

Samuel O'Rourke — A Boxing Champion

Samuel O'Rourke, the Annagharvy Rourkes and Others

Were the Rourkes from Annagharvy, Kings County, Ireland who settled at Rawdon, Quebec related to the noted Irish pugilist Samuel O'Rourke? He was a star athlete in Ireland, England and North America and his life and death story was not unlike that of a present day sports celebrity. His possible connection to Rawdon intrigued my research friends and me for a long time and is a mystery that we have not solved. This is my interpretation, on December 1, 2016, of what we have found; a definite connection to Rawdon seems doubtful. The story will be updated here whenever new insights appear.

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We know that the four Rourke men, John, Michael, William and James, and their sister Mary Neville that immigrated to Lower Canada had a first cousin, Sam or Samuel Rourke, whose father, also named Samuel, was a brother of their father, Michael, (as deduced from the family letters printed in *The Rourkes of Annagharvy*, in *Up To Rawdon, Part Two*).

Samuel Rourke and Samuel O'Rourke are not unique names, in either iteration, in Lower Canada. For instance, there is a Roman Catholic Samuel Rourke, son of a Samuel Rourke, both also of King's County, who married Judith Grace at Notre Dame Church, in Montreal in 1824 and subsequently farmed at Ste-Scholastique, near present day Mirabel and baptized children there. The surname used by the Rawdon family (under various spellings) was simply Rourke; Samuel, the boxer, used the form O'Rourke and it does not appear to have used Rourke. Andrew O'Rourke, an Irish Catholic from Queen's County, was not related to Samuel Rourke's Rawdon family but had a possible connection to Samuel O'Rourke. Thomas O'Rourke, as will be seen, was a Catholic married to a Protestant who lived near Samuel O'Rourke at Grenville, Quebec.

I doubt now that Samuel Rourke (cousin to the Rawdon Rourkes) was Samuel O'Rourke the noted boxer of Tullamore, in King's County not far from Annagharvy. I had thought this was possible when I wrote *Up To Rawdon* in 2013. The idea came from Patty Brown who is a direct descendant of Eleanor / Helen O'Rourke. She shared research with me that had been done years ago by a now deceased family member. Eleanor was believed, by this man, to be a sister of the noted bare-knuckle pugilist, Samuel O'Rourke, murdered at Grenville, Quebec. She was the widow of Francis Graham with who she had immigrated to Montreal in 1826 and was the mother of his four children. Eleanor was believed to be Protestant but Graham was Roman Catholic as were their children, by baptism. The pugilist identified as Anglican (1831 Grenville Census) as was the Rawdon family. Eleanor married at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, in Montreal, 2 July 1834 and although recorded as Andrew Simpson Helen O'Rourke, a spinster, she signed her name Eleanor Rork [sic]. She signed Eleanor Simpson at the 1848 Presbyterian marriage of Eliza Graham, her minor daughter. She spelled her Christian and maiden names a variety of ways on official documents. Is the Samuel Rourke, reported going to New York in the Rawdon letters, the same as Samuel O'Rourke, the pugilist who travelled to New York? Our investigation turned up a lot of facts but none that prove they were the same man. Eleanor's third son was named Samuel Graham; this name should have been given to her second son (using the traditional Irish naming pattern) if her father was named Samuel (as was the father of Rawdon Samuel) and is a hint that Samuel O'Rourke and Samuel Rourke (son of Samuel) were not the same individual.

To add to the story of Eleanor and her brother Samuel, a woman named Catherine Rorke [sic] signed as *marraine* (godmother) at the baptism of Eliza Graham at Notre Dame Church, Montreal in 1828. When widowed, Eleanor had married Protestant, Andrew Simpson, and raised Eliza as such. Was Catherine a Catholic or Protestant or did the priest bother to ask? Was she a sister or sister-in-law to Eleanor? If not, who was she? Could she be the Catherine O'Rourke, daughter of Andrew O'Rourke and Mary Murphy of Queens County, Ireland who married, 3 March 1835, John Johnson (son of Robert Johns and Bridget Manus [sic]) originally of Tyrone at Notre Dame Church. Is it a coincidence or a clue that this couple and her father settled at Rawdon (*Up To Rawdon* pages 427 and 1098)? If so, it opens up the question if Eleanor was actually Protestant or only became so on marriage to Simpson.

A man named William Roark [sic] signed as a sponsor at the baptism of Eleanor's son James Manson Simpson at St. Gabriel Street Presbyterian Church in 1838. Who is he? Possibly a brother to Eleanor and presumably a Protestant. Or could it be William Rourke of Rawdon?

We learn (below) that Samuel, the pugilist, had brothers. Was the Thomas O'Rourke of Grenville one of them? Apparently not. Thomas O'Roarke [sic] / Thomas Rourke [sic] identified from available records had a wife [Elizabeth Cousins] and one child on the 1825 Census at Grenville, Deux Montagnes, Quebec, Canada. I learned from a contact (Kate Thompson via gmail.com) that this was a mixed marriage and that Thomas was Catholic and Elizabeth did not convert; they married and baptized their children in the Anglican church. In 1831, they were located on the Third Range, Grenville and Thomas was head of a family of 8; seven were Church of England, 1 Roman Catholic – 1 married male 30-60 and a female 14-45; 2 boys 5 and under; one boy 5-14 and 2 girls under 14. There was a youth 14-18, too old to be their child, who could be a servant and may account for the one Catholic in the family. On several Ancestry public trees, Thomas O'Roarke (parents not named) is said to have been born c. 1800 in Ireland, county not named.

In 1842, the Thomas O'Roarke family is not on the Grenville census but Samuel O'Rourke, a single yeoman, and adherent of the Church of England is recorded. Thomas had deceased c. 1836. In 1852, William O'Rourk (son of Thomas) lived at Grenville 3 /14 and on the agricultural census he was named as William Rourk. He was, 26, born in Canada and an Episcopalian. His wife Elizabeth [Cook] was 28 and their children were Pricilla [sic Phillis] 8, Thomas 6, Eliza 4 and Reuben 2 William 1. Note that his eldest son is named Thomas and in the Irish tradition this would mean his grandfather was Thomas. Also, on a farm at Grenville in 1852, was James Rourke, 23 (son of Thomas) with his wife Mary and a sister, Phillis Rourke, 18; all born in Canada. They are on the same page as, and very near neighbour to, Thomas Finglass who we will learn was Samuel O'Rourke's farmer in 1845.

The Pugilist's Story

A biography, its source quoted below, mentions that Samuel O'Rourke was the youngest of five brothers and was born in 1805. He had at least one more sister, but not named, as we see in this item from the *Dublin Observer*, 5 April 1834. It speaks to his athletic prowess. "A complaint being laid before the magistrates respecting Mr. Samuel O'Rourk, the pugilist, he made his appearance of his own accord to answer the charge the substance of which is as follows: -

In January last, Mr. O'Rourk was returning from Portartlingon in a gig with his sister, when they met six men coming from the market in Tullamore, who made use of some very offensive epithets to Mr. O'Rourk and his sister, which caused him to stop, and a regular row ensued; the six men thinking to have it all their own way, but Mr. O'Rourk exerting his powerful strength, completely defeated the six. One man, however had the meanness to get a warrant, and it was

on his complaint that Mr. O'Rourk appeared. His name is Bryan. The magistrates confiding in Mr. O'R's honour took his own bail to answer the complaint at the sessions."

"It appears that O'Rourke, a pupil of the late Simon Byrne, has returned from America and offers to fight Deaf Burke for 200 pounds or 500 pounds, the battle to come off on the Curragh of Kildare" (Warden & Dublin Weekly Mail July 27, 1833). This offer was left open for some period of time. Burke had fled to America after some particularly brutal fights; one opponent, Simon Byrne, died after their fight and it is said O'Rourke wanted to avenge his death.

A headline from an article in the *Dublin Observer*, Saturday, 21 December 1833, called Samuel O'Rourk [sic] the Irish-American boxer. He had fought and beaten a man named Fenning at Athlone, County Roscomon, on the 9th of December that year. Previously, in America, he was noted for "bating only fourteen coveys almost out of their wits". He had "returned with '*Fortune backed to his back*,' and seven gold and silver cups snug in his *peter*, the fruits of victory". Fenning described his opponent in the papers thusly. "He's as long as a steeple chace; a monument of a fellow! Six foot two inches in height and thirteen stone (182 pounds)". The fight lasted seven rounds and at the eighteenth minute Fenning was laid out with a right hand blow. O'Rourk was declared ready to take on whatever London might offer. This article ends with a report that O'Rourk's "celebrated grey mare" beat James Kelly's black mare from County Meath in a trotting match at Phoenix Park in Dublin. "O'Rourke, it seems, is equally at home on horseback as he is in the ring, and to show his activity, he jumped over the mare's back afterwards, without touching her with his hands or feet."

Sam O'Rourke, it was reported, beat Deaf Burke in an impromptu, unlicensed fight at Harrington's, Common-Street on the North Wall (Dublin Observer March 8, 1834).

We know more about Samuel's appearance from this article that appeared in the *Dublin Observer* on 17 May 1834 and had been reprinted from *Bell's Life in London*, an English Sunday sporting paper noted for printing Dickens's sketches 'Scenes and Characters'. It appears that he had grown in size! "... his goodly presence has raised him six feet two inches in our estimation, as presently to that admeasurement does his altitude amount. He is in fact, without flattery, as fine a specimen of the "finest pisantry on the face of the earth" as could be culled on a summer's day, and decidedly one of the best samples of an Irish pugilist in "shape and make" as has been offered to our "daylights", in modern times ... His weight is about 14 stone [196 pounds] and from "top to toe" he is as "straight as a pike-staff" with a pair of legs that would do honour to the Life Guards and a pair of shoulders that would put a coal-heaver to blush. Not a superfluous ounce of flesh on his bones, and muscles as hard as if they had been fashioned on the anvil of Vulcan. In age he is in his prime having been born in 1805; and we ought to finish the picture, by adding that in manners he appears unassuming and respectful. ... he will wrestle, run, jump or throw a stone with any man in the world' [and demonstrated his athletic agility]. ... His muscular proportions were examined by two surgeons ... who pronounced them to be the very perfection of symmetry."

Reading the Rourke family letters, in *Up To Rawdon*, we learn that Cousin Samuel's father died in 1828 and in March 1829 he was "contented to stay at home and got half the land from his father" but we see in a subsequent letter that he must have left for New York either that summer or early in 1830. The port of New York was sometimes a route to Montreal.

Other on line biographical articles sketch more of Samuel O'Rourke's career and his travel. He "visited America" shortly after gaining the Irish title in the early 1830s. A summary of boxing history in a Montana paper (*The Butte Daily Bulletin*, 8 September 1919) stated that he returned to Ireland in 1833. He was formerly the heavyweight, bare-knuckle boxing champion of Ireland and referred to (see above) as the Irish-American Champion. The aforementioned *Bell's Life in London* stated "... although little known in this country [England], he has signaled himself by winning, no less than seventeen prize battles, never having been beaten. America seems to have been his most fortunate, as well as most profitable field of action; for from his victories there, and the generosity of the American people, he has realized sufficient to make him independent for life."

A vignette about Samuel O'Rourke appeared in *Bell's Life in London* and gives a taste of the life of a champion on the road in the early 1830s. The illustration, from another match, shows how it might have happened, in a field outside of the town: "... while in the Northern part of the States, we believe Cincinnati, he had an argument with a Canadian named Duberville on the advantage of science and the arms of nature over



the cowardly appeal to the dirk. [This led to a challenge to fight for 100 pounds — O'Rourke with bare fists and his opponent to use his dirk as he liked. O'Rourke stipulated that if he got the man down he might kick him *ad libitum*] The battle came off in the presence of thousands. [His opponent, armed with his dirk], made several lounges [sic], which O'Rourke evaded by jumping back; [in closer quarters the man plunged again "this O'Rourke parried with his left hand, the blade ripping up one of his fingers to the knuckle, but with the right he knocked his antagonist down and according to previous agreement, took the liberty of kicking his nose off his face, to the "infinite amusement" of the spectators — the discipline of the toe continued until the Canadian confessed himself to be beaten. ..."

It was reported in the *New York Evening Star* (July 24, 1834) that "O'Rourke, the Irish Champion, has arrived at Quebec and is giving lessons in *the manly art*". Then, on August 4, 1834, the paper reported that "O'Rourke, the Irish Champion, has been challenged to a fight for \$100 by Thomas Kearney of Montreal". This places him at Montreal a month before the marriage of Eleanor Rourke Graham and in the proximity of Rawdon.

Shipping records man record that a man named Samuel O'Rourke went down the river from Montreal to Quebec City on the *Canadian Eagle* on 28 May 1835 and Mr. S. O'Rourke returned up to Montreal on June 1, a few days later. He appears to have travelled alone. This could have been the pugilist or possibly the farmer from Ste-Scholastique. However, Patty Brown says that in her family the legend was, that on the Quebec-Montreal steamboats, Sam would challenge anyone in the bar to fight him not unlike Sam's own story of his Cincinnati encounter.

We know that Samuel Rourke was at Rawdon on 14 September 1835 as a sponsor at baptism and surely this was the cousin from the letters; the father of the child baptized was Henry Smith and the other witness (Harriet Bagnall) were, like the Rourke family, immigrants from Annaghavry.

The child was William Smith my paternal twice-great grandfather. This Samuel Rourke had been reported going to New York in 1831 but is unaccounted for until the baptism in 1835 and does not appear at Rawdon again. It seemed logical to think he might be the wandering pugilist.



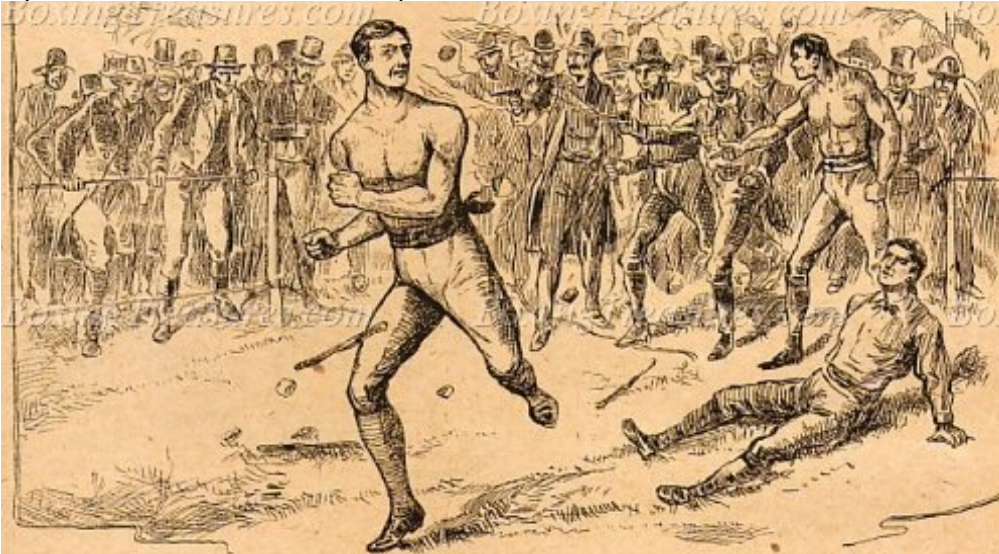
Samuel O'Rourke was brash and insulting in 1836 and continued to challenge the British champion James (Deaf) Burke for the boxing title. Burke declined to fight in Ireland. Burke had thrashed O'Rourke on one occasion, at a location not named, (*The Rise of Sports in New Orleans, 1850-1900* page 55, by Dale A. Somers) and claimed to be the American champion. They seem to have had a series of "sparring exhibitions" in various American cities (Adam Chill, *Boundaries of Britishness: Boxing, Minorities, and Identity in Late-Georgian Britain*, Doctoral dissertation, Department of History, Boston College, December 2007, p. 325).

Samuel travelled to New Orleans where he fought with Burke 6 May 1837. It is reported Samuel was taking a serious beating and his supporters began to riot. The fight was abandoned and Burke fled on horseback. The details are confirmed by reports in the *New Orleans Picayune* of that date. Samuel was arrested and placed in jail the following day for breaching the peace. It appears from subsequent contemporary newspaper accounts that Samuel was claiming to have beaten Burke. A rematch was suggested but O'Rourke would not put up any money and

left the city not to be heard of again (*Mercantile Adviser, Mobile Alabama May 29, 1837*). At any rate, O'Rourke was deprived of his championship and "soon faded from the local sporting scene". It appears that he must have returned to Canada.

Each fighter had an army of supporters, most of them armed with pistols and bowie knives. The following report by Fred Henning is from his 1903 book *Fights for the Championship: The Men and Their Times*, vol. 2 (London: "Licensed Victuallers' Gazette" Office, pp. 232-233") <http://tinyurl.com/zsytrmo>. It paints O'Rourke in a less than favourable light.

"There were only three rounds fought. In the second Mickey Carson, who was seconding O'Rourke, slipped behind the Deaf 'Un whilst he was fighting and pushed him into the arms of his opponent, who threw him. The Deaf 'Un was indignant, and swore that if he did it again he'd knock him down. At this, Mickey, producing a bowie knife from his belt, declared with an oath that if Burke came near to him he'd rip him up from his navel to his chin. In the third round, the Deaf 'Un caught O'Rourke one or two smashing blows in the mouth, and there is little doubt that he would have very soon knocked the great, blustering, half-trained bully out had not Mickey Carson again got in the way. Jim could keep his temper no longer, with a straight hit with the left he caught the second full on the nose, and down he went like a ninepin. Then the fat was in the fire. The wild Irish mob cut the ropes in a dozen places and entered the ring. The Deaf 'Un stood his ground for a minute, knocking over two or three, including O'Rourke's other second, MacSweeney, when Jim Phelan cried, "Run, Burke, run; they mean to have your life."



In this newspaper illustration, we see Carson knocked down; Burke has been stabbed and sprints from the mob who, it seems, are urged on by O'Rourke.

Samuel O'Rourke must have, soon after this, returned to Canada. This report from the *Southern Reporter and Cork Commercial Carrier* (30 October 1845) helps to tell the story. Samuel O'Rourke was a man of "great athletic strength and activity" and when he returned to Canada "he determined to set himself down on an allotment close to Grenville on the Long Salt" [sic Long Sault, on the Ottawa River in Two Mountains County (Argenteuil) near Grenville, Quebec]. This is confirmed by the 1842 Grenville, Canada East Census. It names a householder Samuel Orourke [sic], who was a yeoman and not married, born in Ireland, aged between 30 and 60. He was Church of England, owned 3 cattle and one horse. He had obtained the land by purchase.

Boxing Champion's Death was International News

A report of the death of O'Rourke in the *New Orleans Courier* appeared on 3 October 1845: he "figured here as a pugilist seven or eight years ago." The *Kings County Chronicle* on Wednesday, October 29, 1845 carried a story from the *Montreal Gazette*, about the death of O'Rourke and named him the North American Champion (which may be somewhat exaggerated). This article states that the encounter with Burke was Sam's "last professional] fight". He was referred to (perhaps) as the Champion of New Orleans in papers in that city.

Newspaper reports, especially *The British Whig*, Kingston, Canada West dated 26 September, 1845, report that on the 8th of September 1845 Samuel O'Rourke invited his neighbours to a bee with the intention of raising a large log barn. When workers arrived from near and far the host was not at home. They were told that he had gone the previous day on horseback to the place of a neighbour named Brady about three miles distant to invite him and retrieve some borrowed equipment (a travail or travois). O'Rourke had been accompanied by his two dogs and one of them returned the next day badly beaten.

Church records (Drouin) record that his neighbour John Brady, a farmer, of Grenville, in 1833 married Ann Butler at Montebello, a mission 34 kilometres north west of Grenville on the Ottawa River. On the 1842 Grenville, Canada East Census, John Brady, a yeoman, headed a family of seven. He is entry 13 on the same page where Samuel is entry 16. Brady and his wife were born in Ireland and had 5 children born in Canada. He was 30 – 60 years old and his wife was between 14 and 45, 2 boys and one girl were 5 years or under, and two girls were 5 – 14 years.

One of Samuel's friends, with Thomas Finglass, O'Rourke's "farmer", set out to investigate. Brady claimed not to have seen Samuel "for more than a week". Thinking that Samuel had gone elsewhere, they returned home. On the second day after this, serious searching began under the direction of Captain George Kains, the acting Coroner. He engaged three Indians, who were going up the river to hunt, to assist in tracking the missing man. Brady assisted in the search and denied having met O'Rourke the previous day. He was viewed with suspicion as it was said that he had previously threatened O'Rourke's life.

A trail was found leading off from the road and marked with blood and signs of a scuffle and further on another trampled area. From there the horse was tracked to a gully and in a deep hole O'Rourke's steed was found with its skull crushed, a deep gash to its neck and its fore-feet cut off below the knees. Another trail led to Brady's place. There were marks of another horse and that a travail had been used and this led to a hill that overlooked the Rivière Rouge. It was apparent that O'Rourke had been dragged and rolled leaving blood, wisps of hair and scraps of linen. There was evidence of blood and attempts to remove the blood from an old bleached pine log across the path. It appeared that a body had been thrown into the river from this point.

The body of Samuel O'Rourke was found floating, after a few days, where the Rouge enters the Ottawa. It was "very little disfigured" and there was no doubt it was O'Rourke as his name was tattooed on his left arm. There were gun shot wounds on his right arm and back, some buck shot had penetrated his body and some was found in his skin and chest (he was shot twice). His skull was crushed "in a fearful manner" and parts of his scalp sliced away and the side of his face below the ear bore a wound as if by an axe. He was naked.

A coroner's inquest was held on 16 September 1845 by Mr. Kains at the home of Mrs. Kimble [sic Margaret, widow of David Kimball] at the mouth of the Rouge. Testimony of Albert Kimble [sic] who had seen a naked body in the Grand [sic Ottawa] River driven there by the current of the Rouge and with two men and a canoe had "towed it ashore". This was corroborated by James O'Rourke who stated that he in "no way related to the deceased." I believe this was James, son of Thomas O'Rourke born in 1828 and as suggested above not related to Samuel. It appears to be a coincidence that Samuel O'Rourke and Thomas O'Rourke both had farms at Grenville and not related.

A witness (who was going up the Ottawa River with four others in a punt) had seen the body and believed it was "within the influence" of the Red. Later, Chauncey Johnson went to Brady's house and was asked by Brady if a body had been found. Johnson replied no and asked Brady to join the search. He did not refuse but seemed reluctant until Johnson asked if he thought O'Rourke might have drowned himself in one of the nearby lakes. This relieved Brady of his "confusion or embarrassment" and he prepared to join the search. His wife, however, "asked her husband if he was going in search of that "scoundrel" or rascal" [or some other opprobrious term]. "She was sure the devil had carried him off for the injury he had done to the family, and for destroying her sister's character and said he should not go." Brady said he would but his wife objected severely with her husband until he said he was going to search the lakes. She was then pacified. At this point men came to say they were going to drag the Rouge. The witness left not caring for Brady's company or to search the lakes or to let him know what was happening.

However, men began to gather at the Brady place and removed brush which covered marks made by a horse and travail. They noticed that Brady was watching them and called out,

anxiously, had they found anything. He seemed flustered. They found a trail of a horse and where something had been dragged without using the travail. After viewing the area previously described and the dead horse, the witness (Johnson) went back to Brady to ask him to accompany him and explain "certain marks" that he had found and to tell him that he was suspected of murder. Brady's wife was alarmed that her husband accompanied the witness. When Johnson told Brady that the horse had been found Brady replied "pertly" that they had not found the saddle. On arriving where it was supposed O'Rourke had fallen, Brady held back "as if conscience stricken". Brady explained the marks saying he had been drawing timber to "fix his stable". At the wood road leading from the main trail, the witness called Brady back to ask what was done there. Brady did not know but when showed marks and possible blood he said it could be a bear that "he had wounded last day of August". Brady agreed to go to the magistrate with the witness thinking that he could clear himself. On the way, they passed the travail, which had been recently shaved but still had evident blood stains. Brady admitted it was the one he had used and by no one else and could not explain the stains.

Testimony was given by Thomas Finglass (Samuel O'Rourke's farmer). He lived with him and had watched him depart on the Sunday he disappeared. (Thomas Finglass of Grenville baptized a daughter at the Catholic church in St. Andrew's East, 19 October 1845. The child had been born 15 August 1845. He had a farm at Grenville in 1852.) When he had not returned by noon the next day, he and another man went to Brady's place because O'Rourke had gone there to reclaim the travail. Brady said "he had not seen him since Sunday last". Brady's wife and children arrived as the inquest was to adjourn for the day and were all placed under guard until the next day.

The testimony for George Kains was not legible in the microfilm of the newspaper. Another witness, William Whinefield, told of following the trail from Brady's house and finding the horse, dead in a deep gully, as previously described. His companion identified it as O'Rourke's and had sold it to him on September 4. It was without saddle or bridle. His testimony, concerning the finding of the travail, was similar to Chauncey Johnson. However, at Brady's house, about 15 yards from the house his companion investigated wood chips covering a hole in the ground in which was human excrement and a small bark box containing bills from the Peoples Bank: four \$5s and one \$10, from Montreal Bank, Toronto: one \$10, from City of Toronto Bank: one \$2 and three \$1s (one torn in two), an 1843 [gold] sovereign and a large gold ring identified by a jury member as having seen it worn by O'Rourke and a piece of cotton wool. The witness then went to the home of Widow Butler (the mother of Ann Brady) and took her prisoner; she was hysterical and fainting.

John Brady was sworn in and stated that he was at his home all the day in question and O'Rourke did not visit him nor was he expected and he had no visitors that day. He said that he sometimes went out with his (single-barrelled) gun on Sundays. He had been on his allotment seven or eight years and perhaps had only three times been in the part between his lot and the Rouge. He had a two dollar and a five-dollar bill and some silver. He "does not know that his wife has or does earn money in any way" and keeps his money in a box; he "has but two boxes". He had not noticed the "hewing" or shaving of the travail or seen the blood on it until it was pointed out. He had never threatened O'Rourke. He described work that he had done cutting brush and trees in late August. The mare with the travail went off the track near the place spoken of. His wife was "bit" by the mare when she went to get her back. He had not seen a dead horse on his premises. He had not fired his gun since August and was not aware that it was loaded on September 11. He spoke about putting a cap on his gun. He had "paid O'Rourke two dollars for a pair of booteens for his wife but they did not fit her". These he cut and tore to pieces with his hands. They were "got

while he was absent in shanty; did so because there had been a few words between him and his wife about O'Rourke".

Ann Butler, wife of John Brady, was sworn: her apparel was described "white fustian sleeve vest and trowsers the same" and check shirt over a flannel shirt. She showed the wound to her arm from the incident described by her husband. She stated explicitly that her husband did not take his gun out on Sunday "never does so, certainly never". The booteens were too big and had been cut up and were at her mother's; she had not paid for them and had received no money. She had 1 shilling, 3 pence in pocket-book in a box; they had no small bark boxes in the house. On the Monday, working with her husband, she drove the horse and travail once only. She showed the jury where it had bit her.

Two licenced surgeons were sworn in and reported that despite advanced decomposition, they noted a large gunshot wound on O'Rourke's right arm and five others near it; none could have caused death, also gunshot to the front of his chest. One shot to the back of his right arm, high up and about the middle of the spine were six shots "sufficient to cause death in a very short time" that caused him to fall. Extensive fracture of skull was observed that would have caused instant death. The wound to the head was at about the same time as gunshots. Both men agreed that "two separate discharges had been fired" from a very short distance and from above. It is impossible that they were self-inflicted.

Catherine Brady, past ten years of age, was after much examination determined to know right from wrong. She stated Mr. O'Rourke came two Sundays ago to get the horse [sic] a little after evening and her mother went outside when he was leaving. He came on a young wild colt that he got from Crawford. It had a white spot on forehead and was of red colour; it had a saddle and bridle. A young lad, James Brady (son of Brady) stated the horse was wild, a red horse. Says: "O'Rourke looked at his watch and a nice one it was with a chain about this thick; saw other watches since but says that Mr. O'Rourke's was a "gooder" one." (We know from *Bell's Life in London* that O'Rourke had "several tokens of American approbation in the way of gold chains, seals, gold watch." The boy reported "his father shook hands with Rourke" as he left.

James Butler, the brother of Mrs. John Brady, said "Brady was jealous of his wife and he suspected O'Rourke was the cause of it" and "that John Brady uses his wife ill."

"The [inquest] jury ... found that Samuel O'Rourke came to his death by gunshot and other wounds inflicted by one John Brady with intent to murder and that said John Brady is guilty of the willful murder of the deceased Samuel O'Rourke. The prisoner was subsequently conveyed to Montreal and lodged in gaol."

Another newspaper reported that Samuel's wife was arrested. This is unlikely as Samuel was single in 1842 and no wife is mentioned at the inquest or any source reviewed and probably refers to O'Rourke's wife [see following paragraph]. This misinformation does not appear again.

As mentioned earlier, William Whinefield, one of the search party for O'Rourke, had taken Ann Brady prisoner when she was at her mother's house. She and the children apparently remained under restriction until the inquest. The newspaper reported that at the adjournment of the first day of the proceeding "as the people were dispersing, William Whinefield came in with Brady's wife and children, who were placed under a guard as well as Brady himself". No reliable report

has been found to indicate that Ann Butler Brady was charged. They were required as witnesses at the inquest, which explains to me why this was done and for their own protection.

It was reported (*NY Evening Post* 23 February 1846 as copied from Montreal papers) that on 16 February 1846, there had been a postponement of Brady's trial. On his deathbed, a witness had cleared his conscience by testifying that after hearing gun shot he had seen Brady struggle with O'Rourke and bludgeon him with the gun butt. He had concealed this information for fear of Brady's associates. The witness recovered from his mortal illness and was induced to testify.

On the 13th August 1846, at the indictment of John Brady for murder before Judges Vallieres, Gale and Day, seven witnesses were called for the defence. The jury "were agreed and found the prisoner at the bar not guilty in manner and form as laid in the indictment" It was "ordered that the prisoner be discharged" The document quoted from does not report on the crown's case or give details of what the witnesses for the defence said under oath. (BAnQ - TP9, S2, SS1, SSS11 (259) pps. 45 and 46).

Despite this, the *Brooklyn [New York] Evening Star*, on 27 Mar 1848, reported "Brady, the murderer of the pugilist O'Rourke, died a few days ago in Canada. He confessed on his death bed that he had murdered O'Rourke and another man. He had been tried for the murder of the former and acquitted on the strong evidence of guilt." His death does not appear in the Drouin Index.

On the census early in 1852 Ann Butler, a widow of 56, lived at Range 2, Lot 26 in Grenville with two young men: John Butler 24 and Michael Butler 21 (possibly nephews) and her children Ann, James and John Brady, 10-16 years. She lived very near to Thomas Finglass at First Range 24, who I guess to be on Samuel's place.

It is not known where Samuel O'Rourke was buried. Nothing has been found in the Drouin Index. I requested a search of the register of St. Matthew's Anglican Church, Grenville, Quebec. It would appear at he was not buried there.

In Conclusion

There is nothing remaining in the extensive Rawdon Rourke family oral tradition about a relative who was a boxer, especially one who was famous throughout North America and the British Isles. It does not seem like a story that a family would forget. Cousin Samuel, who was mentioned in the letters and who was godfather to my ancestor, did not stay long enough in that community to make a mark. One wonders, what became of him when his Rawdon visit ended? We have done a lot of detailed searches but with insufficient Irish birth records it is difficult to prove if or how Samuel O'Rourke was related to the Rawdon people and I feel that he was not.

Samuel O'Rourke, the boxer claimed to be Anglican, and it appears that Thomas O'Rourke of Grenville was born Catholic. Thomas's son claimed he was not related to the murdered Samuel.

The claim by Patty's family that Samuel O'Rourke, the pugilist, was the brother of their ancestor Eleanor is well-backed by family legend but it includes no detail about their parents and has only an assumed Rawdon connection. Patty's sources definitely confused Rawdon with Grenville in at first claiming his murder was at Rawdon but I believe the pugilist was probably their relative and had only a doubtful and unproven Rawdon connection. The lack of primary or secondary sources prevents speculation about a close relationship.