffrage Federation, Votes for Women's Fellowship, and the Women's Freedom League, form an important part of the collection.

### **Sadhbh and Maighread Trench**

#### **MS 13,844**

Francesca Chenevix Trench (1881–1918) adopted the name Sadhbh Trínseach during the Gaelic Revival, although she was commonly known as Cesca. She kept a detailed diary of her involvement in the national movement as a member of Cumann na mBan, details of which are listed in the Manuscript Reading Room card catalogue.

### **Éamonn and Áine Ceannt, and Kathleen and Lily O'Brennan Papers**

#### **Collection List No. 97**

The personal papers of Éamonn Ceannt, his wife, Áine Ceannt (1880-1954) and her two sisters Elizabeth 'Lily' (1878-1948) and Kathleen 'Kit' O'Brennan (d.1948.) Áine was Vice President of Cumann na mBan from 1917-1925 and Kit was arrested in Washington for pasting posters denouncing 'British Militarism' in Ireland. Lily was on the staff of the Ministry of Labour in the underground government and wrote for the *Irish Bulletin*.

## **Political Organisations**

This section comprises the records of organisations that were founded by women and comprised mainly female members. The organisations are listed chronologically, illustrating how female activism developed in Ireland from the late 19th and into the 20th century.

### **Ladies Land League**

**MSS 12,144; 17,699 – 17,707 & 17,714**

In 1879, the Irish National Land League was established to support evicted tenants and establish rent reductions. Just over a year later the leaders of the League were imprisoned and in response, the Ladies' Land League was founded. A large number of documents relating to the Ladies' Land League include 100 completed Eviction Forms, with particulars of tenants, families and landlords; these papers are listed in the Manuscript Reading Room card catalogue.

### **Inghinidhe na hÉireann**

**MS 35,262/ 27(31)**

Inghinidhe na hÉireann (the Daughters of Ireland), was founded in 1900 by Maud Gonne. Documents relating to this organisation are contained within various collections including the Sheehy-Skeffington Collection List No. 47, online and card catalogues.

### **Irish Countrywomen's Association**

**Collection List No. 76**

The Irish Countrywomen's Association (ICA) evolved from the United Irishwomen, founded in 1910. The records of the ICA are extensive and contained in over 200 archival boxes.

### **Cumann na mBan**

**MSS 21,943; 22,655 & 41,930/ 1-14**

Cumann na mBan (League of Women), was founded in 1914 as an auxiliary corps to the Irish Volunteer Force. There are a number of documents spread across various collections relating to members and concerning the organisation itself. For a full search, consult the online and card catalogues, and the Sheehy Skeffington Collection List No. 47.

### **Cumann na mBan, county Cork**

**Florence O'Donoghue Papers, Collection List No. A18**

Papers of Florence O'Donoghue include manuscripts and news cuttings relating to the Irish Republican movement (1912-1967); papers also include a small number of documents concerning Cumann na mBan in county Cork.

### **Irish Women's Association**

**Collection List 66**

Documents concerning the Irish Women's Association are included in the estate and family papers of the O'Haras of Annaghmore, county Sligo. The collection includes a small amount of correspondence, circulars and papers relating to the association founded to aid Irish regiments and prisoners of war (1915-18.)

### **Republican Women**

**Sean O'Mahony Papers Collection List No. 130**

Papers collected by Sean O'Mahony relating to Irish history and various republican and nationalist movements (1689-2005.) This collection includes a section concerning Republican Women.

## **Religion**

This section includes the personal papers of women relating to religious organisations and institutions and also papers of religious institutions.

### **Quaker Women**

**MSS 5928; 10,181; 10,187; 31,878 & 39,274**

There are a number of significant manuscripts relating to women in the Society of Friends held in the NLI. For a detailed list see Hayes, Manuscript Sources, card and online catalogue.

### **Saint Matthias's Widows' Alms House**

**1 Volume: MS 32,693**

The volume includes minute books of the committee of Saint Matthias's Widows' Alms House, 1877-1917. This charity which worked with widows in Dublin, was founded by the Church of Ireland.

### **Association for the Suppression of Mendicity**

**Collection List No. 37**

The Mendicity Association was established in 1821 and conferred many benefits to young girls, such as teaching them the art of lace making. This small collection includes the minutes, admissions and rules and regulations of the association from 1821-1974.

## **Academia**

Papers of women involved with academic pursuits.

### **Professor Mary Hayden**

**MSS 23,403 – 23,404, 24,407 & 24,009 – 24,013**

Historian Professor Mary Hayden lectured in University College Dublin from 1909 to 1938 and served on the UCD governing body and the NUI senate. There are a number of Professor Hayden's lecture notes and articles concerning Irish history and language in the NLI, listed in the Manuscript Reading Room card catalogue. This collection contains 19 of her notebooks and a number of folders.

### **Phyllis Ryan**

**Sean T. O Ceallaigh Papers Collection List No. 9**

Sean. T. O'Ceallaigh (1882–1966), was the second president of Ireland and married his second wife Phyllis Ryan in 1936. Phyllis (d.1983) was an analytical chemist and her papers include a notebook relating to 'Fuels from peat,' and off prints of articles.

### **Larcom Papers**

**Collection List No. 127**

The papers of Sir Thomas Aiskew Larcom (1801-79), assistant supervisor of the Ordnance Survey of Ireland (1828-48) and Under-Secretary of State for Ireland (1853-69.) His collection includes news cuttings relevant to the history of women in Ireland such as the Married Women's Property Bill and the question of employment for educated women.

## **Diaries and Personal Papers**

This section comprises the diaries and personal papers of women, including collections from a number of 'unknown' women. Often diaries and letters provide fascinating accounts of the social, cultural and political standing of women in different communities and eras in Ireland. The women are listed alphabetically by their last name.

### **Lady Eleanor Butler and Sarah Ponsonby**

**5 microfilm reels: P 9613-9617**

Lady Eleanor Butler (1739-1829) lived in her ancestral home of Kilkenny Castle and the Honorable Sarah Ponsonby (1755-1831) lived nearby in Woodstock. The two women moved to Wales and set up home at Plas Newydd, near the town of Llangollen in 1780; hence their familiar title the 'Ladies of Llangollen.' The ladies are an interesting example of historical lesbianism or romantic friendship. A complete guide to the contents of this microfilm collection is held in the Manuscript Reading Room Special Collections 432.

### **Letitia Galloway Diary**

**1 Volume: MS 32,517**

Letitia Galloway was an actress in Dublin and her diary (1809–1810) provides an account of life and social customs in county Wicklow during the early 1800s.

### **Kate Matilda Goodall Diary**

**1 microfilm reel: P 8361**

Kate Goodall of Castlebridge, county Wexford wrote a diary of her visits to various Wexford families during the year 1845 when the Great Famine began. This reel contains a copy of the original diary.

**Katherine Louise Kirkpatrick Diaries****10 Volumes: MS 33,671**

These diaries provide an account of life in county Kildare; they elucidate the conditions and customs which affected middle-class women in 19th century Ireland.

**Mary Martin Diary****1 Volume: MS 34,256A**

Mary Martin wrote a diary while her son Charles was missing and wounded on the Salonika front, January – May 1916. The diary includes references to Mary's daughter, Marie, who later became Mother Mary Martin (1892-1975), founder of the Medical Missionaries of Mary.

**Mary O'Connell Letters****MS 33,565**

In 1800 Daniel O'Connell met and fell in love with Mary O'Connell (1778–1836) of Tralee, county Kerry. The couple's relationship is wonderfully documented in more than 600 surviving letters which are held in the NLI; they constitute a remarkable archive. For an index of the letters see the online manuscript catalogue [www.nli.ie](http://www.nli.ie)

**Conolly – Napier Papers****Collection List No. 91**

The collection mostly consists of correspondence of Lady Louisa Conolly and Lady Sarah Napier, daughters of the 2nd Duke of Richmond, and of his grand- daughter, Emily Bunbury (née Napier).

**Thomas MacDonagh Family Papers****Collection List No. 131**

This collection includes an extensive set of personal letters between Thomas MacDonagh and his wife, Muriel, née Gifford. The papers document MacDonagh's involvement with the Irish suffrage movement and also contain the correspondence of his sister Mary (who joined the Sisters of Charity Convent and became Sister Francesca), and the literary papers of his mother Mary MacDonagh.

## Miscellaneous

### **Kilmainham Papers**

#### **377 Volumes: MSS 1001 – 1389**

A collection of British Army records known as the Kilmainham papers; consisting of 377 large folio volumes, containing the correspondence and papers of the various Commanders-in-Chief of the Forces in Ireland from the years 1780 to 1890. They cover every branch of the service, including militia, medical, recruiting, encampments and movement of troops.

Kilmainham papers volume 389, provides a summary guide to volumes 1-377: MS 1389.

There are a number of references to women throughout these papers including a letter from Col. More, 6th Dragoons in 1847 stating that the barracks at Newbridge is 'infested with prostitutes, who climb over the barracks wall and begging the opinion of the law as to how they might be punished.' MS 1054 (p. 290.)

### **Other Collections of Interest**

In addition to the manuscripts department, material relating to Irish women in history can also be found in other collections and departments of the National Library.

1. The Department of Prints and Drawings also holds material relevant to women in Irish history, for example Francesca Chenevix Trench/Sadhbh Trínseach (1881–1918) and Lady Augusta Gregory (already referenced in this guide) and an extensive collection of drawings by Grace Gifford (1888-1955), wife of Joseph Plunkett. The online catalogue for Prints and Drawings is available at [www.nli.ie](http://www.nli.ie) Please note that this does not cover the entire collection, for further information contact the curator of the Department.
2. The Photographic Collections are housed in the National Photographic Archive in the Temple Bar area of Dublin. The National Library's photographic collections comprise approximately 630,000 photographs, the vast majority of which are Irish. Subject matters include categories relating to women during particular eras in Irish history as well as individual portraits of women including Constance Markievicz, Maud Gonne and other women mentioned in this guide. The online catalogue for the Photographic Collections is available at [www.nli.ie](http://www.nli.ie) and many photographs are available to view online. Please note that this catalogue does not cover the entire collection, for further information contact the curator or visit the National Photographic Archive.
3. Books and Periodicals are held in the main library building. The National Library holds a wide variety of printed material of Irish and general interest. For books written by or about women in Irish history see the online catalogue at [www.nli.ie](http://www.nli.ie) a selection of relevant books is listed at the end of this guide. Additionally, the periodicals collection contains many interesting and often overlooked publications, dating from the eighteenth century to the present day and can include anything from the annual report of a major corporation, to a small local history magazine. The newspaper collection is also held in the main library and is one of the most heavily used collections. Newspapers are a major research source for political, economic and social history. Information on our newspaper collection, including the NEWSPLAN project is also available online.

## Additional Sources

### Useful E-Resources:

Electronic Resources are online sources of information; they are generally in the form of journal articles, databases, websites, subject guides or searchable full text digitised collections. The National Library subscribes to a number of these resources which offer access to a rich variety of digital content held elsewhere. Readers can access these resources onsite, from the computer workstations in the Microfilm Reading Room and Genealogy

### Advisory Service in the Main Library. Resources include:

- Early English Books Online
- Eighteenth Century Collections Online
- House of Commons Parliamentary Papers
- Irish Times Digital Archive
- Nineteenth Century Index
- Northern Ireland
- Ordnance Survey of Ireland
- Oxford Dictionary of National Biography
- Times Literary Supplement Centenary Archive
- The Times Digital Archive 1785 – 1985
- MLA Bibliography 1926 - February 2008
- Irish Origins

### Online Links

#### Archives and Libraries

- National Archives of Ireland  
<http://www.nationalarchives.ie/>
- National Museum of Ireland  
<http://www.museum.ie/>
- University College Dublin, Archives  
<http://www.ucd.ie/archives>
- Trinity College Dublin, Manuscripts Department  
<http://www.tcd.ie/Library/libraries/manuscripts.php - coll>
- Public Records Office of Northern Ireland  
<http://www.proni.gov.uk/index.htm>
- Glasgow Women's Library  
<http://www.womenslibrary.org.uk/index.html>
- The Women's Library, London Metropolitan University  
<http://www.londonmet.ac.uk/thewomenslibrary/>
- Digital collections at the British Library, listed by area; including modern Irish  
<http://www.bl.uk/collections/listings.html>
- National Register of Archives  
<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/nra/default.asp>
- Landed Estates  
<http://www.landedestates.ie/LandedEstates/jsp/>

### Gender Projects and Associations

- The Women's History Association of Ireland  
<http://www.womenshistoryireland.com/>
- The Women's History Project  
<http://www.nationalarchives.ie/wh/introduction.html>
- Women in Irish Society Project, NUI Cork  
<http://www.ucc.ie/wisp/aboutw.html>

## Literary

- Munster Women Writers Project  
<http://www.munsterwomen.ie/project.htm>
- A Database of Irish Women's Writing, 1800-2005  
[www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/history/irishwomenwriters](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/history/irishwomenwriters)
- Irish Literary Collections portal at Emory University  
<http://irishliterature.library.emory.edu/>
- The Orlando Project, a history of women's writing in the British Isles.  
<http://www.ualberta.ca/ORLANDO/>

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