

Brian Boru and the Battle of Clontarf 1014

Brian Boru, the famous High King of Ireland, shares Carroll history with us all. In 954AD, when King Callahan died, his son Donnchad succeeded him. After Donnchad's death, Mahon, the oldest of the surviving sons of Kennedy, King of the Dalcassians, claimed the kingship for himself. He desired peace with the Vikings and attempted to secure it. His younger brother, Brian Boru however urged armed violent resistance.

Brian was able to convince the Irish that they had to fight Ivar and his Vikings. Brian and his forces engaged Ivar and defeated him, bringing on a time of peace in Ireland. After an eight year period however, the Viking Ivar returned and assassinated King Mahon. Brian succeeded his older brother Mahon, and the fight was on.

Brian controlled most of southern Ireland, while another king Malachy controlled the northern areas. Malachy, outnumbered and lacking support from his chiefs, ceded the high kingship of Ireland to Brian. Brian married the most beautiful woman in Ireland, Maelmora. She was also known to be the most evil. After only four years of marriage, and a son to the union, Brian left Maelmora. Filled with hatred for Brian and his allies, Maelmora summoned the Vikings for assistance with the promise of lands and riches if they could invade, and defeat Brian Boru. It is important to note here, that Brian's chief confessor, and advisor was a Carroll of Ely.

Brian summoned a force consisting of all Irish from all over the kingdom. Historians estimate that he had a force of DalCassians numbering about 5000, with 6000 Eugenians, and approximately 1000 men from Clan Cian (Carroll). In all, every powerful chieftain in Ireland was assembled behind Brian to oust the Dane Vikings. The year was 1014, and Brian began his march across Ireland to face the Vikings. His armies gathered strength as they marched through the various territories, like a snowball gathering mass as it rolls down a hill. Soon, Brian had some 20,000 Irishmen.

On 23 April, 1014 at sunrise, Brian rode in front of his army holding a sword upright in one hand, and a crucifix in the other. He inspired his men, and instilled the "insanity" of which the Irish had grown famous for in a fight. The Vikings charged the Irish positions. The Carrolls and their related families from the territory of Ely formed one of the center divisions which consisted of some 1500 Cianachts. Throughout the day, the Vikings pushed the Irish back, and the Irish pushed the Vikings back. There was tremendous slaughter, and acts of heroism on both sides, however there can be only one winner. This time, it would be the Irish under Brian Boru. It has been said that only twenty or so Vikings escaped the Battle of Clontarf alive. The Irish basically destroyed the invaders. High King Brian Boru lost his life in battle, and the Carroll, or Cianachts displayed great bravery under their leadership of their Carroll Chieftian.

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