KelticDead Music

Stories, Tunes and Songs in the Traditions of our Celtic Dead

To the Four Ayrts to Guide Us, and For the Four Winds to Get Us There!

The mission of the **KelticDead Music** initiative is to find tunes and songs from around the world that have Celtic, Folk, World, Americana, and Seafaring origins, and arrange them into simple sheet music formats for folk musicians to use and share. In addition, the KDM initiative provides the in-depth stories with possible lyrics for a more complete music-education experience.

*All the selections and sheet music content provided in the **KelticDead Music** initiative are from traditional, made-public, made-public with credits, or cited credits where applicable. This material content is the personal interpretations of the subject provided by **Patrick O-Shaun Young, KelticDead Music**.*

Bold Fenian Men

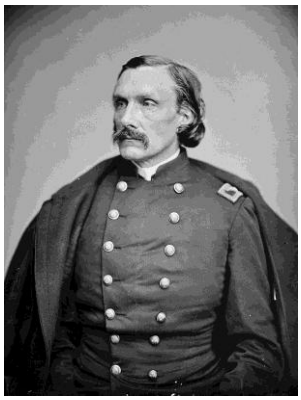
The Story about the U.S./Canadian Battle of Ridgeway in 1866-7 Song also known as "Down by the Glenside."

There are two Webster dictionary definitions for "Fenian."

1. A legendary band of warriors (the Fianna Eireann) as part of Finn MacCool's (Finn MacCumhail) army defending Ireland in the 2nd and 3rd Centuries A.D..
2. A member of secret societies (est. in 1858) in the 19th Century as an Irish homeland organization and as an Irish American organization.

These organizations were part of "The Irish Republican Brotherhood-Fenian located in Dublin, and The American Fenian Society in America." The two sister organizations were part of the ongoing civil war that began in the time of Queen Elizabeth I as a protest over the harsh Penal Laws enacted by the British which essentially made the Irish into slaves.

In the wake of the Great Famine of 1845–52, hundreds of thousands of Irish Americans immigrated to the United States. Many of them did not leave their Irish politics behind them, and many joined organizations dedicated to the cause of ending British rule in Ireland. One of the earliest American-born organizations was the Fenian Brotherhood, founded in 1858 by Irish immigrants John O'Mahony and Michael Doheny. Thousands of Fenians, as members were called into the U.S. Civil War, largely with the Union Army.



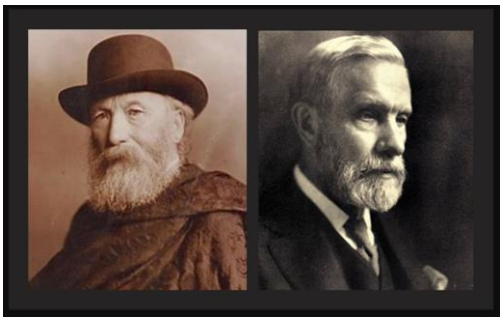
John O'Mahony (born c. January 12, 1815, near Mitchelstown, County Cork, Ireland—died February 6, 1877, New York, New York, U.S.) was the founder of the American branch of the Fenian Brotherhood, an Irish nationalist secret society active in Britain and the United States during the mid-19th century.

After suffering the defeat from the Fenian raids O'Mahony died in poverty, and his body was returned to Dublin, where it lay in state in the Mechanics' Institute after Paul Cardinal Cullen, archbishop of Dublin, an anti-Fenian, refused it admission to the procathedral; his funeral procession, to Glasnevin Cemetery on March 4, 1877, drew a crowd of more than 70,000 nationalists of all sorts.

KelticDead Music Broadside

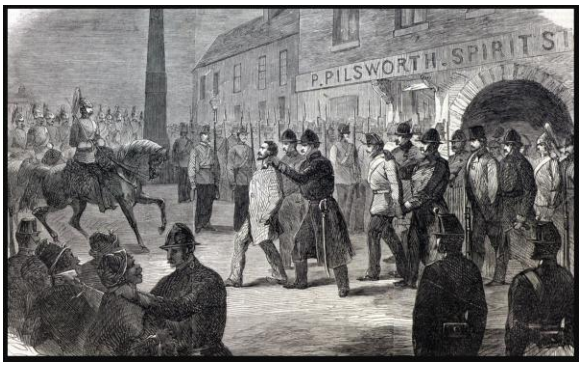
Bold Fenian Men

James Stephens and John Devoy established the Irish Republican Brotherhood. At first the American Fenians first met with little success which caused Stephens to express a great deal of resentment toward O'Mahony. But by 1865 the American Fenian Brotherhood had grown large and prosperous, and it was able to send both arms and money to Ireland.



James Stephens and John Devoy

At first the American Fenians first met with little success which caused Stephens to express a great deal of resentment toward O'Mahony. But by 1865 the American Fenian Brotherhood had grown large and prosperous, and it was able to send both arms and money to Ireland.



In December 1865 the organization divided over the issue of selling Fenian bonds to raise more support. O'Mahony reluctantly backed the Fenian decision of 1865 to make a series of military raids on Canada (which was still part of the British Community), as a scheme to take Canada hostage for the cause of Irish freedom.

Mahony was still reluctant to push the plan forward, due to the American Civil War, but in 1866, the IRB Dublin group was raided and many of the IRB members were imprisoned.

The Dedham, Massachusetts chapter of the American Fenian Brotherhood, which had offices in the Norfolk House, hosted a meeting at Temperance Hall in which a raid into Canada was organized. That first meeting ended with the group singing "The Wearing of the Green," but sadly the first raid was a failure. Some of the men got as far as St. Albans, Vermont, but none made it to Canada, and few of them were arrested and had to send home for money.

The next raid mustered many more men for the Fenian cause, and in 1866, the Fenians confronted the newly formed Canadian Queens Own Rifles at Ridgeway in the Maritime Provices. Due to the experience of the seasoned Irish from the Civil Way, they actually made advances into Canada.





KelticDead Music Broadside

Bold Fenian Men



The subsequent raids into Canada suffered defeats and the movement quickly died out. Mahony suffered a loss of personal popularity after the failure of an attack against Campobello Island, New Brunswick, and he resigned. However, he was called out of retirement in 1872 to resume leadership of the group, but by 1890, the American Fenian movement was quickly overtaken by events in the European wars.

The lyrics of the folk song was probably written in around 1916 (approximately 50 years after the 1866 raid).

'Twas down by the Glenside - I met an old woman
A plucking young nettles - she ne'er saw me comin'
I listened a-while to - the song she was singin'
Glory Oh, Glory Oh, to the Bold - Fenian Men.

It's been fifty long years - since I saw the moon beamin'
A strong manly force, and their eyes with hope gleamin'
I see them again through - all my sad ah dreamin'
Glory Oh, Glory Oh, to the Bold - Fenian Men.

When I was a young man, done marchin' and drillin'
A walking the hillsides was awesome and thrillin'
They loved poor Old Ireland, and to die they were willin'
Glory Oh, Glory Oh, to the Bold - Fenian Men.

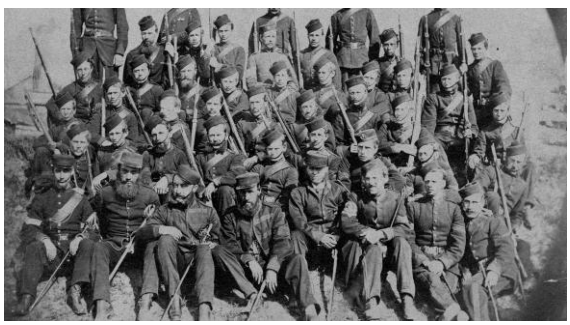
Some died by the glenside, some died with a stranger
And wise men have told us - their cause was a failure,
They stood by Old Ireland - and they ne'er feared the danger
Glory Oh, Glory Oh, to the Bold - Fenian Men.

I passed on my way, God - Be praised that I met her
Be life long .. and short, - I will ne'er forget her
We may have great men, but – we will never have better
Glory Oh, Glory Oh, to the Bold - Fenian Men.

'Twas down by the Glenside - I met an old woman
A plucking young nettles, - she ne'er saw me comin'
I listened a-while to - the song she was singin'
Glory Oh, Glory Oh, to the Bold - Fenian Men.

While the Battle of Ridgeway ended in failure, the Irish continued to push for independence from the Penal Laws of Britain.



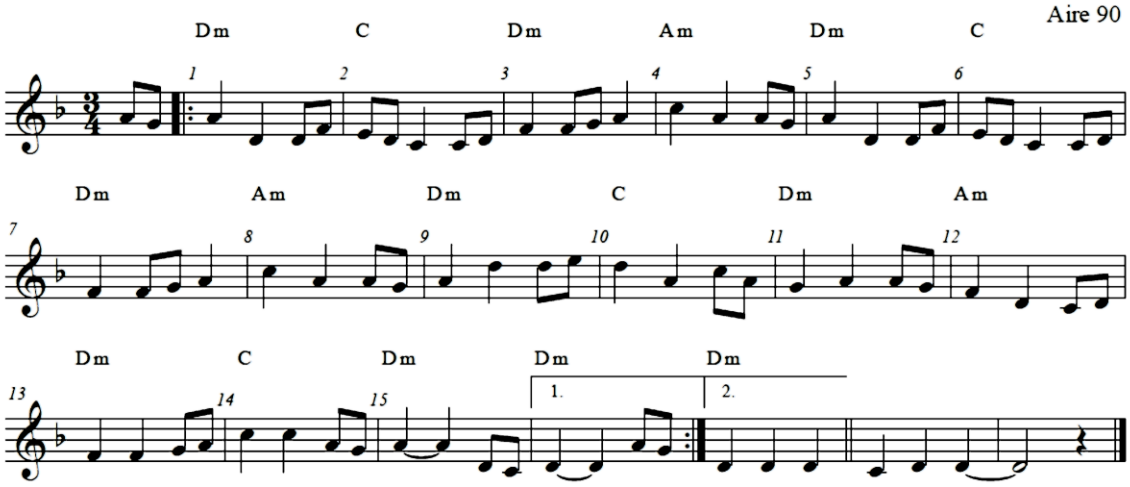


KelticDead Music Broadside

Down by the Glenside
Bold Fenian Men

Arrangement by KelticDead Music

Traditional
Aire 90



Audio on Soundcloud/KelticDead

This folk song has a lot of heartfelt emotion.

Shaun Young used a low-octave, Irish-tuned, bouzouki; a Kerry mezzo C whistle and an MK1 Low C whistle; and voices.

Earnie Taft used his fiddle, and

Linda King supported the tune with her guitar and voice harmonies.

Biographies of all KDM Volunteers found at

https://kelticdeadmusic.org/Friends/



Shaun Young



Earnie Taft



Linda King

Visit KDM YouTube Video Broadside
Bold Fenian Men

KelticDead Music Initiative

is a private, on-line music-education initiative. All the music projects are recorded with live, acoustic instruments and performed in accordance with simplified sheet music arranged in eight bar formats (whenever possible) in accordance with the guidelines that are within the Celtic music traditions. For more music videos and stories visit …

https://KelticDeadMusic.org