

# TOM MOLINEAUX (1784–1818):

THE SLAVE WHO FOUGHT HIS WAY TO FREEDOM  
AN SCLÁBHAÍ A THROID CHUN AN tSAOIRSE A BHAINT AMACH



© 'THE BATTLE BETWEEN CRIB AND MOLINEAUX', 1811: Courtesy of Dave Collins. This widely reproduced contemporary illustration of the second world-title fight shows Tom Molineaux and Tom Cribb, the English Champion.

© 'THE BATTLE BETWEEN CRIB AND MOLINEAUX', 1811: Le caoinchead ó Dave Collins. Taispeántar sa léaráid chomhaimseartha seo den dara troid i gcomhair chraobh an domhain a dhéantar a atáirgeadh go forleathan, Tom Molineaux agus Tom Cribb, Seaimpín Shasana.

On 4 August 1818, an African-American bare-knuckle fighter named Tom Molineaux died destitute in the band room of an army barracks in Galway town. Aged just thirty-four, it was a tragic end for a man who had fought in the first ever world title fight less than a decade earlier.

Described by boxing legend Mike Tyson as “the first black champion who earned his freedom through fighting”, Molineaux was inducted into the International Boxing Hall of Fame in 1997. He lies buried in an unmarked grave in a Galway suburb.

An 4 Lúnasa 1818, fuair trodaí dorn-nochta Meiriceánach Afracach darb ainm Tom Molineaux bás beo bocht i seomra banna beairic airm i mbaile na Gaillimhe. Ní raibh sé ach tríocha a ceathair bliain d’aois nuair a cuireadh deireadh tubaisteach leis an bhfear a throid sa chéad troid i gcomhair chraobh an domhain ní ba lú ná deich mbliana ní ba luaithe.

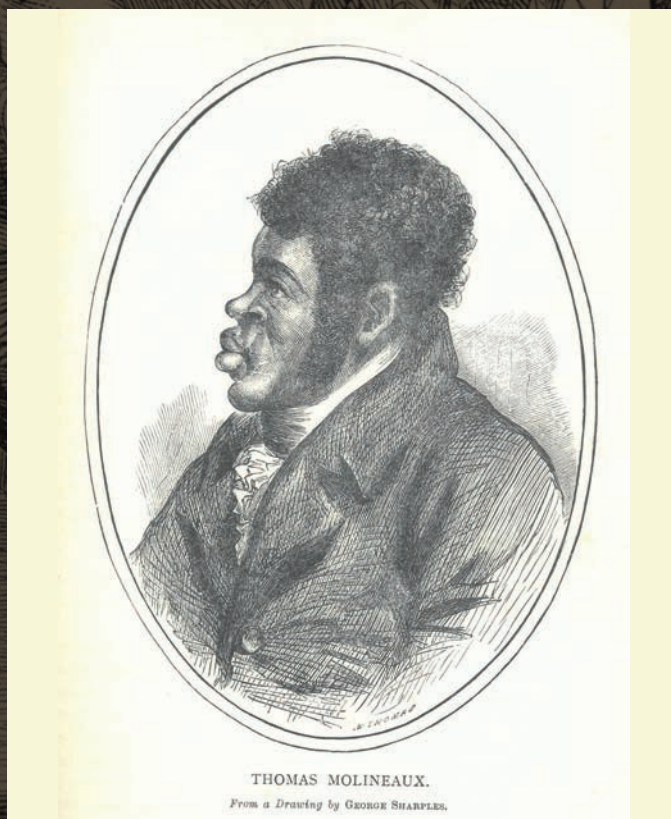
Dúirt laoch na dornálaíochta, Mike Tyson, gurbh é ‘an chéad seaimpín gorm a raibh a shaoirse tuillte aige trí throid’, rinneadh Molineaux a thabhairt isteach i Halla Clú Idirnáisiúnta na Dornálaíochta i 1997. Tá sé curtha in uaigh gan mharcáil i mbruachbhaile na Gaillimhe.

“If there were a more tragic figure in the history of the Prize Ring than that of Thomas Molineaux, it would be difficult to unearth it. His was a tale of bondage and freedom, of poverty and success, of grand victory and tragic defeat, of heroic stature and human frailty.”

KEVIN R. SMITH (2003) BLACK GENESIS: *The History of the Black Prizefighter, 1760-1870.*

'THOMAS MOLINEAUX': Reproduced in *Pugilistica* by Henry Downes Miles, 1906.

'THOMAS MOLINEAUX': *Atáirgthe in Pugilistica le Henry Downes Miles, 1906.*



THOMAS MOLINEAUX.

From a Drawing by GEORGE SHARPLES.