

Case Study: Galway Script

Slide 2: Map

Hi everyone, so when we are talking about the various institutions, we wanted to use examples of the institutions in Galway for reference, as some of you may not know about all the historic sites in the city, you have each been given a map of Galway City, this map of the Galway Institutions taken from the booklet created by Cope Galway “Remember, Respect & Record” and shows the locations of the religious institutions across Galway City. I wanted to use this map to highlight the vast number of religious institutions in such a small area as Galway, however, the sheer presence of the Catholic Church can be seen here, with so many religious institutions spread all over the city, demonstrating the power they had at the time.

Slide 3: Tuam Mother and Baby Institution

I’m sure that many of you have heard about Tuam mother and baby institution. This institution has featured heavily in media reports over recent years as the living conditions were particularly dire and many children died as a result. The institution was owned by Galway County Council, however, the day to day running of the institution was overseen by the Sisters of Mercy.¹ It is estimated that 2210 women and 3251 children spent time in Tuam. Out of these 3251 children, 978 died while living at the Institution.² 80% of the children who died, passed away before their first birthday.³ Despite this incredibly high infant mortality rate, there are no records of the dire conditions at Tuam ever being discussed at Galway County Council meetings.⁴ In recent years, Irish historian Catherine Corless has worked tirelessly to discover the truth about what happened at Tuam.⁵ Her work highlighted the fact that there were no burial records for 796 children who

¹ ‘Tuam Mother & Baby Home’ (2021) <<https://www.tuamhomesurvivors.com/about/tuam-mother-baby-home>> accessed 14 June 2021.

² Clann Project, ‘Adoption Rights Alliance, JFM Research, Clann Project Briefing Notes Re. the Final Report of the Mother and Baby Homes Commission of Investigation’ (01/11/21) para 67.

³ *ibid* para 67.

⁴ Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, ‘Final Report of the Commission of Investigation into Mother and Baby Homes’ (12 January 2021) para 47.

⁵ ‘The Mother behind the Galway Children’s Mass Grave Story: “I Want to Know Who’s down There”’ (*the Guardian*, 13 June 2014) <<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/jun/13/mother-behind-galway-childrens-mass-grave-story>> accessed 14 June 2021.

died at Tuam which suggests that many of the children were buried in large, unmarked graves. It is believed that some of the children were even buried in septic tanks. ⁶ Corless remains hopeful that in the future the Government will pass legislation which will allow the site to be excavated so that the families of victims can learn more about what exactly happened their relatives. An excavation will also provide historians with additional information about life at Tuam.⁷

Slide 4: St. Anne's Industrial School, Galway

This slide shows pictures of St. Anne's Orphanage, Former Lenaboy Castle, on Taylor's Hill.

Lenaboy Castle was owned by the Sisters of Mercy and was used as an orphanage for girls until the 1970s.⁸

The girls were "trained" in domestic services, as well as dressmaking, and some became shop assistants and teacher's aids. The older girls were also thought to care for the younger ones. These girls produced baked goods and sold vegetables from the gardens.⁹

Upon inspection by the Department of Education's Dr Anna McCabe, serious concerns were raised, regarding the facility being used solely for profit and no concern was given to the overall well being of the girls, with no play facilities on the premises, as well as concerns relating to the health and malnutrition of the girls.¹⁰

Was gifted by the Sisters of Mercy to the City Council as part of the clerical child sex abuse

⁶ 'Tuam Mother and Baby Home: The Trouble with the Septic Tank Story' (2014) <<https://www.irishtimes.com/news/social-affairs/tuam-mother-and-baby-home-the-trouble-with-the-septic-tank-story-1.1823393>> accessed 14 June 2021.

⁷ Sorcha Pollak, 'Government Must Not Forget Tuam Mother-and-Baby Home Scheme, Say Relatives' (*The Irish Times*, 2020) <<https://www.irishtimes.com/news/social-affairs/government-must-not-forget-tuam-mother-and-baby-home-scheme-say-relatives-1.4148263>> accessed 14 June 2021.

⁸ St Anne's Industrial School, Galway, Co. Galway, Republic of Ireland' (no date) <<http://www.childrenshomes.org.uk/GalwayStAnne/>> accessed 11 June 2021.

⁹ Hayley Halpin, "'I'm Anxious that Every Bit of Evidence Gets out There, Just in Case It's a Carbon Copy of Tuam'" (*TheJournal.ie*, no date) <<https://www.thejournal.ie/lenaboy-castle-galway-investigation-3654327-Oct2017/>> accessed 11 June 2021.

¹⁰ St Anne's Industrial School, Galway, Co. Galway, Republic of Ireland' (no date) <<http://www.childrenshomes.org.uk/GalwayStAnne/>> accessed 11 June 2021.

redress scheme.¹¹

The council planned on developing a children’s creative hub on the site, however as of 2017, there has been no action taken in developing the site¹² or investigating claims of children being buried on the site.¹³

Slide 5: St Joseph’s Industrial School, Salthill

St Joseph’s industrial school was established in 1871 as a home for neglected and orphaned Roman Catholic boys and operated until the 1970s and at one point housed over 200 boys at a time.¹⁴

The boys received “training” in carpentry, shoemaking, tailoring and baking.¹⁵

As part of Ireland’s Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse in 2000, evidence was presented of physical and sexual abuse against the boys of St Joseph’s.¹⁶

Slide 6: Sisters of Mercy Magdalene

The first institution we will examine is the Sisters of Mercy Magdalene Laundry, which was first established in Galway in 1824 and was managed by the Ladies of the Saint Magdalene Society.¹⁷ The Sisters of Mercy took over the operation of the institution in 1845;¹⁸ the institution was run by the nuns as a combined “commercial enterprise and care facility” until the 1990s.¹⁹ The

¹¹ Lorna Siggins, ‘Call for Grounds of Former Orphanage in Galway to Be Investigated’ (*The Irish Times*, 2017) <<https://www.irishtimes.com/news/ireland/irish-news/call-for-grounds-of-former-orphanage-in-galway-to-be-investigated-1.3257039>> accessed 11 June 2021.

¹² Dara Bradley, ‘Transfer of Ownership of Lenaboy Castle to Council Still up in the Air’ (2018) <<https://connachtribune.ie/transfer-of-ownership-of-lenaboy-castle-to-council-still-up-in-the-air-556/>> accessed 11 June 2021.

¹³ Siggins (n11)

¹⁴ ‘St Joseph’s / Salthill Industrial School, Galway, Co. Galway, Republic of Ireland’ (no date) <<http://www.childrenshomes.org.uk/GalwayStJoseph/>> accessed 11 June 2021.

¹⁵ *ibid.*

¹⁶ Richie McCarthy Galway Advertiser and others, ‘Child Sex Abuse Was Chronic in Galway Institution, Report Reveals’ (*Galway Advertiser*, 2009) <<https://www.advertiser.ie/galway/article/12443/child-sex-abuse-was-chronic-in-galway-institution-report-reveals>> accessed 11 June 2021.

¹⁷ ‘Galway’ (*Justice for Magdalenes Research*, 10 March 2017) <<http://jfmresearch.com/home/preserving-magdalene-history/galway/>> accessed 26 April 2021.

¹⁸ *ibid.*

women and girls held in this Magdalene laundry were used for mainly laundry and needle work. The Galway laundry had contracts with both the public and government departments, working for religious institutions, hospitals and public schools.²⁰

The laundry was located in a very private, isolated area in the city, and was surrounded by high walls and was cut off from the city by the Galway Clifden railway line.²¹

The former convent of the Sisters of Mercy Convent was given to the Galway Charity Cope, where it was renovated into a refuge for women and children who have experienced domestic abuse under the new name of Modh Eile.²²

Upon the development of the new refugee centre, Cope Galway released a booklet to respect and commemorate the women who lived and worked in the laundry, which included stories of some survivors and witnesses.²³

Slide 7: Sisters of Mercy Magdalene part 2

Located on Foster Street and the site of the laundry has been converted into apartment buildings and offices.

Slide 8

Read poem:

‘Make visible the tree

Its branches ragged

with washed out linens

of a bleached shroud’

Patricia B. Brogan - 2008

¹⁹ Tierney John, ‘Remember , Respect & Record : The Magdalen Women of Galway.’(Cope Galway 2018)

²⁰ ibid.

²¹ ibid.

²² ibid.

²³ ibid.

