

THE FORGOTTEN IRISH - Memorials of the Raj

A detailed account of the Irish and their memorials in India, Ireland and the Far East during the 18th and 19th centuries.

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Consisting of over 1,100 memorials and 400 biographies this book is an account of the Irish people who were deleted from the late eighteenth and nineteenth century history. During that period England relied heavily on the Irish to staff the needs of the growing empire. At that time the option to work for the East India Company was a way of escaping the worsening poverty of Ireland. For the upper and middle classes, a commission in the Bengal Army could mean easy money followed by an early retirement. For the Irish peasant serving as a soldier it meant the hope of a full stomach and the prospect of adventure in a warm climate away from the cold and rain.

The missionaries saw the Empire as an opportunity to spread Christianity and the entrepreneurs quick to see a business opportunity opened trading posts. Then there were the adventurers who worked as mercenaries for the Indian princes or had their own private armies. Such as the notorious George Thomas, a deserter from the Royal Navy known as the Raja of Tipperary who won the love of the Begum Sumru but had to run for his life when her other lovers plotted against him.

The British role in the Empire is well-documented but very little is known about the major part played by ordinary Irish men and women in service to the Raj whose names are rapidly disappearing from history. Although few of their graves remain it has been possible to compile the epitaphs and biographies from written sources for many of these remarkable men and women whose deeds have vanished into the past.

Review from 'Genie Gazette', publication of the Genealogical Society of Ireland, February 2005:

"This is truly a fascinating publication by one of UK members Eileen Hewson, FRGS, MGSi as it covers a subject long forgotten and sadly much overlooked by genealogists. In compiling the data for this publication, Eileen has brought together memorials from Ireland and the subcontinent of persons who served in India in the period. This has been an invaluable exercise as it provides, in a single volume, a reference source that will be of immense interest to military historians, genealogists and those chronicling the years of British imperial involvement in the affairs of the indigenous populations of that vast subcontinent. The book is by no means a nostalgic or romantic account of the British Raj but rather a testimony to the forgotten contribution made by countless Irish men and women in this important episode of human history. Eileen is certainly to be commended for all the fine research data made available through this publication."