

It is untrue that KNOCK vision seen in daylight

In a village of about a dozen homes and a Parish Church called Knock in Co Mayo, Ireland, a seemingly extraordinary occurrence was reported.

On the night of the 21st of August 1879 the Virgin Mary flanked by St Joseph and a bishop thought to be St John the Evangelist and an altar with a lamb and cross on it allegedly appeared on the gable wall of the Parish Church for a few hours. Fifteen people witnessed the vision including a child of five (page 60, The Evidence for Visions of the Virgin Mary) and stood watching it for two hours allegedly in torrential rain.

The suspicion of fraud and trickery was there from the very start. The most popular natural explanation is that a projector, called a magic lantern in those days, was deployed.

The Church rejects that on the basis that the images were seen before dark.

Let us examine the witness testimonies and other evidence to check this claim out.

Did the apparition really start before dark?

THE APPARITIONS AND MIRACLES AT KNOCK ALSO, The Official Depositions of the Eye-Witnesses, PREPARED AND EDITED BY JOHN McPHILPIN NEPHEW OF THE ARCHBISHOP OF TUAM) says "The time at which the apparition appeared was some twenty minutes after sunset".

However, the vision reportedly occurred before it got dark and continued until darkness fell lasting for a couple of hours.

Margaret Beirne, the sister of Mary Beirne stated, " I left my own house at half-past seven o'clock, and went to the chapel and locked it. I came out to return home ; I saw something luminous or bright at the south gable."

It obviously was not bright enough to get her attention. She refutes the lies of those witnesses who said the light was unimaginably bright.

Or did she really see something bright at the gable? Or was she the person employed by the priest to set up the hoax? She was there alone before others saw the vision so she must be considered a suspect.

Margaret and Mary both claimed they had the job of locking the Church. Margaret left to do it as did Mary later on as if she didn't know. This mistake could not have happened when they were living in the same house. It is bizarre who the testimonies expect us to believe that though they lived in the same house, three visits were needed to inform. And it was a different family member that was informed each time! Did they not speak to one another? First we read that Mary Beirne went to get Dominick to the apparition at 8. Then Catherine goes to get Margaret there at 8 or thereabouts.

According to Margaret, "Shortly after, about eight o'clock, my niece, Catherine Murray, called me out to see the Blessed Virgin and the other saints that were standing at the south gable of the chapel."

"Then Margaret goes to get their mother to the apparition at 8.15, the mother said, "I was called out at about a quarter past eight o'clock by my daughter Margaret to see the Vision." The one journey should have sufficed.

It looks like Margaret already knew what was at the gable but acted as if she did not, leaving Catherine to have to go and fetch her. Strange!

Mary McLoughlin who may have been drinking declared, "We gazed on them for a little, and then I told her [Mary Beirne] to go for her mother, Widow Beirne, and her brother, and her sister [Margaret who we have suspicions about, and her niece, who were still in the house which she and I had left. I remained looking at the sight before me until the mother, sister, and brother of Miss Mary Beirne came." This indicates that Margaret did not go back to the house to get her mother.

Catherine Murray upon hearing of the apparition "followed my aunt [Mary] and uncle [Dominick] to the chapel".

Dominick Beirne Senior stated, "my cousin, Dominick Beirne, came to see us at about eight o'clock, p.m., and called me to see the vision of the Blessed Virgin Mary and other saints at the south gable of the chapel. I went with him. " This

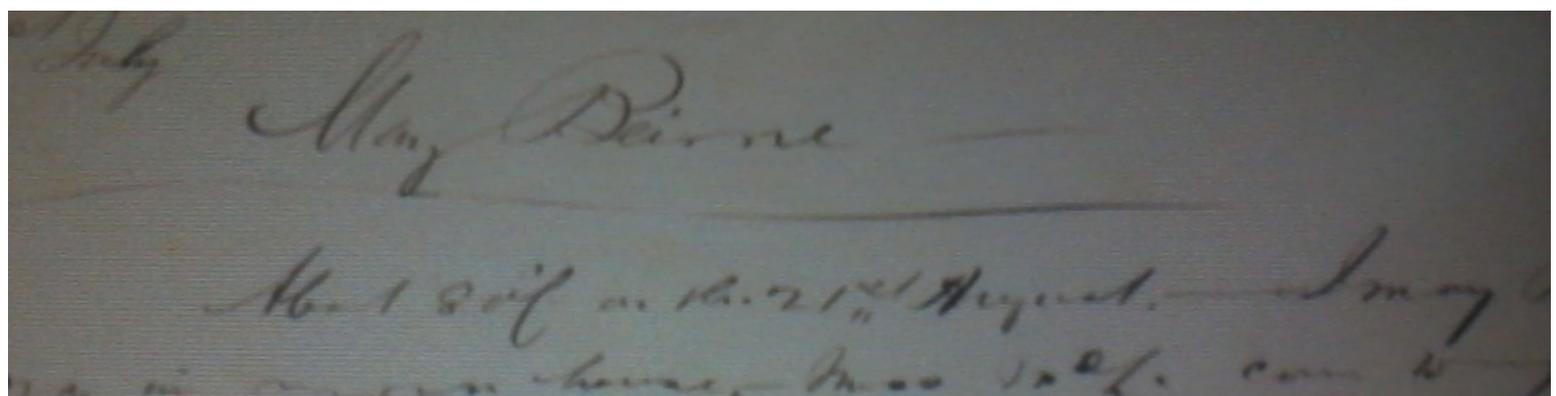
Dominick did not live with the Beirne's and he lived with his nephew John Curry (page 178, Knock The Virgin's Apparition in Nineteenth Century Ireland).

Mary Mc Loughlin, housekeeper to Archdeacon Cavanagh, Parish Priest of Knock, said that the images were on the gable when it was daylight. She thought they were statues. This was about 7.00 pm or slightly after but in modern time it would be 8.30 pm. She was the first person to see the images. She was on her way to Widow Margaret Beirne's house to visit. She stayed half an hour at least, at it. She never mentioned the images during her visit. This was very unnatural if she had seen something strange. And especially when Beirne's house was very close to the apparition site meaning she could not have forgotten. The simplest way to understand this is that she never saw any images at all. It may have been a lie. If some trickery was involved, eg with lights that would be seen best in the dark, and she was part of the conspiracy it could have been necessary for her to lie that she saw the images in daylight to offset the chance of people guessing the truth.

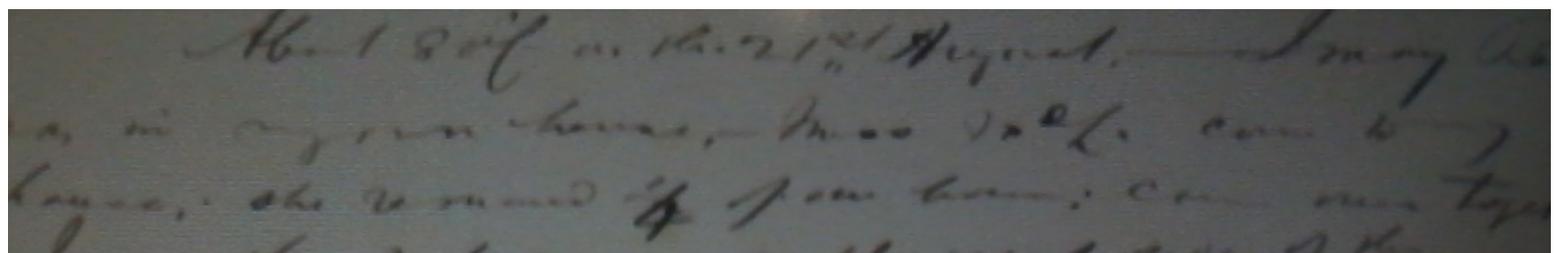
Mary Beirne lived in the house. When McLoughlin left to go back to her own home - the parochial house - Beirne accompanied her.

Mary Beirne's deposition apparently says that she said she left the house to walk Mary McLoughlin back to the parochial house "when it was still bright." She does not say it was bright when she saw the vision which wasn't seen until they passed the Church. They could have stood talking at the door. Indeed she said she was in the presence of the vision from "a quarter past eight to half-past nine o'clock." Also she might have been there later than 8.15 for at the start of her account she is unable to decide if it was 8 or 7.45 pm when McLoughlin's visit ended.

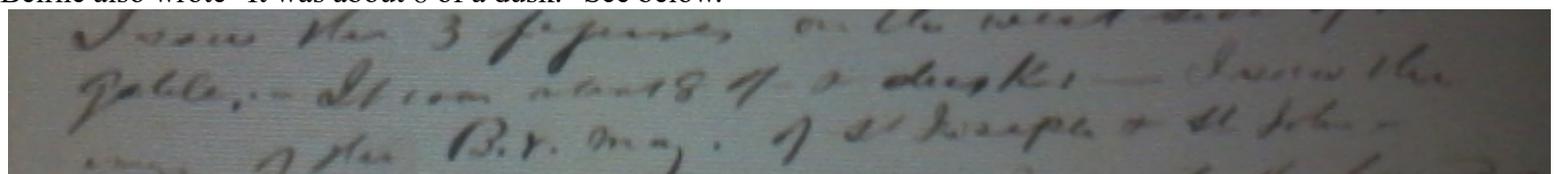
The accepted deposition is altered. The original handwritten deposition has Beirne stating that she was in her own house about 8 O' Clock.

A photograph of a handwritten document in cursive script. The name 'Mary Beirne' is written at the top. Below it, the text reads 'About 8 o'clk on the 21st August. I was in my own house, Miss McLoughlin came to visit me about 8 o'clk and remained a 1/4 of an hour.'

McLoughlin came to visit later than commonly believed. She said that Miss McLochlainn as she called her came about 8 and remained a 1/4 of an hour.

A photograph of a handwritten document in cursive script, showing a portion of the text from the previous image. The text reads 'About 8 o'clk on the 21st August. I was in my own house, Miss McLoughlin came to visit me about 8 o'clk and remained a 1/4 of an hour.'

Beirne also wrote "It was about 8 of a dusk." See below.

A photograph of a handwritten document in cursive script. The text reads 'I saw then 3 figures on the west wall of the gable. It was about 8 of a dusk. I saw the image of the B.V. Mary. I saw Joseph & St John.'

We know the 8 o'clock she is on about means 9.30 pm in today's time. It is indeed fairly dark in Ireland at 9.30 pm on August 21.

(The Sullivan version of her testimony gives the time as 8.15 - see page 117, The Apparition at Knock, The Ecumenical Dimension. If 8.15 is the correct time - and what makes it plausible is the fact that the witnesses would not have wanted to make out they saw the vision that late out of fear of the magic lantern rumour - then 9.45 is when McLaughlin and Beirne

saw the vision. It would follow that it was already getting dark if it is true that the former really saw the vision a half an hour or so before. At best only one witness saw the vision before it got dark and that was at twilight.)

At that time of year in Ireland, it will be fairly dark then. And even darker if it has been a gloomy wet day. We know that they did not follow Greenwich Mean Time at the time of the apparition. You add on a half hour to get modern time and also an hour to adjust for summer time (page 134, *The Apparition at Knock, The Ecumenical Dimension*). Always add on an hour and a half to any time given in the depositions.

Her published deposition is full of alterations by a dishonest publisher. It is simply untrue that she verified that the apparition was seen clearly in daylight.

Mary and Mary Beirne passed the Church after the visit ended. This time both women claimed they saw the figures. Other people joined them allegedly about 8.15 pm (modern time would be 9.45) and it was getting dark (page 23, *The Apparition at Knock*). The images became clearer once darkness fell (page 61, *The Evidence for Visions of the Virgin Mary*). The images were then surmised to be exuding or emitting some kind of light. Perhaps it was just a light that shone on them.

God would have made sure that the first witness would have known that they were not statues from the start. And would Mary and co appear there and stay there when there was nobody about? And could God not make the images brighter until it got dark? Why did Mc Loughlin not see any light? There could have been no light when she was so sure they were statues. This suggests that whatever she saw it was not an apparition. She never mentioned about what she thought were statues in the Beirne house. It looks as if she and Mary Beirne didn't see anything until it was dark and when they passed the Church. Then Mc Loughlin lied that there was something there when it was full daylight. She was a friend of and a housekeeper to the Archdeacon. She may have lied to cut out any suspicions of fraud such as a magic lantern being used. There is reason to be suspicious of the Archdeacon and therefore of her.

Patrick Hill testified in 1879 that he went to the vision at 8. Not that long after he testified soon in the *Weekly News* that it was dark then (page 59, *The Apparition at Knock*). He testified to the *Daily Telegraph* that he went to the apparition when it was night and dark (page 60, 61, *The Apparition at Knock*). So it was dark that night at 8.

Consignments of statues had been sent to Knock recently and broken. She said she thought that the Archdeacon had ordered new statues placed at the gable and never told her. Strangely she never said that the gable would have been an odd place to have put the statues. And what about the altar and the lamb supposedly floating about half way up the gable? She said she saw a white light. Incredibly, just a few minutes later she was in the Beirne house and still said nothing after seeing all these strange things? It doesn't ring true. She saw nothing.

There is no reason to believe the claim that the figures were seen in daylight. They were seen at twilight and in the dark.

Some investigators make a lot out of the apparition appearing in daylight. They say that it indicates for example that it eliminates the idea that a projector (a magic lantern) may have been used to make the images. A projector would need the dark.

My preference is to hold that the images were cut outs stuck to the wall and some light source was shone on them. Investigations have assumed a slide with the images on it was used but that is not necessarily correct. The people who supposedly saw the images in daylight did not think they were amazing. It was only after dark they seemed to be ethereal and magical. Mary Beirne said in the 1930's that close up the images looked as if they were painted on the wall.

Did McLoughlin really see the vision in daylight?

Mary McLoughlin reporting that she saw the vision before night fell as she went to Beirne's is cited by believers against suspicions that the images were made with a projector. The projector would require great darkness. The darker the better.

She said she saw a strange sight in a white light on the way there and thought the figures were statues.

There is no evidence that she really saw the figures before she visited Beirne's at all. She didn't even mention what she allegedly had seen by then to the Beirne's though she was at least a half an hour in their house. She had no time to forget for the house was only a minute away from the Church - was she drunk?

McLoughlin and Mary Beirne left the Beirne house. They approached the chapel and still Mc Loughlin said nothing. That is bizarre and can only be explained by confusion, forgetfulness, a hangover or drunkenness. Mary Beirne was the one that had to notice the figures. McLoughlin in her testimony says that she and Mary Beirne went near the chapel and Beirne cries out about the figures. She testifies like one that didn't see them until Beirne alerted her to their presence. Had they both seen them at the one time she would say, "We approached the chapel we saw beautiful images and Mary Beirne cried out, "Look

at the beautiful figures". The bolded bit is conspicuous by its absence in her testimony. She says nothing about telling Beirne or anybody else that she saw them before.

Mc Loughlin may have seen the images then for the first time and later with the hustle and bustle forgot this and thought that she had seen them before that.

It is said that Beirne said in 1879 that they saw the vision when it was still bright. This is not true. She said they left the Beirne house when it was still light. If they stood talking at the door of the house they might not have seen the vision until it was darkening.

Patrick Hill testified in 1879 that he went to the vision at 8. Not that long after he testified soon in the Weekly News that it was dark then (page 59, *The Apparition at Knock*). He testified to the Daily Telegraph that he went to the apparition when it was night and dark (page 60, 61, *The Apparition at Knock*). So it was dark that night at 8. We know from Mc Loughlin it was supposed to be quite dark at 8.15.

Beirne's house was nearly in line with the gable of the apparition. Why did nobody see the alleged light from the windows of the house or from the front door?

CONCLUSION

It would be hard for magic lantern images to make a good impression in daylight. However, if it was very overcast it would not be impossible. The Church needs people to think the vision was seen in daylight for it wants to discourage the hypothesis that the images were tricks done with a magic lantern.

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