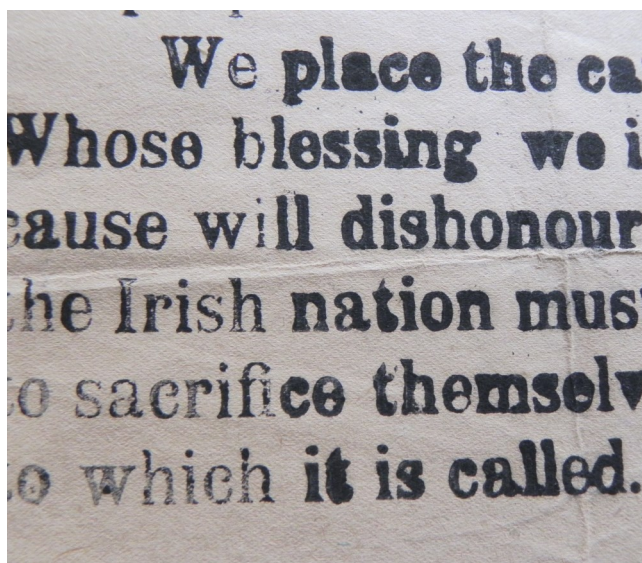


National Archives of Ireland



How we conserve the 'half' Proclamation CSO/RP/1916/8086

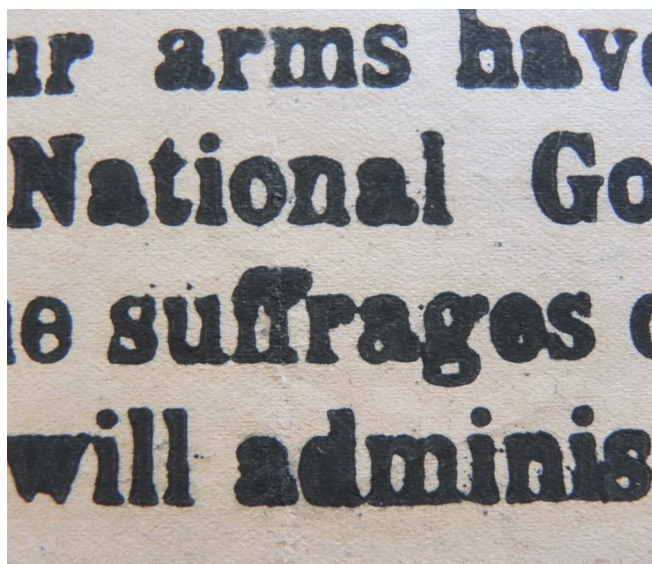


Conservation

Overall the half Proclamation is in relatively good condition as it was tucked away at the back of the relating correspondence. There is very little damage, just small tears along the fold lines, where the sheet was folded into small sections of 200 mm x 140mm.

After a light surface cleaning, the Proclamation was humidified with an even application of water over the sheet of paper. It was then pressed between blotters and board overnight.

For further information, watch the Irish Times video -<http://www.irishtimes.com/1916-who-printed-the-proclamation-1.2532749>



It is believed that just over 1,000 copies of the Proclamation were printed, of which it is thought under 50 remain. The National Archives have in the CSO RP Collection a full sheet with the lower half of text printed on it. Is this a unique document?

The Proclamation was printed on the 23 April in the basement of Liberty Hall, using a Wharfedale Double Crown Press by Christopher Brady, William O'Brien and Michael Molloy. This was the small team of printers who had been printing the weekly *Workers' Republic* for the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU).

Visual identification and comparisons of overall sheet size (765 mm x 530mm) has lead to the conclusion that the paper used for both the *Workers' Republic* newspaper and the Proclamation is the same. Both used low cost, newsprint sheets.

The main ingredient in newsprint is wood pulp, which is made by grinding wood into small particles, softening it by boiling and forming it into sheets. This process results in very short fibres and high levels of a substance called lignin. In paper it rapidly discolours, oxidises in light and causes acids that degrade.

Half Proclamation

It is well documented and discussed how the Proclamation was printed in two halves due to a lack of typeset. The upper half was printed first, the type was then dismantled and the same letters set for the lower half of text.

Two main things are visible from this half print; there is not an even distribution of the ink over all the letters. In some places, there is too much ink (look at the build-up of ink on the 'a, d and w') and in the lower left hand of the text not enough ink has been applied. What is also visible is the transfer of the print on to the upper blank half of the sheet, leaving a 'ghost' impression of the text.