Irish Americans and Their Communities of Cleveland

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Nelson Callahan and William Hickey

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Cleveland Ethnic Heritage Studies, Cleveland State University

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Preface

The history of Cleveland is intimately connected with the settlement of the Irish immigrants. Their struggle for survival in the early days, their social, plitical and economic upward movement as well as their impact on the growth of Cleveland is vividly portrayed in this monograph by two distinguished Clevelanders, Nelson J. Callahan and William P. Hickey. The two essays are complementary to each other and expressing the insights, feelings and sensitivities of two individuals who are very much a product of the Irish heritage.

Father Nelson Callahan, born fifty years ago in Cleveland Heights, is a deeply committed diocesan priest and present pastor of St. Raphael in Bay Village, He is also a noted scholar, writer, researcher and teacher. As former Director of Erieview High School, Professor at St. John's College, Archivist of the Catholic Diocese of Cleveland, author and editor of anumber of books, journals and other publications, he enriched the life of thousands of people.

As past associate at St. Agatha, a black parish of Cleveland, pro-

synodal judge of the Diocesan Matrimonial Tribunal, as well as moderator of the First Friday Club of Cleveland since 1968, he has been influential and highly respected in diocesan affairs.

The fact that he cherishes his Irish heritage is indicated by the positions he has held as trustee of the Irish Civic Heritage Association, honorary judge of the Annual St. Patrick's Day Parade and past associate of the largest Irish parish of Cleveland, St. Patrick in West Park.

William F. Hickey chose English as his major study in his undergraduate days at Notre Dame University, but History equally held his interest, inside and outside the classroom, especially that of this country.

Hickey, who has earned his living as a journalist and freelance writer the past 25 years, considers himself "a pretty fair historian" of the American experience in general and considerably more than that when it comes to both the Irish who settled here and those who remained in their native land.

Hickey, of Irish descent on both sides of his family as far back as he can trace his geneaology, was born on the West Side of Cleveland and grew up in suburban Lakewood. He is currently the television critic of the Plain Dealer, after having served stints as a sports columnist and editor of the paper's weekly entertainment magazine. He resides in Bay Village with his wife, Joan, and their nine children.

To both authors for their outstanding contribution to a better understanding of Cleveland my deepest appreciation. Similarly I

owe a debt of gratitude to Fr. Andrew Greeley, nationally known sociologist, scholar and a leading authority in ethnic heritage studies for the introduction which he wrote for his friend Fr. Callahan.

My sincere thanks to Dr. Thomas F. Campbell for reviewing the manuscript, to Mr. Richard Siersen for copyediting, to Mrs. Patricia Bushel-Veronesi for the maps, to Ms. Kathy Donovan of the Time-Life Books, Inc. for many reproductions, to the Cleveland Plain Dealer for the valuable photographs and to Mrs. Judy Slovenec and Mrs. Shirley Lawson for typing and bringing this work to its successful completion.

Dr. Karl Bonutti
Editor, Monograph Series
Ethnic Heritage Studies
Cleveland State University

Introduction

“They all have the gift of gab and are devious as hell.” So Mr. Hickey quotes the rueful (and perhaps unintended) compliment of Mark Hanna to the Irish as natural politicians. For the gift of gab there is a long and honored tradition going back to the pre-Christian Celts. The deviousness was merely putting the gift to use to confuse and befuddle the English oppressors and their nativist cousins in North America. As for being politicians. . . ah, sure, what can I tell you? There’s no denying, and there are still a few of us around.

Irish Catholic Americans, for example, are twice as likely to work for the government than the national average; and that hasn’t stopped them from becoming the richest (in terms of annual income) gentile group in America. If anyone says we made our money through political deviousness, I would invite them to step out in the alley where Father Callahan and Mr. Hickey will be waiting to discuss the matter with them.

Of course, we didn’t exactly lose money on politics either.

‘Tis a sad thing to report but the Irish show some signs of respectability these days. They belong to country clubs; some of them, may the Lord have mercy on them, even vote Republican (though they still go to church, showing that you can leave the party and not the church, bad luck to them). They are amused by their quaint, indolent cousins in the old country and act like the Irish were always a presentably upper middle-class crowd in this country.

For such folks this book will be a rude shock. Our ancestors lived in worse conditions than any of the minorities today — and had at lease as bad things said about them as we say about the minorities. Indeed, nothing has been said about the new immigrants to our cities that wasn’t said about our great grandparents. We were, it seemed, a no-account, shiftless lot who would never amount to anything.

Well, we showed them, and somehow we managed to stay Irish just the same — even if we forgot what being Irish means and forgot too the brave young men and women who with nothing but the clothes on their backs, a love of freedom, a firm faith and a bright hope came to our shores.

For many of them the only reward was poverty; for not a few was added sudden death.

But we stand on their shoulders. Their courage made our affluence possible.

And don’t you ever forget it.

Andrew M. Greeley

Part I: The Irish in Cleveland: One Perspective by William F. Hickey

Chapter 1: A Brief History of Ireland

To understand the Irish who settled in Cleveland during the early, middle and late 19th Century, it is first necessary to know something about the country from whence they came and how the centuries of troubled existence on that island shaped the collective character of its peoples.

The Celts

Just when the Celts, a considerably advanced race of warrior craftsmen at the time of Christ's birth, moved across the channel waters from Gaul is not known with any certainty. What is known is that Celtic legends relating to the island go back almost to the days when Abraham was leading the Chosen People to the Promised Land.

Traceable Celtic history dates back roughly to the year 2,000 B.C., but for reasons purely romantic, most scholars have tended

to set their historical timetables to coincide with the arrival in the early 5th Century A.D. of the man who became known as St. Patrick. Why this should be, Patrick's astounding accomplishments notwithstanding, is a mystery. In the centuries before the Christianizer of Ireland performed his near-wondrous works, the Celts had established themselves as overlords of Britain and Gaul, as well as the island of their real destiny.

IRELAND AND THE EUROPEAN COUNTRIES IN 1970 — Drawn by Patricia Bashel-Veronesi.

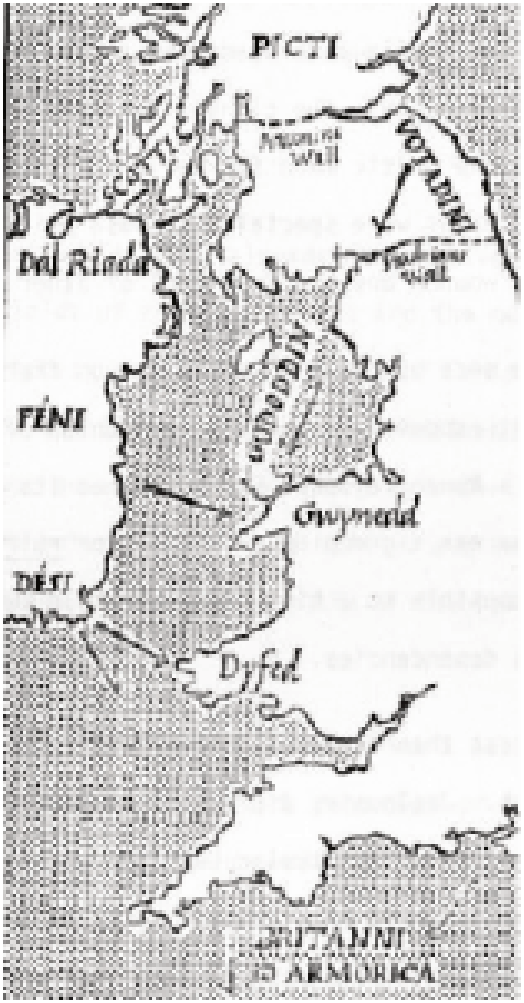
Drawn by Patricia Bashel-Veronesi

Their strength in numbers and skill in battle enabled them to range far across the continent of Europe. Indeed, their war cries rang through many an Alpine valley, including those that now form parts of northern Italy and Yugoslavia.

Their success on various fields of battle stemmed from their advanced status as craftsmen as much as it did from natural ferocity. The Celts' finely-honed metallic axes scattered the Teutons and others unfortunate enough to get in their way. But it was not only a case of superior numbers and arms winning the day, however, for the Celts were a thinking people, capable of

instituting and altering battle plans as the occasion demanded. We can glean this from the very word by which they came to be identified — Celtoi, meaning “the clothed people,” indicating they considered themselves superior to the naked Teutonic tribes that sought to share the continent’s western regions with them. In other words, the Celts had long given up the practice of painting themselves blue and hanging naked from trees.

By the time Caesar’s legions invaded Britannia, civilized society in Ireland was already ancient, at least as advanced as the Greeks and, in many ways, similar to the heroic life Homer so notably recounted in his epic tales. Like Greece, Ireland possessed an honored class of bards, men who were categorized into sixteen divisions and whose astonishing memories could store away thousands of verses of romantic narrative. The bards were veritable walking libraries.



The principal Celtic population movement in the fourth-fifth centuries A.D. — Drawn by Prtricia Bashel-Veronesi. Ref.: *The Celts*. T.G.E. Powell.

The core of Celtic society was the clan. Traditionally, all members of a particular clan were related and bore the same

name. As their learning and skills developed over the centuries, other names began to surface within the clans. The name Hickey, for example, came from the Celtic word for healer. We can assume that the ancient Hickeys were specialists whose skill was the dressing of battle wounds and the treatment of other maladies.

Normally, the size of the clan was based on fighting strength, with each such unit expected to field 30 companies of 300 men — the equivalent of a Roman legion. Each clan had its *ri* or king, and above the clans was a group of over-kings or *ruiri*, who, in turn, were responsible to a high king, who held sway over all of Ireland and its dependencies.

It would be less than truthful to say that Celtic society was without blemish. Jealousies did exist between over-kings and among clans, and many spectacular battles were fought. However, more often than not the clans lived in reasonable harmony, drawn together by their common basis of language, culture and code of laws. Traditions were so strong among the Celts that internecine warfare could be halted by the high king declaring a period of national festivity.

The Celts, also like the Greeks, early on in their history abandoned their primitive form of religion and adopted a number of native divinities, thereby launching the relatively sophisticated era of Druidism. For centuries the Druids were the elite members of Celtic society, the soothsayers, magicians, and repositories of all learning in the days when no man on that island could write.

Saint Patrick

Thus, into such a land, already comparatively advanced in the material fields of arts and crafts and the metaphysical field of religiosity, came the influence of Christianity, whose outstanding representative was the aforementioned Patrick. Though it is not generally known, there were Christian settlements in Ireland even before Patrick was held as a slave there, but they were confined to the southern tip of the island and were of little consequence.

While much has been written of Patrick's escape and subsequent triumphant return to the island, a good deal of it has been romanticized to the point of absurdity. What he accomplished needs no adding to, for his deeds have come thundering down through the centuries on their own merit. History, however, demands an accounting without flowery froth.

Whatever his personal gifts or his ability as a proselytizer, Patrick was, above all else, a very practical man as he went about his self-appointed task of converting the Celts to Christianity. Having been held captive by them for six years, he knew their language, their customs and their peculiarities of character, and he used this knowledge at every opportunity.

St. Patrick's Bell and Shrine. Bell: reputed to be sixth century, iron and bronze. Shrine: 1091-1105; bronze with silver, gold, crystal, glass, about 10″ high. National Museum of Ireland, Dublin.

The bell is supposed to have been taken from St. Patrick's grave in 552, at which time it was placed in a shrine. The bell is of thin sheet iron coated with bronze, and it has an iron clapper. The bell is known as the Bell of the Will. Nothing remains of the original shrine; the present shrine was ordered by the archbishop of Armagh sometime between 1091 and 1105. The shrine can be dated this precisely because the name of the archbishop and of the high king of Tara are given in an inscription in Irish on the back panel.

His overall strategy to win their minds and hearts was as sound as it was simple. He went straight to the rulers, the *ri* and the *ruiri,* with his message of the Good News. Knowing their

penchant for debate, he engaged in near-endless exchanges of thought, all the time remaining the friendly persuader. At length, he convinced them of the validity of his teachings and, once that was accomplished, he further induced them to lead the way in spreading the Gospel of Christianity throughout Ireland. Then he merely stood back and collected the clans like so many sacks of ripe grain.

That he was one of the Church's most remarkable men goes without saying, for what better attests to that fact than his conversion to Christianity of a warlike nation of people without the spilling of any measurable amount of blood? It must be noted, however, that Patrick did not live to see his work completed. It took another full century following his death in the late 5th Century to rid Ireland of its last vestige of paganism.

Interestingly enough, this famed missionary left no personal monuments. What he did leave proved to be a far more glorious testimony to him than all the monumental bric-a-brac might ever have been: he left the Church firmly established in Ireland, and that institution soon began creating scholars the likes of which the world has rarely seen. It was these followers of Patrick who became the saviours of Western civilization and culture for a period of almost four centuries, while mainland Europe foundered through the Dark Ages.

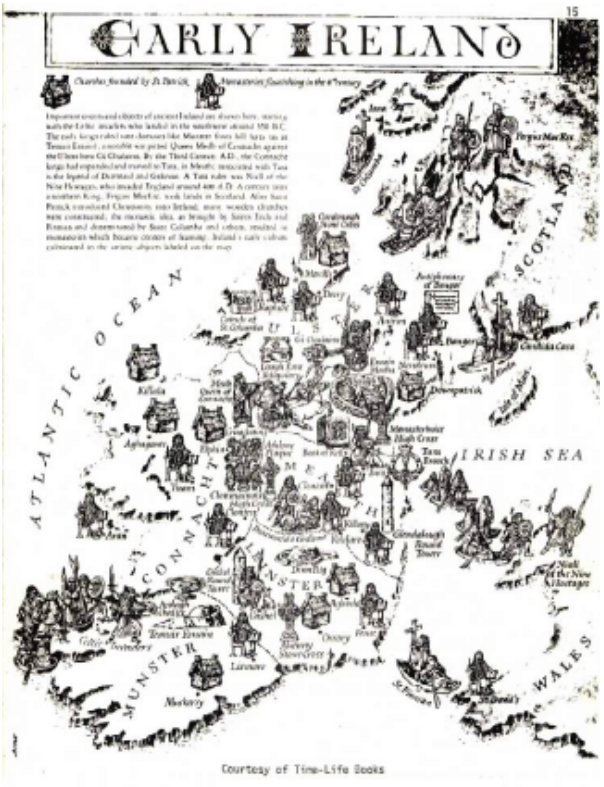
Irish Scholarship and Missionary Work

This period was easily the most magnificent in Ireland's long history in terms of recognizable accomplishment. Accredited

historians have come to a general agreement that it was these Irish scholars who kept the lamp of civilized learning burning brightly, while those of Rome and Byzantium dimmed to a flicker.

Nor did the Irish scholars content themselves with mere acts of knowledge preservation, for whenever the heathen storm raging over Europe subsided in the least, they would come pouring out of the island's monasteries and launch their fragile ships in an easterly direction. To all parts of Europe they travelled, urged on by Christian zeal and the knowledge that they alone were the repositories of civilized life and learning.

The magnificent Columcille, who was by birth a king but chose to become a saint, was only one of Ireland's leaders in missionary work. From his fortress on the island of Iona went scores of teachers and preachers who ultimately restored Christianity and civilization to the continent. Clement went to Gaul, where he was to tutor Charlemagne, Boniface went to the land that became Germany, and Gall became the Apostle of the Swiss. These are just a few of the better known ones, but there were so many it is probably unfair to name any without naming them all. Let it suffice to note that in Germany today 55 Irish saints are venerated, 45 in France, 30 in Belgium, 13 in Italy and 8 in Scandinavia.



EARLY IRELAND — Courtesy of Time-Life Books.

Irish scholarship during this period was considerable by any standard. St. Simeon the Stylite was not content to teach advanced mathemetics in the usual manner, but preferred to do it by verse. Virgil of Carnolia insisted that his mathemetical computations proved that the earth, of necessity, must be an orb. Brenden the Navigator immediately set sail to test that theory and, by so doing, added substantially to man's knowledge of geography.

The Norman Invasion

Ireland's centuries of glory, alas, were to come to a bitter end, so intensely unpleasant, in fact, that it is almost without precedent on this earth. While some historians trace the woes of the Irish to the Viking incursions of the 8th and 9th Centuries, history does not support their collective thesis. It is true that the Norsemen were successful enough in their repeated invasions of Ireland to establish permanent settlements attempt of the Vikings to expand their sphere of influence. The coastal settlements were never more than a blemish on the face of Ireland.

It wasn't until the Norman invasion of 1171 that the Celts first tasted the butterness of wholesale military defeat. Ironically, Ireland's downfall was, for all practical purposes, brought about by an Irishman. It all began after a dissolute brute of a king, Dermot Macmurrough, was chased out of Leinster for ravaging the fair wife of the Lord of Brefny. Tought she apparently did not mind the ravaging, her husband and his clansman did, and Dermoy was forced to flee the country. He ended up in Acquitaine, where he won the favor of Henry II, who seized upon Dermot's grievances as an excuse to utilize a Papal bull of authority over for ravaging the fair wife of the Lord of Brefny. Though she apparently did not mind the ravaging, her husband and his clansman did, and Dermot was forced Ireland that was given to him by Pope Adrian IV, who was the only Englishman ever to sit on the throne of Saint Peter. For the record, his name was Nicholas Breakspeare.

Henry induced two of his barons then residing in what is now Wales, Richard de Clare and Earl Pembroke, the famed

"Strongbow" of history texts, to launch an attack on the Emerald Isle. The Normans came on horse and foot, their suits of armor gleaming in the sunlight, their guidons flapping in the coastal breezes and their vast array of modern weaponry combining to form an awesome spectacle. Now it was the Celts' turn to feel the despair attendant to facing a foe with superior arms and greater manpower.

Though the first flush of victory rested easily on the Normans, they found holding onto their conquests quite another matter. While the Celts might have been routed, they displayed a remarkable talent for regrouping quickly. What's more, they also displayed a tenacity of will that let the extravagantly plumed Normans know that the subjugation of Ireland would be no easy task, but rather a long and costly one, paid for in rivers of blood.

Adding to the woes of the conquering Normans, jealousies soon erupted within their ranks. More accurately, Henry II became annoyed by the less than grateful attitude of his newly rich barons and ordered them home for an accounting of the spoils. At the same time, the remnant Viking settlers rallied to the cause of their former foes, the Celts, and joined them in their incessant guerilla warfare, an art the Irish were never to forget.

This was all too much for the proud Henry II to bear, so he led a mighty army across the Irish Sea, determined to subjuqate all the wild men who inhabited the island, no matter what they called themselves or from whence they originally came. Henry's army made that of his barons look like a scouting party. The Irish chieftains, stunned by this show of Norman strength, particularly by the quality of the armament, sued for peace. Not all of them,

of course, for that would have meant forsaking the national trait of ignoring overwhelming odds in a foe's favor. Rory O'Connor, the high chief of Ulster, refused to surrender to the Norman usurper and put up such fierce resistance that Henry II was content to hold only Leinster and Munster.

Lessening English Influence

However, even those two provinces were soon to slip from his grasp. Henry II helped this come about with his complicity in the murder of Thomas 'a Becket, the Archbishop of Canterbury. His return to England to face a Papal Inquiry set in motion a debilitation of the Normans left behind. They began to lose their identity as conquerors and began an assimilation of Irish ways. They soon, in fact, were absorbed by the people they had so recently conquered.

Oratory at Gallarus where the scarcity of timber made building in stone necessary, oratiries that were built in the eighth or ninth century still stand. Dingle Peninsula, County Kerry. Photo by Harold Orel. Book: *Irish History and Culture*.

This occurred, one might note, in spite of Henry's stringent laws designed to prevent that very possibility. For instance, the penalty for a Norman fraternizing with the Irish was rather severe. Anyone caught so doing was to be "half-strangled, then disembowled while still alive," and woe to the hangman careless enough to break a neck, thereby allowing the perpetrator of such a crime a relatively merciful death.

Incredible as it might seem, despite that law and others equally formidable, the Normans continued to take up Irish ways, to the point where they adopted the native dress, language and names, not-to mention the principal cause of all this — to take Irish wives. In a relatively short time the barons and lesser

rank Normans were so transformed that they actually aspired to become Irish chieftains.

The government in England naturally took a dim view of the Norman turn of character and in 1295 issued yet another decree forbidding such goings-on. Not only was the statute published in vain, it served a purpose directly opposite its intent — it hastened a series of self-defense alliances among the Norman-Irish chieftains and the traditional Celtic leaders.

The seduction of the Norman overlords continued unabated in the ensuing years and the people in Ireland gained a respite from English interference in their affairs, thanks largely to certain events which distracted the English considerably — The War of Roses between the houses of Lancaster and York, to mention one. In fact, at the time Henry VII assumed the throne, English influence in Ireland was limited to the County of Dublin and parts of Meath, Louth and Kildare.

The ascension of the seventh Henry to the throne marked three centuries of English rule in at least some parts of Ireland and, all things considered, the whole effort was a stand-off. While Norman banners did, indeed, float over the Irish countryside, the pride paid in blood and defecting sons was a princely one.

In 1494 Henry VII determined to do something about the Irish problem once and for all time. He decreed from that moment to perpetuity, English law would be the operative one in the land and, needless to say, the Irish code of laws would henceforth become inoperative. This action only served to stiffen resistance and inspire rebellion anew. The dismayed Henry VII decided

that the damnable island was not worth the trouble of subjugating it and appointed the Earl of Kildare to rule it as he saw fit.

Unfortunately for Ireland, Henry VII's successor, the noted Defender of the Faith, Henry VIII, was of a different mind. HO enticed a number of Irish nobles to visit his court, seized them and had them thrown in the Tower. When the sons of the nobles took to the field against the treacherous Tudor Kingi he had a surprise in store for them, a weapon of ultimate horror called the cannon. The rebellion was crushed and the instigators hanged. That was Henry VIII when he was a moderately compassionate man — before the Reformation.

The Effects of The Reformation in Ireland

That movement of reform, carried out principally by Henry VIII and his daughter Elizabeth 1, added a new dimension to the trials and tribulations of the Irish people under English rule. The Irish heretofore had only been an enemy on the battlefield, now they became even more of a threat to the throne — they were living examples of Papist thought, word and action. In other words, they were anathema to the new Church of England.

The Act of Uniformity, which Elizabeth I ran through an obedient Parliament in 1560, decreed that only one liturgy was acceptable, that of the Church of England. The penalty for any overt objection to the new religious scheme was death, with the manner of execution varying according to the sentencer's

particular creativity of mind. Most were not creative and the hanging tree became the symbol of Irish doom.

The number of unspeakable atrocities committed in the name of the Virgin Queen will never be known, but they were carried out daily on a people whose only crime was that they despised foreign rulers and their attempts to force on them a religion they found wanting and odious. The Irish cherished freedom and the right to worship as they pleased, namely the now thousand-year-old tradition of the Roman Catholic Church.

The seizures of men and property under Henry VIII and Elizabeth I impoverished the people and Church in Ireland, but could not extinguish the spirit of either. The faith of the people remained intact and the Church was primarily responsible. In caves and on hillsides, by privet hedges and along the byways of Ireland, mendicant friars and priests by the hundreds preached the faith oftheir fathers in their fathers' tongue. Wherever they went throughout the length and breadth of Ireland, these men of God found a people more than eager to hear their words and to honor them.

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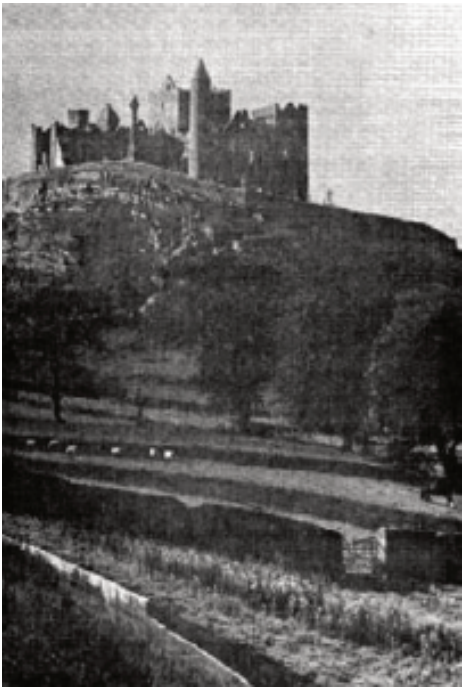

Rock of Cashel, which was until 1101 a seat of Munster Kings. Cathedral (right). St. Patrick's Cross (left). By the courtesy of Time-Life Books, Inc.

Though the English tried mightily to snuff out what they considered the last flickerings of Roman Catholicism, their efforts only served to kindle the embers of faith into a raging flame. No sooner would one priest reach the end of his earthly journey at a hanging tree, than another would appear as if by magic. As often as not, the new priest was a lad who only a few years earlier had received his catechetical instructions through a

privet hedge and then slipped off to the continent to study for his holy orders.

There were other reasons to slaughter the Irish, to be sure. Appropriating their land was one of the principal ones, but any excuse would do in a pinch. When the habitants of Munster, for instance, proved an irritant to their English landlords, the Crown, in the form of Sir William Pelham, wreaked havoc upon them. He later boasted to Elizabeth I "that the local citizenry had been reduced to the point where they now prefer death by the sword to starvation."

Oliver Cromwell

As proficient as Good Queen Bess' minions were at devastating the natives, their efforts paled in comparison to those of a commoner who came along a century later — Oliver Cromwell, a name that will live in infamy as long as one Irishman draws breath anywhere on the face of the earth. While he was certainly not the first man of power to attempt the extermination of a race, hit try at genocide ranks with the very best. It was, for instance, much more noteworthy than that of Walter Devereaux, Earl of Essex, who sought to please Elizabeth I by destroying thousands of Irishmen.

Of course, there are those who insist the Irish brought it on themselves by their repeated refusals to accept the lot accorded them by the English. Rebellion, armed and otherwise, was an ever-present reality in all corners of the Irish countryside. In 1649 Cromwell was placed in charge of a large army, one well-

equipped and trained, and dispatched to Ireland to subdue, for all time, its obstinate people.

After landing at Dublin, Cromwell turned northward and fell upon the coastal city of Drogheda. He smashed its defenses and laid it waste. Then he got down to the grisly business at hand, the implementation of his plan of conquest — take one stronghold at a time and then kill every man, woman and child who survived the onslaught. With 8,000 foot soldiers, 4,000 horse soldiers and the latest weaponry at his disposal, his goal seemed achievable.

Oliver Cromwell by Robert Walker, 1649. By the courtesy of Time-Life Books, Inc.

The massacre of Drogheda, was staged in 1649 by Oliver Cromwell — Left on his white charger. Seaking to avenge English deaths in Ulster, Cromwell slaughtered 3,500 people.

Alas, even Cromwell tired of the slaughter. It wasn't that he had objections to it, it was just that it was so time-consuming that it reduced his overall efficiency. He came to realize that at his present rate of conquest and extermination, he would reach old age before completing the task at hand. He devised a method of speeding things up that, while more subtle, was nevertheless as brutal. It has been known for centuries in the civilized world as slavery.

He divined that Irish women, girls and even young boys could be gotten rid of quickly and profitably by packing them on ships headed for the Crown's colonies in the West Indies, where the planters and soldiers were already tiring of a steady diet of dark-skinned women. In all, over 30,000 women and children of Ireland were dispatched to Jamaita and other Caribbean ports of

call, while an additional 4,000 were sent to the ripening colony in Virginia.

As for the men, their fate was little better. Nearly an equal number of them, especially those from the routed armies of the mightier Irish chieftains, brought a fetching price from the continent, where royalty knew the value of good fighting men. The armies of Poland, Spain and France were soon set rattlina by the presence of tall, fair-skinned Irishmen, whose valor was assured.

But when even these methods could not rid Ireland of the Irish, Cromwell was driven to rage and finally despair. It was at this time that he issued his famous cry, “Go to hell or Connaught.” Thus, the remaining Irish were to be herded on a reservation and kept there at all costs, the better to prevent them from havina any influence on the new settlers the Crown was bringing over daily from Scotland and other sections of Britain.

It was no garden spot that Cromwell picked for the Irish to spend their future existence. Connaught, a desolate, wind-swept corner of northwestern Ireland, was described by one historian of the time as “a province with not enough wood to hand a man, water enough to drown him or earth enough to bury him.” As Nelson Callahan suggests in his accompanying piece, a case might be made for hell.

Some of the more stubborn Irish refused to be transplanted and took to the woods and mountains in other provinces, living lives that have been described as “of wild brigandage.” Whatever price the Crown put on their heads, they survived, attended to

spiritually by their privet hedge guidance counselors and, no doubt, by a host of magical fairies, the very same wee people who were wont to play tricks on those bent on harming the Irish. They did a terrible thing to Cromwell's soldiers in Connaught, for instance. Within 40 years of their arrival in that province, not one of their children could speak a word of English.

Cromwell was by no means the last of Ireland's tormentors. There were so many who followed him that it would take a tome just to list their names. What must be remembered is that from the time of Henry VIII to Victoria Regina, the tormenting centered on the Irishman's religious beliefs and practices — his Roman Catholicism.

The Force of Religion

When Nelson Callahan points out the fact that the Irish were "culturally Catholic," he is not only stating the case correctly, but with kindness. The true Irish from Patrick's day on have been steadfast Catholics to the very marrow of their bones and no other race has so willingly paid such a fearsome price to retain its religion.

The Irishman's fidelity to his faith was and remains astounding. He has clung to his Catholic ways with a tenacity unmatched in the past. It was, in fact, this very clinging to the faith of their fathers that enabled the Irish of the 16th, 17th, 18th and 19th Centuries to overcome the persecutions, the poverty and pestilence visited upon them by their enemies, be they of barbaric or of royal bloodlines. They refused to be either

annihilated or converted. The deep religious convictions of the Irish people gave them invincible strength. They were deprived of their leaders, their churches, their schools, their lands, their houses and their language, yet as a nation they swung forward, bound together in a triumphal march unprecedented in history.

So that one might better understand this triumphal march, it should be noted that in 1672, after Cromwell had wreaked his evil will upon the Irish, they numbered but a million souls. A century and a half later, when the Irish were to disperse themselves worldwide, the nation numbered seven million, having overcome wholesale slaughter, starvation, not to mention dispossessment of their very homes. As an anonymous Irish historian wrote over 200 years ago: “The fools, the damned fools. They thought that by conquering our land they could as easily conquer our spirit. The fools, the damned fools.”

The Complex Gaelic Language

The language known as Gaelic, which the People of Ireland themselves refer to as “Irish,” is an ancient tongue, one of the Indo-European group to which English also belongs. It is not, however, an easy language for English-speaking persons to master. Its grammar is complex. Gaelic nouns, for example, are like Latin ones in that they change their ending according to their use in the sentence. Because the

language has dropped many syllables since it was given a written alphabet in the Eighth Century, and because multiple-letter combinations can make a single sound, many modern words contain letters which are not pronounced. This volume makes no attempts to utilize accent marks used in the Gaelic alphabets. Below are some common Gaelic words, and some words used in this book, with their phonetic equivalents:

Erie (Ireland): “Airuh”
Erinn go bragh (Ireland forever): “Airin go braw”
Dail Eireann (Parliament of Ireland): “Dawyl Airun”
Sinn Fein (Warriors of Destiny): “Shin Fane”
Aghaidh (face): “Eye”
Fleadh cheiol (music festival): “Flahkyoil”

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Chapter 2: The Period of Emigration

With that historical background in mind, it is now possible to zero in on the long-suffering but ever rebellious people who immigrated to America and, of course, eventually to Cleveland. This background material is also supplied as a refutation that "the Irish had no history in the 18th and 19th Centuries," which were the two principal periods of their immigration to the United States. Ireland had a history, but one many people would like to forget, especially British historians.

What is particularly sad about the period of their immigration to these shores is that it occurred, as we have seen, when the people of Ireland existed in quiet misery. It was their low point in learning, in the fields of arts and crafts and, most notably, in physical well-being. While it is a pity that it was not Columcille's scholars who were coming here, it is even to the greater glory of those illiterate and impoverished Irishmen that they did so well once they established themselves here.

They came to America in such numbers that the extent of their migration boggles the mind. Consider the fact that between 1800 and 1900 over four million sons and daughters of Ireland crossed the Atlantic to begin a new life here. There has never been anything quite like it before or since, and it gives further evidence to the desperate condition of life in Ireland. As historian Carl Wittke put it: “It would be difficult to find another country where the causes of large-scale migration were so compelling as in Ireland in the 18th and 19th Centuries.”

It would not only be difficult, it would be impossible. Forgetting for the moment the Irishman’s hatred of his English oppressors and his even more intense hatred of the “foreign” religion they insisted he adopt, the average Irishman was fortunate to find any kind of work at all. When he did, he was paid six pence a day and one meal or eight pence with no meal. He lived in a sod hut of one room, which was perpetually cold, damp and filthy. More than that, he had absolutely no future in a land controlled and, for the most part, owned by absentee landlords. Little wonder he emigrated.

The First Irish Immigrants

The first record of Irish on American soil, other than those unfortunate women and children who were sent by Cromwell to amuse the planters of Virginia, is marked in the log of the year 1654. Quite appropriately as things turned out, the Irishman’s entry to the new world was made possible by a ship called “The Goodfellow,” which deposited 400 of them on the docks

at Boston. No doubt, they preferred the wilds of the unknown continent to their expected treatment at the hands of Cromwell.

The occasion of the landing of this "horde" of Irishmen sent the Yankee natives into a state of outrage and they immediately called for laws that would prevent a repetition of what had occurred. No welcome mat for the Irish in America, but then, what else was new? They weren't even welcome in their own country, so there was no point in going back. They were here and they intended to stay, no matter how the Yankees felt about it; stay they did, despite the continued railing of the Bostonian proper and otherwise. They clung like so many barnacles to the wharves and pilings along the waterfront. To say that they prospered would be to stretch truth to the breaking point, but they did multiply, and 83 years after setting foot on American soil, they staged the first St. Patrick's Day parade this country ever witnessed. Needless to say, there has been a Paddy's Day parade down Boston's streets since that eventful March 17, 1737.

From the time "The Goodfellow" first "greened" America, the Irish came steadily to these shores. They did not come in large numbers like their brothers of the Famine, but in a trickle. The nation's first census in 1790 showed that 44,000 Irish lived here. Enough numbers of them had taken root by the time of the Revolutionary War that their presence was felt, and appreciably so by the colonists opposing the dictates of George III.

Students of history should be aware that the most common surname in the Continental Army was not, as one would imagine Smith or Jones, but Kelly. There were, to be exact, 696 men

named Kelly in the ranks of George Washington's inelegant but feisty army. What contribution did they make? Let Washington's adopted son Custis tell it:

> The aid we received from Irish Catholics in the struggle for independence was essential to our ultimate success. in the War of Independence, Ireland supplied 100 men for every single man by any other foreign nation. Let America bear eternal gratitude to Irishmen.

America, of course, was not quite ready to go that far, for the Irish were, after all, Papists to the core and therefore a threat to the nation's pursuit of liberty and Protestant approach to life. The Irish would bear watching, and the best method of facilitating that would be to keep them in their place — in the inner city ghettos. The Irish, with enough exceptions to prove the rule, kept their place. They also kept these things close to their hearts, and the collective organ continued to smolder.

The conditions under which the Irish lived in the larger cities along the eastern seaboard were nearly, but not quite, as wretched as those they sought to escape from in their homeland. It was a cruel case of poverty and disease, followed by more poverty and disease. There was no work too menial for them to do and they did it. Despite the dreadful day-to-day existence they suffered, they saved what pennies they could and sent for brothers and sisters back in Ireland. That action alone gives one a remote clue as to what life was like in that "Little Black Rose of a Country" across the sea.

The typical Irish boarding house was a brick building three to six stories high that was filled "with runners and shoulderhitters" that preyed on the inhabitants. These ruffians, who worked out of the mandatory grog shop on the first floor, all spoke with brogues and spent their days either flim-flamming or strongarming the vulnerable newly-arrived. Yet life was still better here than at home.

Those just off the boat would be taken to one of these tenements and afforded space in the basement or "bag room." Whole families would be piled atop one another in these dank cellars until death or some other horror emptied a room upstairs. Then the newly-arrived would be allotted one room that, more often than not, would be without ventilation of any sort and would reek with the stench of the previous family's filth. Welcome to America.

A New York cotton buyer, who had just returned from a trip through the South, wrote in 1801: "The Negro slave on the plantations of the South lives under better conditions than most of the Irish in New York. He is also treated more kindly." However true that might have been at the time, the downtrodden Irishman of the big city ghetto had a lot more going for him than the slaves in the South. Foremost, he was a free man, free to move about whatever his economic deprivation. Thus he was allowed to struggle, and that is all the Irishman ever wanted out of life. Let all the cotton buyers in New York lament his condition, the Irish were no slaves.

Besides, the Irishman had his first–floor grog shop where he could gather with his friends and display his sense of humor and

social amiability, “shoulder-hitters” or not. Every such “Little Dublin” had social clubs that were usually given names that showed the Irishman was well aware of his status in the new country. There were, for example, a good number of clubs with the title of “The Far Downs.”

Mass Migration

The first sizable immigration to America came in 1816, when 9,000 Irish men and women made the crossing. In 1818, when the number doubled, vessels began to be chartered specifically for the purpose of transporting Irish immigrants. They came to be sorely needed, because by the year 1832 some 65,000 souls boarded them, heading for these shores.

Often these Irish were debarked in Canada, either at New Brunswick or Quebec, since many of the first waves of Irish came on Canadian lumber ships, the owners of which saw in those Irish bodies a suitable return cargo. It was profitable for both parties — the ship owners made money and the Irish found it an easy matter to enter the United States. It wasn’t difficult to walk across the border, and the Canadian debarkees soon gave New England a Celtic look. In a few decades they would take control of the once Yankee stronghold.

Emigrant Sailing packet about to be towed out into the Mersey, 1850.

"Departure from home," a sentimentalized engraving from Harper's weekly, New York, 1858.

It should also be noted that the mass migration of Irish was more than welcomed by the English, both at home and in Ireland. They saw in that movement a lessening of the "Irish problem." One London newspaper ran an editorial headlined "Good Riddance," which went onto say that "the departing Irish were marauders whose lives were profitably spent in shooting Protestants from behind hedges." It went on to describe the emigrants with such choice words as "vermin," "snakes," "scum" and "demons of assassination."

The emigration of the Irish, while steadily increasing after 1830,

exploded during the years of the Great Famine. It began in 1845, when an unusually cold and wet winter, followed by a like spring, created the conditions for a blight of the potato crop throughout the land. Since the Irish diet consisted mainly of two foods, potatoes and fish, the failure of the potato crop left the inhabitants little choice but to emigrate.

In 1847 a young English Quaker, who had gone to the city of Westport to aid the stricken Irish, wrote: "It is a strange and fearful sight, like what we read about in history books of beleaguered cities; its streets crowded with gaunt wanderers, sauntering to and fro with hopeless air and hunger-struck look, a mob starved and almost naked." The sensitive young Quaker was fortunate that he did not tour the Irish countryside, for the sights there would most certainly have done damage to his psyche, especially the thousands of green-mouthed human corpses who had been reduced to eating grass to still their pangs of hunger. If that weren't enough, the sight of men picking rotting flesh off the bones of their dead neighbors would surely have done it.

Just a glance at the passage figures of the Irish fleeing the Famine reveals the sharp increase in emigration. In 1846, 92,484 boarded packets for America. In 1847, 196,224 followed. In 1848, the number dipped to 173,744, but rose sharply the next year, when 204,771 left their native soil. In 1850, the last of the years considered to be a part of the Famine, 206,110 men, women and children made the crossing. In addition to those who came to these shores, untold thousands of others made their way

to Australia, New Zealand, various South American countries and even to England itself.

FAMINE IN IRELAND; SEARCHING FOR POTATOES. Illustrated London News, 1847.

One can get an idea of the hazards Of crossing the Atlantic, which were willingly faced by millions of Irishmen seeking freedom from want and oppression, from a letter written by one who had made just such a journey. In 1848 John Holland wrote:

> Our ship was 10 weeks on the seas from Queenstown to Gros Isle, an island that lay below Quebec City, which is used as a quarantine center. Out of a total of 225 passengers, only 35 set foot on shore. The rest found their grave in the ocean, my two brothers among them. I have been told that 12,000 Irishmen have died at Gros Isle this year alone.

While the mortality rate on John Holland's ship was well above average, deaths from disease, which spread lightning-like among the Irish in the fetid holds, often claimed half of those who boarded ships in English and Irish ports. The men, women and children in those holds were generally in a weakened condition to begin with and they had no medical help aboard ship. Often, they did not even have the comforts of the dying, as priests were scarce and those at hand greatly overworked. There were simply not enough hours in a day to administer the last rites to the multitudes needing them.

It was, of course, a case of survival of the fittest and the fittest were none too fit. A lifetime of deprivation, culminated by several years of actual starvation is not exactly the best preparation for a mid-19th Century sea voyage. That any of the nutritionally-deprived Irish survived those tight to ten-week crossings is testimony to the ongoing resourcefulness of the human body. Nor should the strength and attributes of the mind be discounted in any way, for the mental anguish expressed by the incessant keening over the loss of loved ones was only the tip of the Irish iceberg of sorrow.

If it weren't for the intensely held faith of those suffering souls

in steerage, not one of them would have been able to exist this side of madness. Despair, that black whore of the soul, was ever flitting about those in the holds, but their belief in the teachings of their Church held that seductress at bay. “Christ crucified,” they chanted, “May our crown of thorns be enjoined with Yours.” While certainly a lament, the ejaculation was also a rallying cry of sanity among the Irish voyagers. One of the principal reasons the Famine Irish preferred America to the British Dominion lands, aside from the fact that many of them had relatives here, was that they remembered it was American ships that brought what little relief there was to Ireland.

St. Patrick’s Day Parade Forming in New York in 1858.

Irish Catholics in New York City, for instance, sent $800,000 to their native country in 1846 alone. It should also be noted

that a number of Protestant denominations in this country made contributions of money and foodstuffs to the stricken Irish, something the starving people of Erin were not likely to forget.

Moving West: The Erie Canal

Whatever their penchant for long-suffering, the ghetto Irish came to realize that they had to leave the rat-infested tenements in which they dwelled, in order to survive. The death rate among them was horrendous even for those days of primitive medicine, but even more than that, they had no future in a place where a dozen men applied for every job that opened up.

The Irishman's first chance to escape the ghetto was provided by a man named DeWitt Clinton, who as Governor of New York, championed the cause of the Erie Canal and turned the first shovelful of dirt himself in 1817. The Erie Canal, a dream 368 miles long, stretching from Rome, New York, on the Hudson River to Buffalo on Lake Erie, a bridal ribbon of water that would marry the Atlantic Ocean and the Great Lakes afforded the Irish of the eastern seaboard a chance to push inland, to breathe fresh air. Later, the expansions of the railroads would do the same for other Irishmen, but for now, the Canal would suffice.

The Irish in New York and from as far away as Boston and Baltimore came pouring out of their tenements at the first sign-up call. So many were to follow the original 3,000 signees that they made the digging of the big ditch a private Paddy affair. The work was back-breaking, the pay low and the living conditions

poor. So what else was new? A job was a job and the Irishman couldn't afford to be choosy.

As noted, there were so many Irishmen involved in the digging of the Erie Canal that all the canal workers, whatever their national origin, were called either "Longfords" or "Corkonians," depending upon from which area in Ireland the majority of the workers in a given encampment came. According to one digger, however, there was one plus factor about the work — it was the first time an employer in America hadn't lied to an Irishman. The work, indeed, was back-breaking, the pay low and living conditions poor.

Just clearing the adjoining towpaths was difficult enough, but the digging of the canal itself was something else again. The Erie was an ambitiously planned ditch. It was to be 40 feet wide at surface level, sloping to a width of 28 feet at the bottom of its four-foot depth. When one fashions such a ditch 368 miles long, it means that a great deal of dirt has to be moved megatons of it.

Conditions for Canal Workers

In return for their labor, the canal diggers received 30 a day for 12 hours on the job, plus board and lodging. The board consisted of coffee and hardtack, with a little sowbelly (bacon) for breakfast, a lunch of bacon, bread and beans, and a dinner of stew, in which the potatoes outweighed the meat. While the meat was often maggoty, the potatoes were always good and what more could an Irishman ask for, other than a good jigger of

whiskey at day's end. Whiskey was, of course, part of any labor contract involving Irishmen, even those negotiated in the cities.

As far as the lodging was concerned, the diggers were provided with army tents, circa War of 1812. It was true the tents were of good size, but they were hardly comfortable, especially when a dozen men were crammed into each one. The canvas abodes were suffocating in summer and icebox cold in winter. In spring it was said that a man could easily drown in one. But oh, those lovely autumn days, those golden, hazy days of late September and early October — they made life worth living.

The Westward-Ho Irishmen soon discovered it was not the wear and tear on their back muscles that was dangerous, but the wear and tear on their insides by creatures they knew nothing about. They were called microbes by the people who knew about such things, and very few people did. Those invisible creatures came to be highly respected, if not feared, for they disabled more Irishmen than all the lower back spasms ever suffered by men the world over.

The deadliest microscopic foe was left by the mosquito, that pesky creature whose sacs dripped with malaria juices. There were, of course, no men the likes of Colonel William Crawford Gorgas, who eradicated the yellow fever among those who dug the Panama Canal in the early 20th Century. The Irish were left to their own devices — a daily jigger of whiskey and rosary beads. Sad to say, neither proved adequate for the occasion and hundreds of diggers went to their eternal reward at an early age from the banks of the Erie Canal.

The second microbic foe caused diarrhea, which while not as deadly, was nevertheless debilitating to an extreme degree. There is simply no way a man can perform hard labor 12 hours at a stretch if his intestines are water-logged. There is an accompanying weakness, not only of the body, but of the mind that prevents a man from exerting his will. Most of the contractors on the Erie Canal, good Christian gentlemen all, could not see the necessity for paying wages for no work. They opted to dock a man's pay, rather than get caught up in Christ's parable about the workers in the vineyard.

Chief Engineers Office Chesapeake & Ohio Canal;
Cleveland, 19th April, 1880.

To the Contractors for the Completion of the Chesapeake & Ohio Canal, Their Agents, and Sub-contractors.

You are directed not to employ upon your works any of the following named persons, viz: —

Lawrence Burns, mason
Richard Keefs, stone cutter
Nicholas Huges, stone cutter
George Biggs, stone cutter
James Mulligan, stone cutter
Henry Carter, mason

Dennis Nolan, mason
Jeremiah Reide
Lawrence Swift
John MeSweeny
Thomas Nugen
John McGinty
Edward Conner
James Watson
Michael Keenan
Patrick Murray
Michael Cunningham
Martin Rudy
Patrick Bannan
Petrick Murray
Peter Lavelle
Huge McCaffry
Edward Riely
Mark Kilroy
Patrick Roach, and
William McCormick

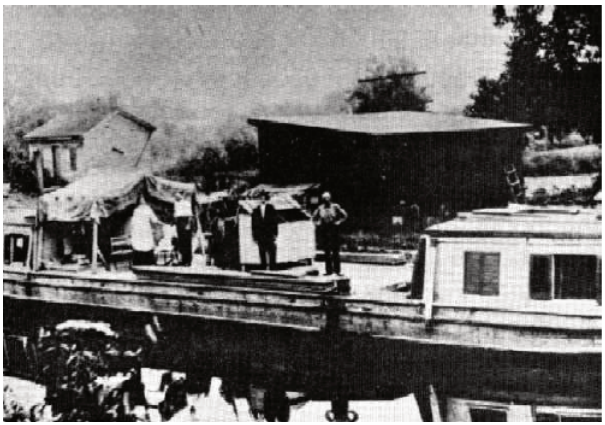
Charles B. Fisk, Chief Eng.

Blacklist of Workers, mostly Irish, On the Chesapeake & Ohio Canal

There was yet another microbe who regularly visited the canal sites, whose sole purpose of existence was to disrupt the Irishman's work habits. It was the germ latter-day physicians would label diplococcus pneumoniae. About 75 varieties of pneumococci are known, and the Irish working on the Erie

managed to catch most of them. Admittedly, bouts with this germ tended to be seasonal affairs, mostly in the winter and early spring, but they were serious enough to send many a Paddy to his grave.

Ohio Canal Freight Boat



Canal Scene Near Stone Road Cleveland Public Library Collection 1870.

Statistics, at their very best, remain boring. Numbers of Irishmen who died while digging the Erie Canal are boring, for they are merely numbers. The mind, in fact, can accommodate any number or series of numbers of deaths and other tragedies. It is only when those stark figures are personalized that the mind feels uneasy. One worker, Timothy Geohagan by name, wrote to his sister in Ireland, telling her of his life and job in the brave new world. “I don’t know, dear Sister, if any of us will survive, but God willing, we will live to see a better day,” he wrote from his tent near Utica in 1819, “Six of me *fmil*tentmates died this very day and were stacked like cordwood until they could be taken away. Otherwise, I am fine.”

What is remarkable about the letter is that Timothy Geohacan got someone to write it for him and some historian to punctuate it. Although the canal diggers were largely illiterate, they

provided those who could write a steady source of income, for letters from workers streamed across the Atlantic. One such hired writer wrote the following to a friend:

> I was writing a letter for this poor Paddy and the Paddy wants me to tell the folks back home that he has meat three times each week. When I asked why he wanted me to write that, seeing as to how he got meat three times a day, the Paddy told me that his folks would have a hard enough time understanding him getting meat three times a week and would think he had gone daft if he told the truth.

Though an inordinate number of Irishmen died beside that 368-mile stretch of water, their passing was no more than a ripple in the construction sea that was the Erie Canal. No sooner would an Irishman be buried in a shallow, unmarked grave than two would apply for his job. In other words, while it might have been a watery trail of tears for some, it was equally a stream of hope and ambition for others.

It is interesting to note that during the two years before the Erie Canal was completed in 1825, the main topic of conversation among the Irish who labored on it was that a new canal was rumored to be in the making. Best of all, it was to be in nearby Ohio country and almost as long as the Erie, which meant at least eight years work with steady pay and no questions asked about one’s ancestry. Things were looking up for the survivors of the first big ditch.

The Ohio Canal

It was, of course, no accident that the digging of the Ohio Canal commenced the same year that the Erie was completed. There were all kinds of wrangles among members of the newly-formed Ohio legislature as to its route through the state, but in the end the start of the canal depended primarily on the availability of men to dig it. In the summer of 1825, upwards of 3,000 Irishmen, all skilled with the shovel, were standing by, just waiting for the sign-up call. It came on July 4th of that year, when the first ground was broken downstate near Newark.

The Irish, veterans of the Erie and a goodly number just off the sailing ships, made their way to almost every point of the proposed route the 308-mile canal was to travel between Cincinnati on the state's western boundary and Marietta greenhorn would find his final resting place along the banks of the Ohio Canal.

Drawing by Kinley T. Shogren from THE CUYAHOGA by William D. Ellis. Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc.

Chapter 3: Settling in Cleveland

Whatever the toll it took in lives, the Ohio Canal, among other things, made Cleveland a very important city. It transformed it into a strategic location, an exchange point for goods from the South, as well as the East, not to mention foreign shores. In no time long lines of wagons jammed its streets and vessels of every description crowded its twisting river, the Cuyahoga. By 1830, with the canal only a bit more than half completed, Cleveland was on its way to becoming a boom town.

What is Meant by "Irish"

The debate still goes on as to who were the first Irishmen to settle in Cleveland. As the Jesuits are wont to say, argument without a definition of terms is absurd. Thus it 611 comes down to what constitutes an Irishman, the genuine article, as opposed to hybrids such as the Anglo-Irish or Scotch-Irish, which were created by implantation and immigrated to this land from the English fiefdom of Ulster.

In this background piece I purposefully omitted mention of the Province of Ulster for two reasons: first, in the period of Irish emigration it was peopled primarily by non-Irish, and second, so much has been written about it of late that everyone should be familiar with its role as England's last vestige of an empire. Whether its people had been there for centuries during the migration or merely decades, they were not Irish by the normal ways of measuring a race — language, blood relationships, culture and religion.

However, as to the Irish in Cleveland, we could note that there were men with Irish surnames in the Connecticut Land Company, the organization responsible for the city's existence. Then, too, is the fact that Cleveland's first mayor was a man named Alfred Kelley. Another man named McIntyre stoutly defended the city durina the War of 1812, even though the British attack failed to materialize. But these men were not Irish in the true sense of the definition. Irish surnamed, yes, but not Irish in thought, word or action, and especially not in the intangible called culture.

So for the purposes of this work, the Irish will be those who emigrated from the 26 counties that lay outside Ulster and those very few from within who were not of the Orange Order. The Irish are those who followed the way St. Patrick laid out for them and not Good King Billy. While those requirements may seem stringent, they are eminently fair when one considers that 95% of all the peoples who lived on that island fit those standards.

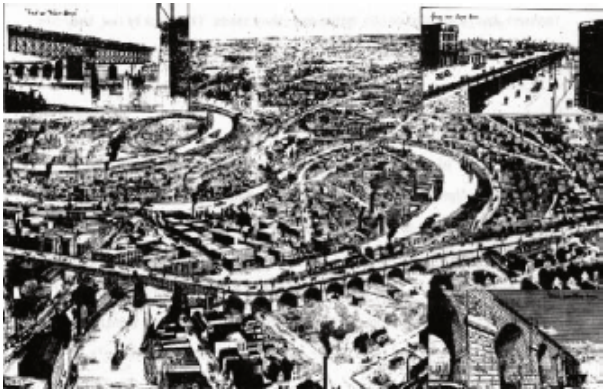
The First Irish in Cleveland

In light of that, it is safe to say that the first Irish to settle in Cleveland were those who came in the early and middle 1820's. There were only a handful of them and all had come from their labors on the Erie Canal, seeking a better way of life. They had been told that the life of a seaman was to be preferred to that of a canal digger. Only the most adventurous of them were willing to give up their steady work to go chasing such a rainbow, but some did, spurred on by thoughts of material gain, the quicker to get money to send home so relatives could join them here.

Some did manage to land berths on Great Lakes sailing vessels, but most had to settle for jobs on the docks. They didn't complain; they were lucky to get them. This handful of men was given a little nod by the city's established citizens, for they were so few in number as to be of no consequence. They stayed in their place by the river's mouth and few Clevelanders were even aware of their existence.

It was a different matter in the next few years, especially when the summer of 1825 rolled around. The Erie Canal had been completed and the Ohio about to get under way. The Irish began piling into the town in measurable numbers and the reaction among the local Yankees was quite different — they didn't like the rag-tag men who spoke English with a brogue and were obnoxious in other ways as well. Work on the canal lured most of them away, but by the best estimates of historians of the day and newspaper accounts, close to 200 Irishmen remained as squatters.

Plan of Cleveland 1868



Birdseye View of Cleveland 1878

Like their pioneering brothers before them, they headed for the docks seeking work. But there was another reason for doing so: the Yankee establishment let them know in no uncertain terms they were not welcome in other sections of the still small, but bustling, community. The attitude of the local residents was understandable, for the Irish were a different breed — foreign, footloose and free-spirited, wild men all.

One can imagine the impact the 200 Irishmen made on the more orderly Yankees, who numbered only about 1,000 themselves. They strongly resented this invasion by rough and tumble, mannerless men, who seemed interested only in obtaining the bare necessities of life and drinking the saloons along the riverfront dry. The Yankees had a decision to make and they made it quickly — they ceded the marshlands at the river's mouth to the Irish.

Whiskey Island

One must picture that land as it was when the Irish first huddled together on it. When Moses Cleaveland first came upon it, it was a delta and he had some difficulty finding the main channel to the river itself. The fact that he had to come upriver three-quarters of a mile before reaching ground solid enough to stand on gives one a clue as to its composition. One of the men in his company, in writing later about the founding father's trip upriver, revealed a nice touch of humor. "I could not help but re flect that history was repeating itself," he wrote, "Moses, like his namesake, was caught in the bullrushes."

The land around the river's mouth and for a half-mile south of it was pure swamp, with the exception of a ridge that had been formed by the Cuyahoga's current as it curved westward on its way to emptying in Lake Erie at a point just east of present day Edgewater Park. It would not be until 1827 that federal funding and engineering expertise allowed local citizens to dig a channel, creating the river's mouth as we now know it. The Irish, naturally, did the digging.

Since that knoll was the only habitable land anywhere about, the Irish took possession of it and began erecting tarpaper shanties on it. Amusingly enough, that stretch of slightly elevated land was once the "farm" of Lorenzo Carter, the city's first resident, who had built a still on its easternmost end. The land the Irish settled on had been called Whiskey Island for years before they arrived, but if it hadn't been, it would have had to have been renamed.

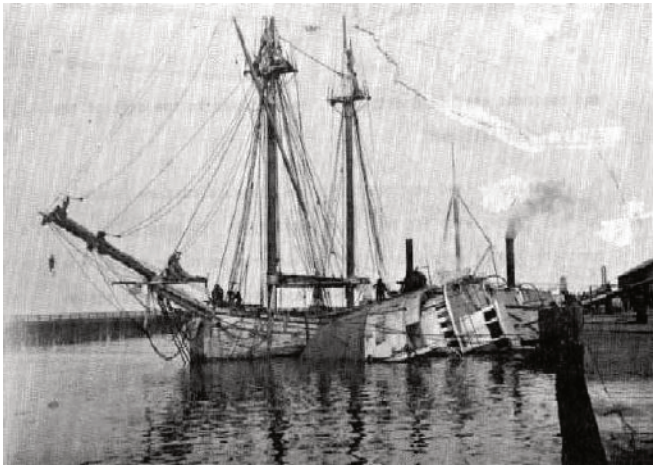
The Irish who squatted there gave a new meaning to the island's name — they made it a real island of whiskey. In its heyday it boasted of having 13 saloons, a considerable achievement since it was only a mile lona and a third of a mile across at its vtidest point. It was from the first and for many years remained the wildest, bawdiest section of Cleveland.

Whiskey Island was not actually an island, but rather a peninsula. Furthermore, it never was an island, not even when its first inhabitants, the "Irrinons" or Erie Indians, made a permanent camp there in the middle of the 17th Century. It is amusing to note that the French called the Eries "The Cat People," while two centuries later, Irish dock workers would come to be known as "Iron Ore Terriers" or "The Dog People." Those two tribes, the Eries and the Irish, would have had a rollicking good time had they the chance to meet, for both were of mercurial temperament, intemperate and amazingly stubborn, especially when it came to admitting the odds were against them.

Be that as it may, when Moses made his way through the Cuyahoga's bullrushes, Whiskey Island was a peninsula jutting westward from where the river's present day mouth is to about West 54th Street. When the river was straightened to allow nature to assist in the clearing of the sandbars which clogged its mouth, the original entrance to the lake was filled in and the peninsula then became anchored on its western end.

It is now difficult to imagine what a beehive of humanity Whiskey Island was from the 1830's to the turn of the century. All there is on it now are a number of grasshopper-like machines called Hulett Unloaders, oil storage tanks, a few warehouses, the

International Salt Company's large works, railroad yards and, of course, docks. The only traces of humanity left on the island are remnants of Riverbed Road and footers from a number of houses and business establishments. Oh, what it was in the days of the early Irish settlers!



Near the Lake Shore Bridge. Grain boat upset due to unbalanced load.

Whiskey Island — River Boats unloading ore in 1880. In the background is St. Malachi Church on Whiskey Island (*Plain Dealer*).

Whiskey Island was triangular in shape, almost an isosceles but not quite, with its northern boundary as its base. The island's northern limits were where the Penn-Central mainline tracks now run. The land now north of there resulted both from the action of the lake and the action of men, who carted fill there faster than the lake could reclaim it.

It is even more difficult for one looking over Whiskey Island today to imagine that all told, it had 22 streets crisscrossing it. Any doubts of this can be dispelled by a consultation of early Cleveland area maps. The streets were laid out by a group of ill-fated investors who purchased the land from the estate of Lorenzo Carter. The longest thoroughfare was Bennet Street, which ran the length of the island along its northernmost

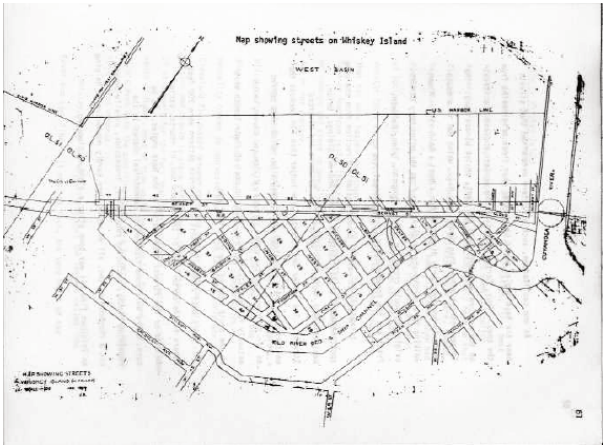
boundary. It now serves as the roadbed of the Penn-Central mainline tracks.

With the exceptions of Bennet, Albert and Toledo Streets, all others ran northwest-southeast or southwest-northeast, creating the crisscross pattern. Bennet, of course, ran in a West-east direction, while Albert and Toledo Streets ran in a north-south direction. The latter two were at the eastern edge of the island and only one block long. There was also an unnamed alley parallel to and a block west of Toledo Street, which some of the early inhabitants dubbed “Sin Alley.”

As one can imagine, such a pattern determined that streets near the base angles would be shorter than those originating from the apex. Thus, Carter Street on the western end and Elm Street on the eastern were both only 600 feet, or two blocks long. The longest street other than Bennet was Macy, which ran in a southwesterly-northeasterly direction for almost a half-mile. A man walking in a northwesterly direction from the point Macy Street originated would cross, in order, Thompson, Tyler, Baldwin, Pratt and the forementioned Carter Street.

If he were to walk in a northeasterly direction from the same spot, he would cross, again in order, Andrew, Gidings, Union, West, Hickory, Mulberry, Center, Elm, Sycamore and Riverbed Streets. The latter two streets were longer than Elm because the eastern base angle contained an irregularity, which also served as the terminus for two other streets, Willow and River, which actually ran parallel to Macy, but for most of their length were on the south side of the old river bed.

The blocks created by this crisscross pattern were 300 feet square in the center part of the island and, of course, varied in size as the streets drew nearer to the base angles. To be sure, there were some fascinating geometrical shapes in the remaining blocks, including rectangles, trapezoids, parallelograms and a rhomboid or two, all of which were hardly conducive to helping an Irishman find his way home after a night of tippling.



Map showing streets on Whiskey Island

Life on Whiskey Island

It was often said, and with some justification, “that most nights on Whiskey Island were lively ones and when the police answered a riot call, the horses would automatically head in that direction.” The Irish who inhabited Whiskey Island were,

indeed, hard-drinking, brawling and often lawless men, but then, they had plenty of reasons to be all three. They were rootless outcasts of society, a shunned and largely despised group of men, who despite their crude ways, Were not insensitive to the injustices that had been heaped upon them from the moment they first set foot on American soil. They had to take out their frustrations on someone and since no one else was available, they took them out on one another.

Many of them had aspirations that went beyond three squares, a place to flop and a bottle of whiskey, and they were to prove that in relatively short order, despite being caught up in a mentality common to oppressed people. The Irish of early-day Cleveland fluctuated between rage and despair and needed their bottles and brawls to stave off madness on an epidemic scale. If it weren't for the fact that they were able to retain a collective sense of humor, none of them would have made it, for then they didn't even have the consoling words of a priest to get them through their worst moments.

Whiskey Island was well within what the Yankees called "the fever and ague line." It was, in fact, the very heart of the swamplands in which resided the dread malaria-carrying mosquito which left its mark upon the Irish who dwelled there. It was the canal story all over again — the only question that remained was which would get to the Irishman's body first, malaria or diarrhea. Living on that patch of land in the 1820's took a heap of surviving.

Those early Cleveland Irish and their brothers working on the Ohio Canal in various parts of the state were also plagued by the

two-legged variety of creature, the one called man. They were often swindled by hucksters and even more often were victims of a more direct form of thievery. An editorial in the *Cleveland Leader*, dated June 6, 1826, railed against the unfair treatment afforded the Irish canal diggers, noting that many subcontractors were systematically cheating them out of their pay, meager as it was.

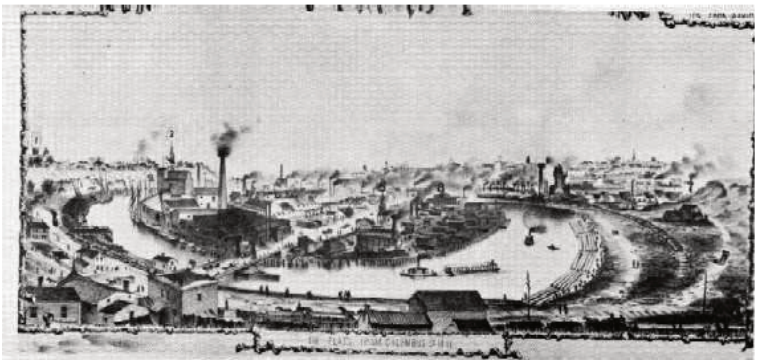
It was the old "company store game," in which the worker, no matter how long or hard he might labor, finds himself in the position of owing the company money at the end of each month. The canal Irish had little choice but to make their mark on the contractor's ledger and try to square things the following month, since jail terms for debtors were still the law of the land. It was a feat rarely accomplished, even when abstinence was tried. Nevertheless, things were bound to get better and they did, if one can overlook an epidemic of typhoid fever which originated in the canal area.

New Work on the Canal Boats

On July 4, 1827, the first canal boat navigated the 37 miles between Akron and Cleveland, passing through 41 locks. Although the two northernmost locks, the final links to Lake Erie, were not yet completed, it was cause for great celebration among local citizens, for it meant the city would soon take its place as a trading center of importance. It was also celebrated by the more perceptive Irishmen, as they saw in those flat-bottomed bateaux that plied their way up and down the canal, an escape from digging the canal itself.

They hired on as deck hands and cooks, some even landed jobs as helmsmen. This was the Irishman's first step in upward mobility, this exchange of a shovel for a hawser, frying pan or ship's wheel. It was difficult work, but compared to what he had been used to, it was like stealing money.

However, there was one little catch to their new life, but one considered inconsequential by the Irish. One of the principal reasons the Irish were hired on the canal boats had to do with their reputation as excellent brawlers. As the canal became congested with traffic, disputes would arise as to which barge would pass through a lock first when two arrived simultaneously. Since time was money, it became a somewhat important matter. The barge captains solved the problem by the age-old method of limited combat. One man, presumably the toughest, was selected from each barge to do battle for the honor of the boat and, of course, the economics involved.



The Flats from Columbus Hill, *Cleveland Plain Dealer* Collection.

1. St. John's Episcopal Church	6. Cleveland Elevator
2. Union Elevator	7. Glaser Brothers Tannery
3. St. Malachi Catholic Church	8. Bosfield & People Pail Factory
4. Cleveland-Columbus-Cincinnati Ry Round House	9. Cleveland Furnace Rolling Mills
5. St. Mary's of the Flats Catholic Church	

The two appointed gladiators would leap from their barges and engage one another on the adjoining towpath. There were no Marquis of Queensbury rules hampering these brawls, anything and everything was considered acceptable, including biting, gouging and kicking a man's procreative organs. Ouite naturally, the winner's barge got to go through the lock first. No more back spasms for the Irish, just a few broken skulls.

The canal workers who opted for the life of a bargeman saw their former ranks filled with yet more Irishmen, who continued to stream out of the ghettos of eastern seaboard cities by the

thousands. In 1829 it was estimated that 1,200 immigrants were arriving in northeastern Ohio each month, and a goodly number of them were Irishmen looking for work on the Ohio Canal. Most of these newcomers, however, were shuttled downstate and across the state to the Miami-Erie Canal. They apparently were every bit as boisterous as their brothers who had worked on the Erie and who were presently working on the Ohio. They spent their leisure hours in a village called Providence, and as one citizen of that western Ohio hamlet remarked: "It seemed to make no difference to them (The Irish) that our town was named for the Almighty. Every Saturday night they turned it into hell."

Moving Out from Whiskey Island: the 1830's

As far as the Cleveland Irish were concerned, things were looking up a bit. The boom hit in 1830, initiating a full decade of prosperity that was blemished only by the Panic of 1837. The port, hence the docks, bustled, providing more jobs for the men with the brogues. Other laboring jobs opened up also, as the business district, which still fronted on the river, became a thriving center of forwarding and commission warehouses, in addition to the ship chandler's storehouses that seemed to be everywhere. It was menial work, but it also meant that more Irishmen had a chance at stability.

As the 1830's progressed, some Irishmen even made it up the hill to the city proper, where they found jobs in the building trades, usually excavating foundations or carrying materials. The newly-arrived Germans, far more skilled in the crafts, latched onto the more artistically demanding and financially rewarding

jobs. Digging foundation holes had its hazards. There were cave-ins and sometimes a partially constructed wall would come tumbling down most unexpectedly. One unfortunate Irishman's death was recorded in the *Cleveland Leader* on July 7, 1835. It read: "Patrick Shields, an Irish laborer, was killed yesterday by the falling of a building wall on Superior Street. He was single and 34 years of age."

The 1830's saw the Irish firmly entrench themselves in Cleveland. They began to occupy both sides of the Cuyahoga, from the mouth of the river up to and a little beyond what is now Detroit Avenue. They also began careers as businessmen. Patrick Malone opened a butcher shop and John Murphy petitioned for a license to operate a public house. Not to be outdone, Thomas Maher opened a greengrocers shop. No tycoons in the lot, but upwardly mobile men, to be sure.

The 1830's also saw the completion of the Ohio Canal, for in the summer of 1832, a locally owned boat became the first to travel the 309-mile route between Cleveland and Portsmouth on the big river. The day of the Irish canal digger was all but over. Some stayed to dig auxiliary canals that formed a large web of waterways downstate but the main digging was a *fait accompli*. Many, as noted before, stayed on the canal as deckhands on the barges and began settling down in various towns along the waterway. Descendants of those early boatmen can be found in almost every town of size along the canal, but most notably in the northern section of the state. Any number of Akron, Canton and Massillon residents named Sheridan, O'Brien, Boyle,

O'Malley and Sweeney, to mention but a few, can easily trace their family patriarchs to their days as canal boatmen.

The Irish in Cleveland at this time were not numerous, but their numbers doubled in the 1830's to around 400. Included in that community were increasing numbers of women, sisters of canal diggers who had been sent passage money and urged to make the trip. The footloose were being supplied with hobbling pins and the chance to beget progeny. There would be more than a few friendly Celtic faces to greet the Famine Irish upon their arrival in the late 1840's. The canal diggers not only carved out waterways hundreds of miles long, they also paved the way for the Irish who came after them.

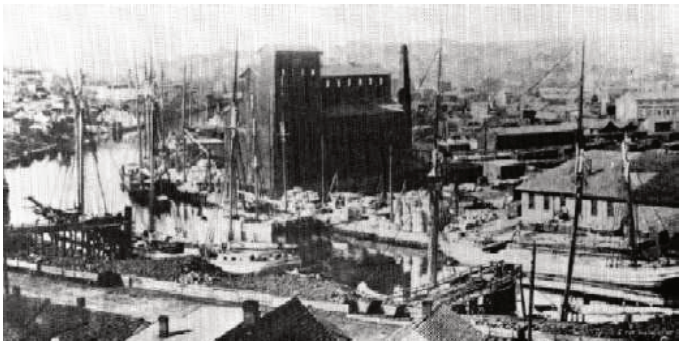
Not enough can be said for the brawny diggers who survived the poverty, pestilence and ostracism they encountered at every turn. Whatever their crude and boisterous ways, they were the ones who, through sheer grit and a laugh here and there, established the Irish beachhead on the shores of Cleveland and held on against overwhelming odds. They did more than that — they secured the docks and inland waterways for their own kind. May all their shovels rest easily, especially those of the forgotten souls who were unable to leave traces of themselves.

While the action of securing the docks might strike one as an achievement lacking in distinction or hardly being noteworthy, it was, in fact, an exceedingly important accomplishment. It meant the Irish who came after them would have a chance at life. The docks became the be-all and end-all of existence among West Side Irishmen. The fact that the work was grueling, low paying and often dangerous was neither here nor there, for it provided a

lifeline and a hope for the future. Besides, when was an Irishman offerred any other kind of work?

Expansion Continued: Irishtown

Within two years after the Famine struck Ireland, the Irish population of Cleveland had soared to 1,024, and more were on their way. The influx of newcomers from the Emerald Isle truly shattered the serenity of the native born. The banks of the Cuyahoga could no longer contain them and the Yankees were forced to code more territory. The Irish moved both eastward and westward along the lakefront. They established a ghetto extending from the shoreline to Superior Avenue in the vicinity of what is now East 9th Street. They also slid westward and filled the area between the Lake and Detroit Avenue to about West 28th Street. No matter, it was all just one form of swamp or another.



Looking north from Irishtown Bend in early 1870's (*Plain Dealer*).

Old Main Avenue Lighthouse. Corner of West 9th and Lakeside about 1850 (*Plain Dealer*).

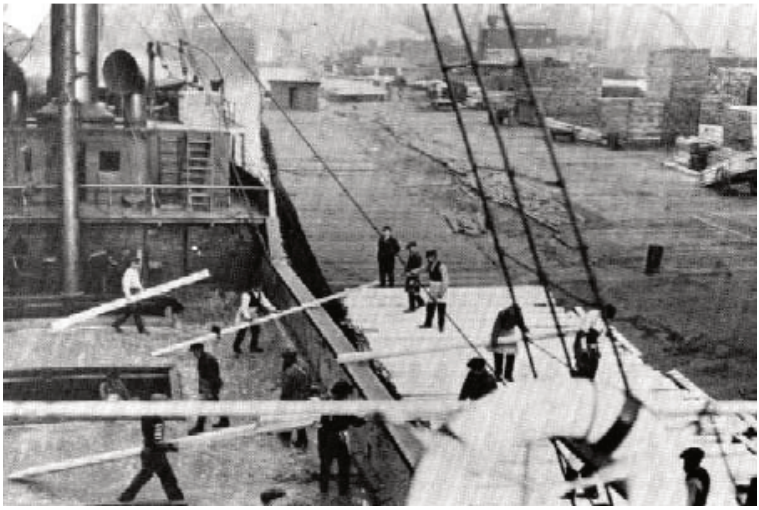
From that initial expansion they would go on to establish other pockets of Irish power, east and west, sometimes leapfrogging established Yankee comunities. The Newburgh section is the prime example of this, but in that case, as in all others, they were simply following work opportunities. It should be noted that the Famine Irish had at least one predecessor in the Newburgh

area, if we are to believe a letter dated August 16, 1833, written by one Arthur Quinn, who carefully datelined his missive back home, “Newburgh, County of Cuyahoga.” Quinn advised his relatives that “this is a poor man’s country, but unless he has land or can labor hard, he stands a poor chance at success.”

Working on the Docks: The Iron Ore Terriers

When stating before that the docks were “all,” as far as the Cleveland Irish were concerned, ot was my intent to use the word as a collective that included every activity that could possibly be connected tot he docks. The Flats, the heart of Irishtown, was also the industrail center of Cleveland, as well as the commodity exchange center. By 1840 there were four iron foundries located there and a “manufactory” for machine tools and, of course, several shipbuilding companies. The city’s true wealth lay in shipping, and that encompassed a plethora of businesses, all of which held possibilities for employment among the Irish.

Cuyahoga River scene in 1880. View from foot of St. Clair Street (*Plain Dealer*).



Unloading a lumber steamer in Cuyahoga Pier about 1895 (*Plain Dealer* Collection).

Although iron, in one form or another, had been transported to the city for a number of years, the discovery of vast amounts of iron ore in Minnesota in 1852 was to guarantee the Irish of Cleveland solid work well beyond the turn of the 20th Century. Although the precious red mineral wasn't much at first because of limited need — the first shipments in the 1830's were of such small quantity that they could be handled in a few barrels on the deck of a passenger vessel — as the city developed into an industrial giant, it was delivered daily, thousands of tons at a time.

As the foundries and mills expanded, due to advances in metallurgy and the demands of a surging economy, the necessity to build cargo ships specially designed to carry ore became imperative. Hulking wooden vessels were built that were practically all holds, some capable of transporting 300 tons of ore.

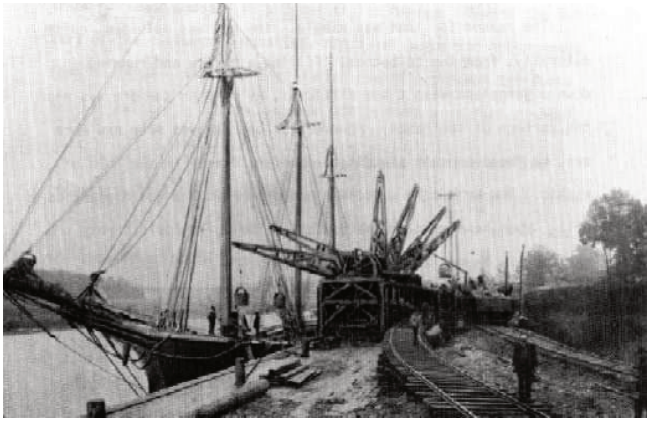
It took 100 men four days to put that much ore into one of these vessels and took an equal number of unloaders seven days to clear the holds. By rights it should have taken eight days, for it is at least twice as hard to bring ore up out of a ship as it is to drop it down into one.

The job of unloading those ore-ladden monsters was the sole province of the Irish. It was unbelievingly back-breaking work, every bit the equal of canal digging and probably worse. The first tools the Irish were given to accomplish their task were rather primitive ones — a shovel and a basket. Through the

benevolence of the shippers, they soon graduated to the shovel and the wheelbarrow. What made the work unbearable is that it got more difficult as it went along.

The reason for that was simple. The ore was unloaded, quite naturally, from top to bottom. Filling a barrow and running down a gangplank wasn't too difficult, as long as the ore was near the surface of the hatch. However, as one removed more and more ore, he found himself standing deeper and deeper in the hold of a ship. Now he had to push the loaded barrow up a board plank as well. When he neared the bottom of the hold, he could barely see daylight — he had a long way to go.

Yankee ingenuity came into play within a short time, prodded as it was by economic reasons. The shippers had alseries of platforms erected in each hold, thereby enabling the shovelers to raise ore to the deck more expeditiously. More ingenuity on the part of the shippers resulted in a pulley system being devised, which allowed oversized buckets to be hooked up to a team of mules on the docks. When a bucket was filled, the mules would be spurred into action and their resultant straining would hoist the bucket of ore out of the hold and deposit it on the dock. It was not uncommon for 40 teams of mules to be employed in various combinations on a given day.



Early machinery for loading and unloading ore — 1880. The unloading devices are “Whirleys” which replaced the Irish man with a wheelbarrow.

Upward Mobility: the 1850’s

During the 1850’s the Irish in Cleveland, those who had come from canal digging chores and those sent here by the Famine, made their first en masse move upward to better jobs. They began employing their native know-how in various ways. One such man was Anthony Aaron Gallagher, a Mayo native who spent his first few years here unloading iron ore. A gregarious man who seemingly got along with men from all walks of life, Gallagher hit upon an idea that was to make him a very successful and powerful man in Irishtown.

He first approached the ship owners and offered to take off their hands the troublesome and time-consuming chore of securing men to unload cargoes. For a commission, he would take full

responsibility for the hiring and firing of the Irish stevedores. He must have been a persuasive talker, as the Yankee shipping magnates agreed to give him a chance to prove himself.

Gallagher then made the rounds of the docks, explaining his idea to the workers, pointing out to them that their hit-and-miss chances of obtaining a day's work would be a thing of the past. He would guarantee the willing and able the security of regular work, providing, of course, that they would keep their end of the bargain by giving him "26 dry days of work each month." He was careful to explain that they needn't join Father Matthew's Temperance League, but merely that they must be sober and in good condition at the morning roll call.

A good many workers thought Gallagher's idea had merit and agreed to give it a go, however they might have crossed their fingers behind their backs. Gallagher's system worked surprisingly well, and even more surprisingly he remained a popular man on the docks throughout his career, Irish jealousies notwithstanding. He ran the docks efficiently and kept his bargains, both with the men and the shippers. The vast majority of those who did business with him agreed "he was a fair man."

\While the Gallaghers didn't have a monopoly on brains or ambition, another man of that name also did very well in Cleveland. He came to be known as "Holy Water" Gallagher because of his penchant for nearly "drowning" the corpses he attended in his role of undertaker. Though there were no funeral homes in those days, the custom being to lay out the deceased in his bed or in the parlor, Gallagher's services were required to prepare the corpse, hire the wailers, and see to it that the

poor soul was sent off in splendid fashion. He and his business prospered mightily and he became one of the most prominent members of the Irish community.

He was, after all, one of them. When he arrived in Cleveland from Mayo in 1847 at the age of 19, Gallagher completed the transfer of the family from that wind-swept county to the banks of the Cuyahoga. His five brothers had preceded him here, as did his sister Mary, who had come in 1836. Gallagher landed a job unloading iron ore, but after paying the red dust its due for two years, he knew there had to be a better way to make a living. He saved his pennies and bought a horse and wagon and set himself up as an independent drayman.

Using his contacts, his brothers and cousins, Gallagher was soon established in a very successful hauling business. This bit of enterprise, he was to explain later, “Came from a bit o thinking on my part. Someone had to haul the cargoes the ships brought in, why shouldn’t it be me?” No doubt, he must have asked himself another question — Why aren’t there any Irish undertakers? He answered his own question by becoming one and giving up his profitable, but definitely plebian, hauling business.

Another Irish entrepreneur of the day was Captain Patrick Boylan, a descendant of one of the few men who escaped Cromwell’s slaughter of the inhabitants of Drogheda. Boylan’s grandfather and father were pilots in the harbor of the city of Cromwell’s revenge and, as a lad, he was introduced to the sea and its mysterious ways. He became a highly skilled seaman and crossed the Atlantic, first settling in New York in 1852. A

short time later he negotiated the purchase of a sailing vessel and brought it to the Great Lakes, using Cleveland as his base of operations. If nothing else he did improve the morale of the Iron Ore Terriers, for it was a proud thing to unload a ship owned by an Irish Catholic, the only such ship afloat on the inland seas.

This was the decade of the Irishman striking out on his own, of attempting to establish his own business. Daniel Donahue, for instance, became the city's first Irish Catholic dairyman, and his business prospered so well that he was able to purchase 600 acres of land on the far west side of town to increase his milk production. James Clements, who had come to Cleveland in 1843, founded a stone mason business. Peter Daly arrived in this city in 1848 and, though only 18 years of age, started his own hauling business. He, too, had paid his two-year dues as a teamster before making his move, which was solidified by a contract with the Cleveland Rolling Mill Company.

In the Cleveland area there were at least two exceptions to the Irishman's distrust of land ownership during this era, Daniel Hoynes and James Hickey, both from County Kildare. The two men worked for the Big Four Railroad Company and saw in the land near Olmsted Township a great opportunity. Hoynes was the first to leave the railroad life. In 1847 he bought 600 acres of fertile Olmsted toil and prospered sufficiently to raise a family of 10 sons. Hickey left the Big Four two years later and purchased 1,000 acres in the same township. Both families were to remain tied to the soil for many years.

Shantytown Life in the Late 1800's

However successful the more daring and ambitious Irish were, the average man of the same community during the middle and latter half of the 19th Century still looked eagerly to the docks for his livelihood. It must be kept in mind that until the industrial explosion occurred in the 1870's, Cleveland's great wealth lay in its bustling port. Not only did it serve as a voluminous exchange center of commodities, but also as the Great Lakes' largest builder of ships. For decades the harbor area was a veritable forest of masts.

The Irish who peopled Cleveland's West Side lived anything but comfortable lives, and that includes those who regularly brought home a paycheck. Newspaper accounts of the day make much of the squalor that was Shantytown, but little of the fact that well into the 20th Century the Cuyahoga was an open sewer of industrial and human wastes. Disease was rampant and it was only a question of which disease would strike the Irish at any given time. Almost all the plagues emanated from the Flats area, the heart of Irishtown. The principal causes of death there were cholera, diphtheria, scarlet fever and diarrhea infantum.

The Irish dock worker received on the average $8 for his "26 dry days" of labor each month, hardly a considerable sum even in those days and certainly not enough to afford him the more readily available creature comforts, much less anything that could be considered a luxury. His shanties were, indeed, improving and were generally larger in size, thanks mainly to his skill as a liberator of lumber. Of course, that isn't saying too much, when one considers that almost any edifice erected, say,

in the 1850's, simply had to be larger than a tarpaper shack or clapboard lean-to.

Many of the Irish, who had no place to build their shanties other than on the sides of the hills that sloped down to the Cuyahoga, displayed a certain amount of ingenuity by building homes on stilts. That way, one need merely plumb his floor and anchor his house against the hill, all the while increasing the length of his supports. Such open air basements provided children a great place to play hide-and-seek and wayward men a place to sleep off their night's indulgence of spiritous waters. The mainstays of the back or side yard, as the case might have been, were the outhouse and the woodshed, with the latter also serving as a place of punishment for recalcitrant or otherwise obnoxious children. The Irish were not a race to pamper children in any given era and certainly not in the mid-19th Century, a time of harsh reality.

In a time when the Irish continued to stream into the city, adding to its seemingly perpetual housing shortage, the modest dwellings of Irish families were continually bulging at the seams. A typical family unit would include the father, mother and normal large brood of children, plus any surviving grandparents and down-and-out relatives many times removed. Sometimes, friends of distant relatives would be given places to rest their weary bodies. It didn't really matter, the Irish had to take care of their own and they did, in the complete belief that there was always room for one more. Privacy, if it existed at all, was a state of mind and not a condition of reality.

There is a centuries-old adage having to do with the poor always

being more generous than the rich, that the less people had, the more willing they were to share their meager goods. While this bit of philosophical thought has encompassed all nations from the earliest days of civilization, the Irish made it a truism. Sacrifice was the key to life on the banks of the Cuyahoga and that included one's time and consoling words, as much as it did one's loaf of bread. If any one expression came to the fore in Irishtown, it was the simple phrase "our own kind." That said it all.

Meals for reasons both economic and by design, were simple and as filling as possible. For a people long-accustomed to near starvation diets, the overwhelming thrust of eating habits was to fill the stomach to the bursting point. The famed "Mulligan Stew" could serve as a prime example of a dish fitting the needs of a 19th-Century Irish Clevelander. It was made from the cheaper cuts of meat, potatoes, of course, and most any kind of compatible vegetable. The makings were thrown into a kettle and simmered until they took on a gelatinous form, the better to stick to one's ribs. Corned beef and cabbage became synonymous with the Irish, and fish dishes were also favored, with tea as the primary beverage. The chicory-flavored coffee wasn't too popular, milk, other than a mother's own, was rightfully suspect (Louis Pasteur was yet to make it safe), and beer was for Germans.

Irish Saloons

There was, of course, another liquid that the Irish drank often

and in large amounts. Most people called it whiskey, but among the Irish it was more commonly known as “the creature.”

That was only as it should be, for they saw in that amber-colored spiritous water an almost mystical being, one who had extraordinary power over the affairs of men. While it was true that “the creature” had a cruel streak in him, and woe to the man so foolish as to deny it, he was, in the main, jolly good company, a friend who could perform miracles with a man’s soul, often sending it soaring heavenward at a moment’s notice, to a far better place than most mortals knew existed.

Whiskey often has been called “the curse of the Irish” and few care to argue the point. All one need do to prove the validity of that statement is peruse the rolls of alcoholic treatment centers in major American cities. It is an experience not unlike reading a Dublin phone book and most of those unfortunate souls ended up in such centers as the result of taking just “a wee drop of the creature” once too often. Of course, a “wee drop” in Irish jargon usually means enough to drown a man of another nationality.

Indeed, the 19th-Century Irish loved their saloons. They would sit in them of many an evening and, spurred on by “the creature,” dream their dreams and scheme their schemes, all the while licking physical wounds gained in their labors and mental wounds, courtesy of the Yankee establishment. They would talk of the old country and sing its songs until there wasn’t a dry eye in the place. They would give Victoria Regina a roasting the likes of which she wouldn’t see this side of hell and gleefully predict that her fat derrière would one day be singed by the coals

of that nether World. To hell with her Britannic Majesty and all the bloody Orangemen who ever lived. Up with the Pope.

That the Irish who huddled on the banks of the Cuyahoga had more than a speaking acquaintance with "the creature," can be attested to by the fact that Whiskey Island, a relatively small tract of land, boasted 13 saloons in its heyday. Toward the latter part of the century in question, the Irish supported in generous fashion 24 watering spas that dotted the hill between the docks and St. Malachi's Church, no mean achievement even for Irishmen.

While much has been made of the race's fondness for and propensity to indulge in spiritous waters, most of what has been written has told, at best, only half the story. Few historians, and oven fewer social scientists, have done any probing as to the root cause of the drinking problem of the Irish, but then few such men have taken the time to study the painful history of Ireland. The Celts were a boisterous race and they loved nothing better than to attend a *feis*, a festive gathering of the clans, where much celebrating and merriment ensued.

The Irish drinking problem, however, had its roots in seven centuries of oppression, the most ungodly kind of rapine ever visited upon a race. There has never been a people who suffered so much for so long who did not develop or grasp an already existent mental crutch. The Irish reached for the liquid narcotic which had the power to make any day seem bearable, even if only for a moment or two. If the truth be known, spiritous water saved more Irishmen than it ever ruined, but, unfortunately, those kinds of statistics are never compiled.

It must be understood that in this country in the 19th Century, the saloon was much more than a place to go to forget ones troubles. It was everything to the Irishman, his social club, his forum to exchange philosophical thoughts, to engage in political debates, the stage on which he performed his theater magic, even his town hall platform. What better place could possibly serve him? None, of course, and the whiskey that flowed was merely a glorious fringe benefit.

Though they might be largely illiterate, the Irish in Cleveland, as in other cities in which they settled, were great writers of prose and poetry with their tongues. The saloon was an absolute necessity, because the Irish had to have someplace to let their soul feelings take wings, to prove they were capable of expressing artistic and noble thoughts. It is also quite true that the saloon also served as a dais for their collective rage and they vented their spleens in the direction of the Yankee establishment. That, it should be well noted, was about the only way an Irishman ever counted coup after a skirmish with the local natives.

It was, in fact, in the saloons that the Irish earned their reputation for being quick of mind and sharp of tongue. Some of the exchanges of wit have come down through the succeeding generations and have taken on legendary status. Of course, sometimes a man’s abrasive tongue would bring him back an argument in more solid form — like a fist exploding in his face. Bejayzuz! There were some splendid rows in those quaint forums of debate and many an Irishman woke up the following

morning with two very distinct kinds of headache. They didn't call police vehicles "Paddy Wagons" for nothing.

Again, it wasn't only the whiskey that made the early Irish in Cleveland a rowdy bunch, but another trait that developed during seven centuries of fending off extermination — the need to be as devious as the given situation demanded. A young curate, who had spent years among them ministering to their spiritual needs, once observed:

> Every Irishman who was ever born is two-parts saint and two-parts son of a bitch. An Irishman will finger his beads and talk ceaselessly about going to heaven, yet can never resist the temptation of scratching the nose of the Devil.

There are many who would agree with the good father's assessment of the race, for who knows better than one's own kind? Certain traits beget certain actions and over the centuries a collective national character is formed and hardened to the point of reality. It is eminently true that the Irish are not above bending a few rules of church or state, all the while being filled with pious thoughts about the Creator and all his lovely angels and saints.

If the Irish have any trouble with their faith, it's only because they know it too well and are so fond of it that they feel they can deviate from its tenets, should a particular occasion arise. The Irish are firm believers in St. Francis of Assissi's assertion that the body is a recalcitrant donkey that inhibits man in his quest for spiritual perfection. Sure, and it's Brother Ass who prevents

the Irish from being a phalanx of solid saints and nothing else. The Irish always have made up for their peccadilloes in a manner that can only be described as grandiose. Consider, for example, that at one time not too long ago, Irish missionaries comprised 27% of the Roman Catholic Church's world evangelizers. What a staggering statistic that is a nation of six million souls supplying more than a quarter of all those who labored in foreign mission fields. In comparison, Americans represented 6% of the total number of missioners and, at that time, were some 40 million strong.

Politics

While the Cleveland Irish of the 1850's might rage about their treatment at the hands of the established natives, they were quick to recognize a flaw in those Yankee "Swells." The owners of the mills they worked in and docks they toiled on had, however begrudgingly, given them the vote. It would only be a matter of time until the Irish would overcome. The Irish saloons took on yet another function — it would be precinct quarters for the Irish who aspired to political office, the base upon which the famed Irish political machine would be built.

It is interesting to note that the Irish in Cleveland were rather slow to develop any real political clout in this community until after the turn of the century. Admittedly, they ran their own turf and often made a difference in a particular elective race, but they didn't make the kind of splash that their brothers did in other large American cities. In New York, for instance, 18 Irish Catholics were elected to political office as early as 1852. In

1873, with the political demise of William Marcy Tweed, they took over Tammany Hall itself.

There were a number of reasons the Cleveland Irish political clout remained latent rather than becoming blatant. The foremost of which had to do with their numbers. The Yankees and immigrants from other nations were still the large majority. Secondly, the Irish were assigned the anathema role in society, the role blacks have been cast in today. The only other group of immigrants to give the Irish meaningful support were the Germans, who, although they thought the Irish improvident wastrels, nevertheless saw in them something charismatic. It is even more interesting to note that nearly a century later, when the Slavic peoples of Cleveland formed a group to oust the predominant Irish from political office, the Germans alone stood by them. But that is getting far ahead of the story.

The Old Irish Settlement upper right behind Standard Oil Company's work. In 1880's (*Plain Dealer*).

The Old Superior Street Railway Co. horse car barn on Superior Ave. and Willson Ave. (now E. 55th St.) about 1880. The Streetcars in the picture carried 40 passengers and required two horses. Straw on the floor kept passengers' feet warm in cold weather (*Plain Dealer*).

Crime

The Irish profile, from the earliest days of their arrival until the turn of the century, was not one, which would lure Yankees to ballot boxes in their behalf. It must be remembered that all through the latter decades of the 19th Century, the Irish of Cleveland were blamed for every major and minor ill that afflicted the city. It was estimated by police officials and trumpeted loudly in all Cleveland newspapers, especially Edwin Cowles' anti-Irish *Cleveland Leade*r, that 90% of all crimes committed within the city's boundaries were perpetrations of the Irish.

While that percentage seems exhorbitant, it must be acknowledged that there was a criminal element in Irish society that was an everyday grim reality of life. Since the Irish of the West Side were very much ghettoized, as the result of their own doing as well as that of others, the law-abiding Irish were the principal victims of personal crimes, while the Yankees were the victims of offenses against property. The latter received far more notice from the press than the former, but then, that was to be expected.

Newspaper accounts of the day and the oral history of the Irish community handed down through the generations are in general agreement that most of the crimes would fit into the categories known today as robbery and assault. Groups of thugs would roam the bawdier areas of Irishtown and waylay the careless souls they would come upon. The most notorious of those groups were the McCart and Triangle gangs, whose members plied their nefarious ways in the darkness of night, mostly pilfering goods from the docks and nearby warehouses. There were occasional murders of night watchmen and police, but crimes with attendant fatalities were not the usual occurrence.

The Irish community had a very strange attitude toward the criminal element that lived within it. Some historians have likened it to the “omerta” or silence of the Sicilian immigrants of the early 20th Century, but that really wasn’t the case. The Irish, with their heads full of fantasies, firmly believed there was such a thing as bad blood and those who robbed and mugged were the victims of that affliction. It goes without saying that they also thought that the bastards who preyed on the innocent would go

to hell in a handbasket and be tormented for an eternity, so why should they get exercised about such wrongdoing?

A newspaper item of the early 1870's revealed that however patient the Irish might have been with the criminals who lived within their ranks, they appreciated any discomfort that might come the evildoers way. One day just such a reward came when two gangs (unidentified) settled a territorial dispute by warfare in broad daylight. In no time, a large crowd of Irishmen gathered to watch the head bashing and cheered like mad when the going proved all but fatal to both gangs. The crowd also booed lustily when the police moved in to prevent what appeared to be certain mass murder among Cleveland's citizenry.

The collective blood-thirstiness on the part of the lawabiding Irish who watched that and other melees usually dissipated by the time the brawls were over and known "bad bloods" were allowed to roam the streets unmolested. There were no vigilante groups in Irishtown, but that is not to say that individual acts of revenge were not carried out, for they were, sometimes in spectacular fashion. One "bad blood" was beaten to a pulp in front of St. Malachi's Church as Mass was letting out one Sunday morning by an Iron Ore Terrier who had been waylayed by same outside a saloon the night before. Another bad blood was beaten, tarred and feathered and then heaved into the Cuyahoga by three staunch sons of a tugboat captain who had suffered a mugging at the hands of that culprit.

The crime in Irishtown, while real enough in itself, was, as mentioned, exaggerated by the city's daily newspapers to the point where it seemed no one other than an Irishman ever

committed a crime in Cleveland. At first, the anti-Irish publishers were content to detail the squalor of the Irish, but that soon became old hat, not to mention slightly embarrassing, when it was pointed out that not a single Yankee organization had ever offerred the struggling souls on the banks of the Cuyahoga so much as a drop of water to soothe their fevered brows. Dives was calling Lazarus a filthy pig. Squalor didn't make for interesting copy, so when the crime reports started being issued, the newspapers quickly jumped on the bandwagon of Yellow Journalism. Cowles of the *Cleveland Leader* was a standout in the category of bias. His loathing of the Irish stemmed from the fact that he could not abide Papists, seeing in them a threat to this cradle of liberty. He was a strange man, for he had in his employ a number of Catholics whom he treated fairly in all regards. Individually, he could deal with them, but the thought of masses of Papists with the right to vote unnerved him to no end. He wrote violently anti-Catholic editorials in the *Leader,* in which he urged, among other things anti-Catholic in nature, that laws should be enacted to prevent Papists from holding public office in America. Of course, Cowles' railings were to be expected, for at the time he was President of the Order of the American Union, an organization that had its roots in Know-Nothingism and was dedicated to the suppression of American Catholic civil rights.

The Irish had the book on Cowles, as they did on many another local newspaper publisher. They came to regard the press as just another tool of continuing oppression, a case of more numbers being done on their hard, flinty heads. The attacks on them only served to solidify their ranks and develop an "us against them" mentality that lasted well into this century. It also served to

sharpen their collective sense of humor in regards to the local establishment. They were quick to seize upon and enshrine any putdown of the English-Yankee types who ran this or any other city or country.

When word came to them that the father of the noted Irish poet William Butler Yeats had squelched an English journalist, they repeated his words in every bar in Irishtown. For the record, the English newspaperman had asked Yeats Pere if the "Irish problem" would ever be settled? The reply was swift and rather devastating. Said the elder Yeats: "No, it's insoluble. How can the dullest people in the world rule the cleverest?" So much for Irish coup counting in the 19th Century.

Service Occupations and Some Community Problems

One plus factor that resulted from the on-going Irish "criminality" was that the Yankee community decided that there was something in the adage about fighting fire with fire. Irishmen were invited to be official upholders of the law — to become policemen. A goodly number of them, weary of the work on the docks or some other less than commodious place, responded to the call and most of them did a creditable job. In fact, within a few decades, especially around the turn of the century, it seemed to America that every policeman in every large city in this country spoke with a brogue.

An almost equal number of Irishmen joined the fire-fighting brigades when they came to be formed, work every bit as hazardous as the policeman's. In a city still largely consisting of

wooden frame buildings, fire was a constant threat. Sometimes the Irish made the work doubly hazardous by making mad dashes to the scenes of fires just to get there faster than a rival firehouse. There was a spectacular fire in 1870 that engulfed a large section of the Flats, gutting warehouses, foundries and numerous Irish shanties. A pumper, manned by four Irishman, went careening down the Superior Road hill and into the river with all lives lost, including that of the two horses pulling it. No caution among the Irish once an alarm sounded.

If that weren't enough for the Irish to handle, a short time later they were visited by an earthquake, one of the few measurable ones recorded in this area. Fortunately, it took no Irish lives, but it toppled their chimneys, rattled their shanties and caused them to wonder what could possibly come next. They didn't have long to wait. The city fathers thought that the Flats would make an ideal location for a burning shed for the garbage that was collected daily. The refuse from the surrounding hotels, groceries and better homes was deposited in great piles on the river bank for observation by the Irish.

Though it was burned daily, the garbage did little to enhance the beauty of the neighborhood or improve the health of the people who lived nearby. The Irish took umbrage at this display of Yankee high-handedness and created such a furor that the city fathers finally discontinued the practice, opting to hire independent haulers to cart the unwanted decaying matter to less populous places on the outskirts of the city.

Continued Expansion: Lace Curtain and Shanty Irish

The 1870's were to see the Irish spread ever westward, occupying most of the territory from the lake to Bridge Avenue, as far west as West 65th Street. It was called Gordon Avenue in those days and there wasn't much beyond it, except for a few scattered farms. By 1880 a new parish, St. Colman's, was created for the Irish who lived in that section. Thus, the West Side Irish had need for a third church although they were compressed into a territory only 40 blocks long by 20 wide.

By this time the Irish were getting numerous enough to create sections within their own enclave. They were also beginning to separate as to their degree of upward mobility. It was a time for labeling one another. When those who moved up the ladder of success more rapidly began moving into larger frame houses and taking on fancy airs, they were dubbed "Lace Curtain." They, in turn, referred to there less fortunate brethren as "Shanty" or "Pig in the Parlor Irish." There were yet other derogatory terms exchanged, some reaching back to events or conduct in the old country, which shows that the Irish felt a measure of success here. An especially insulting term was "Achill Irish," which alluded to the supposed traitorous conduct of the people who inhabited that island off the coast of Mayo during the bad days.

Though insults were freely exchanged, the rival factions of Irishtown generally made no big deal of the jealousies that existed. There were, to be sure, occasional physical confrontations, highlighted by fistfights and the breaking of boards over one another's heads, but nothing to get excited about, much less alter one's way of living.

Of all the Irish who settled here, the most self-conscious were those who lived hard by St. Malachi's spire. Taunted by the more affluent Irish, that is the ones who could afford curtains in the windows of their residences, the "Angle Irish" became the most chauvinistic of the Irish in Cleveland and by far the most resentful of having their turf invaded.

It was not uncommon for a "Lace Curtain" type, should he chance to meet a lass from "The Angle," arrange to meet her in neutral territory, such as the corner of West 25th Street and Detroit Avenue. This was to be preferred to enduring real and imagined threats from the lass' brothers, cousins and even unrelated members of the Angle fraternity. After an evening of courting, he would say his good night at that corner and watch his beloved disappear into the darkness.

While it may sound somewhat ungallant, it made a great deal of sense for two reasons — first, it saved him a possible beating and secondly, there was no need for him to accompany her merely for safety's sake. No one in any section of Cleveland's Irishtown could recall an incident of a woman being molested. Men were mugged and robbed, certainly, but a woman — never. It was the code and it was respected even by the bad bloods.

That is not to say that the Irish as a race were miraculously exempted from the fragility of man called concupiscence. They did commit sins of the flesh, as Whiskey Island's bawdy houses attested, but the molestation of a "daycint" woman was considered the most detestable action of man and one of the deadliest sins it was possible to commit. The Irish view of carnality was almost the equal of the Puritans. Besides, to dispel

passion they had “the creature,” which was, more often than not, up to the Job.

Chastity was a virtue held in deep respect by the vast majority of the Irish who lived here in the 19th Century, especially the latter half, and it was by no means meant for women alone. The men were expected to be equally chaste and no double standard would be accommodated — that was for Latins who couldn’t control their emotions and South Sea island pagans who didn’t know any better. Heaven only knows how many times that message came thundering down from a pulpit on high, complete with vivid descriptions of hell’s fires and the souls who would be tortured there for all eternity, all because they had fallen victim to the pleasures of the flesh.

Irish Wakes

As previously noted, the Irish were much concerned with the life hereafter, for they knew in their heart of hearts that a just God had to reward those who suffered their hell on earth, like many an Irishman did, or He would not be a just God at all. Many Irishmen dwelt so much upon their soul’s well-being that they often neglected their temporal welfare. They were caught up in philosophical argument — it really didn’t make a bit of difference what one did or did not accomplish here, eternity was forever. So let the fools and devils take all of earth’s spoils — life was but a brief encounter for the average Irishman anyway. If his work didn’t kill him at an early age, then certainly disease or pestilence would. Maybe even “the creature” might turn on him and send him to his grave.

That was, of course, the reason he took such an abiding interest in the celebration of death. The poor departed souls were finally in good hands, far better ones than ever cradled them here, and they could now rejoice for eternity with God and the heavenly hosts. Such an event as the passing of a good man or woman was proper cause for celebration, as well as for paying one's sorrowful respects to the surviving family members. It took the Irish to come up with the most perfect combination of joy and sorrow ever invented — the Irish wake.

Out of respect for the deceased, may God have mercy on his soul, the bottles and merriment were kept in those parts of the house where he wasn't. Any and all other rooms would be utilized because a wake made for a grand time for large numbers of people. The mourners, either familial or hired professionals, were considered no good if their keening did not drown out the noise coming from the other parts of the house. The wails that were emitted from the throats of the mourners were often of such heart-breaking intensity, of such soul-wracking despair that they chilled the blood of those present and sent them scurrying off to the anterooms where the spirits flowed like water from a tap. What's more, a really good mourner could reach a peak of vocal desolation quicker than one could pour a drink, which added immeasurably to the ambience of the occasion.

The house of the deceased would be a study in black with ribbons of that color affixed to everything in sight, including the door knobs. All the clocks would be stopped at the moment of death and left in that frozen condition until well after the departed souls had been laid to rest. Relatives and friends would

keep the vigil all night long or as long as they could remain upright, alternating their attention from the corpse to the back rooms. Conversation and laughter flowed as rapidly as the whiskey, with everyone in attendance expected to remark how good “himself” looked as he lay stretched out on his bed or in a casket in the parlor.

There were times when things got a little out of hand, when the bereaved’s friends would partake of too much spirits and decide that a practical joke was in order. On more than one occasion, the deceased was slipped under the bed and his place taken by a friend or relative. This was an especially effective ploy when the switch was made just before the professionals hired for the evening came in to view the object of their labors. No sooner would they begin their keening than the “corpse” would return from the dead by slowly raising himself to a sitting position and undertake a rapid blinking of his eyes. Needless to say, the mourners would flee in perfectly understandable terror. Such pranks caused a few fistfights now and then, but they were all done in the spirit of good clean fun and never failed as a conversation piece for months after.

The wake brought out one of the many strange quirks that are part and parcel of the Irish character. It seemed that the reprobate evoked a greater amount of sympathy from the gathered clans upon his passinq than the neighborhood saint. Call it the imp of the perverse or what you will, but there was something in the Irish soul that drove them to be more compassionate in their testimony to the scoundrel on his bier and to the members of his family. Such a passing brought out the last drop of an Irishman’s

milk of kindness and warm comradeship was the order of the evening. Sometimes the pall bearers would even abstain from spirits, so as not to cause the surviving members of the family additional grief. God well knew they didn't need any more, after having to put up with the likes of the deceased all those years.

Cleveland Irish During The Civil War

The Irish always have had quirks in their collective character. The local variety was to prove it beyond question in 1863, when a goodly number of them marched off to war and an equal number closed the port of Cleveland by staging a massive strike, a most unpatriotic action, to say the least. No amount of persuasion by the city fathers could bring the Irish to halt their strike that was supposedly denying their brothers the means to do decent battle with Johnny Reb.

The Irish, who were in on the founding of almost every labor union in this area, had picked a most propitious moment to stage such a strike. There were higher wages to be gained and the shippers could well afford them, seeing as how Cleveland was then "The Queen of the Lower Lakes," the busiest port of any. The shippers thought otherwise and hired scabs from far and wide to replace them. While it seemed a sensible move, it never came off, because the Battle of Cleveland ensued and it took the entire police force of the city to quell the disturbance. The Irish stevedores had much the best of it, according to eyewitness reports, as they had a solid defensive position and "better throwing accuracy." The age-old axiom of baseball held true — good pitching will always beat good hitting.

Besides, the Irish manning those barricades on the Cuyahoga were in no mood to apologize for their community's efforts on behalf of the Union cause and the same was true of Irishmen in every city, North and South, in the country. What's more, there were no draft riots here, as no one needed to be drafted. Cleveland's Irish volunteered in numbers far larger than anyone suspected they would and they saw action on scores of battlefronts. To get an idea of how many answered Abe Lincoln's call, all one need do is to study the list of names ofCivil War veterans inscribed on the walls in the display room of the Soldiers and Sailors Monument on Public Square. One-third of all naval volunteers from this area were Irish, which isn't a bad showing, considering that they comprised only 10% of the population. Nationwide, over 200,000 Irishmen served in the Union and Confederate Armies and the division was roughly 140,000 to 60,000, with the North getting the larger number.

Organizations to Free Ireland: Trouble with the Church

The strangest quirk of all, however, had to do with the Irishman's willingness to risk excommunication from his church by joining secret societies whose aim was the liberation of Ireland from English rule. Many of them did, in fact, accept excommunication from the church they so firmly believed in, because they considered the cause of their homeland's freedom everv bit as sacred as their immortal souls. It was not an easy choice for most of them to make and an abundance of anguish followed every such decision to retain their memberships in organizations their bishops had condemned as "socialist-inspired and anti-American."

No doubt, a bit of explanation is in order. It all began in 1858, when an Irish nationalistic revolutionary movement became a reality on both sides of the Atlantic. The heart and soul of the movement rested in two autonomous divisions of the revolutionary organization — a secret society in Ireland called the Irish Republican Brotherhood and an openly active branch in the United States called the Fenian Brotherhood. The American society, composed of both patriotic visionaries and embittered Immigrants was to be the fund raising unit that would supply the brothers across the tea with guns and other tools of war. The American Fenians also pledged to mount an armed expedition in support of the revolt that was to come.

Since the Catholic Emancipation Act had been passed by Parliament only a few short decades before (1829), the Irish bishops wanted no rocking of the governmental boat, especially by a group of wild-eyed revolutionaries. When Charels Stewart Parnell and others founded the Irish National Land League and encouraged the peasants to withhold rent from their landlords, the bishops, in return for certain favors by English government officials, condemned the plan as immoral — the peasants were guilty of thievery — and threatened anyone so doing with excommunication.

The American bishops, with a few notable exceptions, followed the lead of the Irish hierarchy — the Fenians and Land Leaguers were to cease all socialistic, revolutionary activity disband their secret societies and concentrate their energies on becoming good Americans. Otherwise they would face excommunication, and that included all members in all such organizations. When the

Land Leaguers of Cleveland informed Bishop Richard Gilmour that they saw no need to disband their Ladies Auxiliary, he, in turn, informed them that the ladies would be excommunicated as well.

The Irish have never been an anti-clerical people. They had shared too much mutual suffering with the clergy and had seen too many priests go to the gallows on their behalf for that. However, after the Irish bishops sided with the British government in the mid-19th Century, they lost their affection for men of that clerical rank. The kindest words the Irish accorded their bishops was they had to act as they did, lest the Church would have lost its government dole.

One of the reasons the Irish chose to disobey their bishops, both here and in Ireland, is that a considerable number of priests agreed with their assessment of the hierarchy and backed up their words by joining the secret societies themselves. The freedom of Ireland was at stake after seven centuries of foreign rule and oppression, so the bishops would have to give them a better reason to desist, than mere self-righteous words.

This is yet another reason the Irish here were delayed in their political development. A great deal of their energies were spent debatinq the plausibility of the Fenian movement, if not its efficacy, and there is no doubt that it was the focal point of action on the part of the more important local politicians. Though Americanization was already settling in, half of them remained Irish and Erin was on the threshold of gaining her freedom, so they thought. It would be another 60 years before the English

Lion would withdraw his bloody claws from the heart of the Emerald Isle.

The dilemma facing the Irish here, of excommunication due to their participation in secret societies, was solved in the latter half of the 19th Century. The renians bungled their way to oblivion shortly after the Civil War ended, when they attempted to seize Canada and hold it hostage until Ireland was freed. An army of Fenians did invade Canada and captured Fort Erie for a brief spell before retreating back across the border into the waiting hands of the American army. The whole affair was rather comic and the Fenians fell from favor with the mass of sympathizers it had in the Irish communities across the land.

It was to give way to the Clan na Gael, an organization the American bishops didn't like any better than the Fenians. In due time, however, the Clan na Gael was to give way to the Ancient Order of Hibernians, which, because of changes in the hierarchy and the soft-pedaling of its aims, came to an acceptable status. The Hibernians peaked here in 1900, when they could boast of having 13 full "divisions" ready at a moment's notice to stage a parade for whatever occasion. Some proof of its acceptance can be ascertained in the fact that no less a clerical personage than John Cardinal Glennan of St. Louis was the organization's national chaplain.

It was pretty much a case of what the bishops didn't know would never hurt them. The Clan na Gael was, of course, as dedicated to the cause of Irish freedom as were the Fenians and its members had no intention of abandoning the fight, no matter what the American bishops might say. When they were declared

anathema by the Church hierarchy, Clan na Gael members simply infiltrated the ranks of the Hibernians and held great sway within that organization Perhaps infiltrate is not the correct word, for the Clan na Gaelers were welcomed with knowing nods, if not open arms.

Irishtown: 1870's and 1880's

Yet another factor involved in the slow political development of the Irish here, and a very important one, is that most of the men and women who resided in the Irish ghetto were primarily concerned with bettering themselves materially, and thus were pursuing jobs with a little more concreteness to them. It must be remembered that the Irish in Cleveland really didn't begin to make their collective climb until the 1870's and 1880's, when they began to move out of the mills and warehouses for better positions.

This period saw them become streetcar operators, independent haulers and, of course, members of the city's safety forces in disproportionate numbers. The quickest-witted and more ambitious members of the Irish community sought white-collar work as soon as they mastered their numbers and learned to read and write. It is interesting to note that Irish women here were among the first of their sex to land jobs as clerks. During the 1890's they actually outnumbered their male counterparts.

The Irish women were to play another role in the community of business and finance that was noteworthy. After a torturously slow acceptance as worthy workers during the 1860's, they

became much sought after as house servants in the mansions of the wealthy. In the 1870's, Euclid Avenue ranked with the most beautiful streets in the world and the label "Millionaires' Row" was one justly deserved. Along what is now between East 9th Street and East 40th Street, the rich built their massive homes, and in almost every one of those show places, Irish girls and women were serving, as they put it, "the Swells."

Irish women were favored because they were quick to learn the ways of their "betters" and were passably to scrupulously clean. They were also generally loyal to the family they served and no threat to the lady of the house. They had learned their catechisms well and were tigresses when it came to upholding their chastity. Liasons with the men of the household were the extreme exception and not the rule. These women became maids, upstairs as well as down, seamstresses and, in some cases, managers of the household. They were to make a positive impact on those for whom they worked and, by doing so, contributed mightily to the enhancement of their own community.

What of that community in the 1870's and 1880's? It was still a grim one. The Cuyahoga, which flowed through the heart of Irishtown, became so polluted from the discharge of 25 sewers and the waste products of adjoining factories and oil refineries that the city health authorities formally protested its despoilment. The mayor, R.R. Herrick, called it "an open sewer through the center of the city." Precious little was done, however, in the way of cleaning it up, and the Irish had to become accustomed to the smell.

Irishtown at this time was a maze of cobblestone streets, huge piles of red ore and golden grain, and over it all wafted the smell of tarred hawsers and oakum. Factories and mills of every size and description hugged both banks of the Cuyahoga, and shanties had been erected up the hill all the way to St. Malachi's Church, which served as a beacon of guidance to both ships and men.

Cleveland Irish in Baseball

A strange thing happened in the 1870's in Irishtown that aided several score of its inhabitants to escape ghetto existense and see how the other half lived. It was a game called baseball, which had come into vogue after the Civil War and caught hold in Cleveland in the years shortly thereafter. A professional team was formed hereabouts called the Forest Citys, and, no doubt because a shillelagh was involved, the Irish took to it with a passion. In no time every brick-strewn lot in Irishtown was literally turned into a diamond in the rough.

While every Cleveland Irishman is acquainted with the feats of Paddy Livingston, who caught for 17 years in the major leagues, 11 with the Clevelands, not many realize that scores of Irishmen played professional baseball from the 1870's well into the 20th Century. The pay certainly wasn't good, but the fringe benefits, such as traveling about the country, sometimes as far west as St. Louis, and fairly good food, more than made up for the absence of money. Most important of all, baseball allowed the Irishman a chance to gain hero status, despite his national origin. He was accepted and it sure beat shoveling ore out of a boat.

The team representing Cleveland in the National Professional Baseball League in 1878, for instance, had six Irishmen in its starting lineup. 'Big Jim' McCormick was the premier pitcher and his fast balls were caught by one Barney Gillgan, who was described in one journal of the day as being "quick as a cat." William Philips played first base, Tom Carey was at shortstop, William Reiley played left field and 'Doc' Kennedy was in right.

That was not bad for a group of lads who had taken the game up only a few years before. What was to become the American national pastime was already the local Irish pastime and would continue to be for many years. Many solidly Irish amateur teams existed until the 1930's. Perhaps the last, and perhaps, greatest of them all were the Shamrocks of the 1930's, a team managed by Will Dehaney, himself a professional ballplayer, and featuring the talents of his five diamond-talented sons.

Other Advances

The 1880's gave birth to some marvelous mechanical inventions, all designed to speed up the wheels of industry. Among them were an electrically operated gantry, the predecessor to the ultimate unloader of ore boats, the Hulett, which exists to this day, and the newfangled open-hearth forge. Whereas the first mechanical unloaders, and there were several such inventions, could grab five tons of ore at a bite from the hold of a ship, the Hulett, which was to come to perfection in the 1890's could grasp 15 tons in each of its two metallic claws. Furthermore, it needed only six men to operate it and could do in one day what it had formerly taken 100 Iron Terriers to accomplish.

In 1882 wooden vessels were giving way to those made of iron, and Cleveland was in the forefront of building the ironclads, “the ships that wouldn’t float,” and remained one of the most important shipbuilding centers in the nation. There were good jobs to be had in the shipyards, but they demanded skilled men. The Irish were to learn that lesson the hard way, as the shipbuilders began importing Scot craftsmen directly from the yards of Clyde.

However, things were looking up — there were always the ships themselves, and, of course, railroads were coming into their heyday. So much so, that there was literally no direction an Irishman could look without seeing the advance of the railroads. To the north, on the waterfront, was the Union Depot, 603 feet of solid Berea stone, with engines puffing in and out all day long. Those who lived down river at Irishtown Bend had the dubious pleasure of having railroad tracks in their front yards, the better to serve the mills even further south on the river. An anonymous Irishman, when asked what he had for dinner one night, supposedly said, “the usual — cinders.”

The typical Irish child born in the 1880’s could look forward to only six or seven years of rudimentary education and then it was out into the inhospitable world, where nothing was taken for granted because nothing was ever given. Most boys still looked to the docks to launch their careers and hundreds of them began their upward move from the position of water boy. The girls looked to the domestic servant world or, as mentioned, a clerkship. Most of all, they looked toward marriage or the convent.

The job of water boy no means an easy one. Pails of water tend to be heavy and cumbersome, especially when one is forced to run with them, the only gait allowed. Sweating Terriers, for instance, tended to become impatient with the young Gungha Dineens of the day and wouldn't hesitate to swat the bejabbers out of a slow-footed lad. When they yelled, "water boy," which they did often in any given day, it was best to move on the double.

After a few years apprenticeship as a water carrier, a good brawny lad could expect to take his place amona the men and labor 10 hours a day at a job that required little or no skill. The more ambitious and quick-witted no sooner landed such jobs than they began to look for ways to become skilled. They were a new breed, no longer content to spend their lives in an endless pursuit of bed and board. Some gave up the docks altogether and struck out on their own, with only their courage and a bit of blarney to see them through.

These were the men who displayed to Yankee businessmen that the Irish were capable of holdina positions other than unskilled laboring jobs. A typical example was a young man whose job it was to run down the tops of hopper cars, shouting to a checker nearby the brand of coal the car contained. He was a diligent lad and soon knew a great deal about coal. His employer was so taken with his attitude and knowledge that he offered the young man a job sellina the black oold — another Irishman exchanged his blue collar for the coveted white one.

The 1890's provided even more of a breakthrough for the more exceptional sons of Irishmen, for this decade was to see them

enter the professions of law, medicine and dentistry. Frank Moran, at 21, was the youngest member of the 1897 graduating class of Western Reserve University Dental School. A classmate, Joseph Henahan, went on to head the University's oral surgery department. He is credited with advancing the design of forceps and also came up, with the idea of block anesthesia. When he retired in 1937, he was succeeded in his position by his nephew John Sweeney.

Politics: The End of the 19th Century

More than with medicine, however, the Irish gained a foothold in the profession of law. It seemed more suitable somehow, probably because it involved a more dialectic mind and a glib tongue, and was, of course, a stepping stone to the field of politics, the natural habitat of the Irish. Upon seeing this advance, a long-time politician of note, Marcus A. Hanna, often called "the maker of Presidents," is alledged to have said, "They're all natural politicians. They have the gift of gab and are as devious as hell."

Whether Hanna actually said those words or not, he and a lot of other Republicans certainly could have, for they locked horns with the overwhelmingly Democratic Irish during many an election and never looked forward to such confrontations. The Cleveland Irish of the 1890's had learned their lessons well — the vote was a powerful club over the head of a society in which they formerly held little clout.

Irish-style politics in other cities was something to behold. Just

a century after the Revolutionary War had taken place, the Irish had made such inroads into the nation's political system that one observer remarked: "One of the functions of the Irish race in America is to administer the affairs of the cities."

The none-too-happy-observer had conducted a study, which led to the discovery that at least 17 cities were held captive by Irishmen and their sons. The Irish political clout in the cities stemmed, of course, from their refusal to scatter themselves into the rural hamlets of the nation's interior. They much preferred huddling together in urban ghettos, and, indeed, were often urged to do so by their bishops. John Hughes, Archbishop of New York, was typical of the high-rank prelate who saw betterment for the Irish through cohesive voting blocks.

The mass voting in the large eastern seaboard cities not only led to the control of municipal governments, but ultimately would change state and national politics as well. Moreover, of all the immigrant groups, the Irish alone had a thorough understanding of Anglo-Saxon democracy, so it was only fitting that they be the vanguard group. The irony in it all, is that the Irish learned its workings back in their homeland through osmosis, for they were not allowed to participate in its functions. Hence, they could doubly appreciate the power inherent in such elective offices as mayor, alderman and sheriff.

To the Irishman's way of thinking, the Democrats had all the best of it when it came to party politics, for they not only wooed the Irish vote, but actually nominated and backed Irishmen for elective office. As previously noted, as early as 1852, 18 Irish Democrats had won political races in New York alone. Not bad

by anyone's standard of measurement, and a lot of people were sizing up the situation.

One of the most virulent groups opposing Irish success in the game of politics was the 'Know-Nothings,' a nativist reactionary fraternity dedicated to the proposition that Popery and its adherents would never gain a foothold in America. Despite intense opposition from that group and others like it, the Irish political machine continued along in high gear. By the early 1870's, Tammany Hall, that extra-legal organization that served as the Democratic Party's headquarters in New York, fell into Irish hands when "Honest John" Kelly succeeded William Marcy (Boss) Tweed, the last old-stock American to rule the Tiger's Lair.

In 1883 Cleveland was to have its own "Honest John," surnamed Farley, elected mayor of the city, but he got precious little help from the Irish community, since he was from the north of Ireland and as Orange as a man can be — a Mason, no less. Farley really wasn't a bad mayor, just an unenterprising one. Most local citizens agreed he deserved his nickname, for, if nothing else, he was honest.

In almost every other large American city, including the colossus of the Midwest, Chicago, Irishmen would come to dominate the political situation. It was a very simple process — Tammany and other Irish-controlled political machines built their power on the strength of large and unified voting blocks. What's more, most of these organizations survived where others failed because the Irish were efficient with the whip. They understood clearly that politics was a gut-level business.

It was the contention of the Irish political bosses that the average man didn't care half as much about what went on in Washington as he did about what went on in his block. Did the city plan to build a park in his neighborhood, or a new firehouse that would mean more jobs? Could the block captain help him out with his problems? That was the gist of it in 19th Century America and the Irish knew it. Cleveland, however, was not an eastern seaboard city, nor were the local Irish as numerous as their brethren elsewhere. Even more to the point, the Irish here tended to be much more independent in their voting habits, preferring to go with the man every bit as much as with the party. That is why it took them longer here to gain the Political upper hand, really until the late teens and early twenties of this century.

The story of Irish domination of county and city offices since then has been told too many times and is too recent to need retelling here. Suffice it to say that the Irish held political offices in numbers disproportionate to the size of their community. 'While still quite strong today, Irish political power peaked here in the 1930's, with sons of Erin holding so many county and city offices that it was startling and, of course, the reason why the Slavic people here formed the anti-Irish Democratic Cosmopolitan League.

Contributions of the Clergy

One of the most important contributions the Irish made to this city lay in the field of education. This resulted from an equally important contribution they made to their Church — they became priests and nuns by the hundreds. They became

elementary school teachers and Biblical scholars, pastors and laborers for Christ in far-flung mission fields. They were seemingly everywhere in this city.

The priest played an exceedingly important role in the Irish community of Cleveland from the earliest days. In addition to their normal role as spiritual counselors, they were also deeply involved with the temporal welfare of their flocks. They were letter-writers, job-getters, domestic-peacemakers, career-motivators and, on more than one occasion, the subduers of the rowdy element. A consecrated hand can be formed into a fist as well as an unconsecrated one.

They were also the community's matchmakers, seeing over the doings of such social clubs as the LaSalle, and arranging boy-meets-girl sessions ("Sure'n she's a lovely lass from a fine family and it's better to marry than to burn"). They were just as determined that some Irish lads and lasses would never marry — while vocations may well spring from the Creator, quite a few in Cleveland were instigated in varying degrees by the good fathers.

As Nelson Callahan points out in his overview, the Irish priests of Cleveland were men to be reckoned with, what with their policy-making gatherings and secret accords. They came to be feudal barons, reigning autocratically over their baronies and fiefdoms, with an input of their thinking being an all too real factor in the everyday life of the Irish community.

The role of the clergy here and how its members affected the lives of Cleveland's Irish, predominantly for the good, cannot be

overemphasized. In various cases in many decades, the priests and nuns provided the warp that held the fabric of the community together. Needless to say, they were also its woof.

A Final Comment

In 1963, Geraldine Javor, then a reporter for the *Plain Dealer*, was assigned to do a series on the city's ethnic groups. When it came to detailing Irish accomplishment and outstanding Irish citizens, she all but gave up. Apologizing for her omissions, she listed nearly 1,000 names of then current prominent Cleveland Irishmen. Among those named were captains of industry, outstanding civic and religious leaders, plus equal numbers of men of science, of the legal and medical professions, and of the arts and athletic world. Being young and from an East Side Hungarian background, it was understandable she would list the Tom Pattons of the Republic Steels, rather than the Coal Oil Mastersons of the docks, not to mention such other worthy Cleveland Irishmen as Nuisance Adams, Jap Austin, Fullweight Bonham, Angel Chambers, Cheesy Dugan, Stinky Fay, Doughnuts Gallagher, Bow Wow Gorman, Head-and-a-Half Holmes, Bumble Bee Kilbane, Rabbi Mangan, Blinky Morgan, Plaster Mullen, Tombstone Murphy, Giggles McDermott, Pickles O'Donnell, Girlie McGinty, Mickey-the-Buzz McNalley, Tougher Patton, Gamey Ryan, Shirt Stanton, Frog Walker or Pig Ears Wainwright.

Those gentlemen will have their day; however, of that I am sure.

Part II: The Irish in Cleveland: One Perspective by Nelson J. Callahan

Dedication

This essay is dedicated
to the Callahans and Mulhollands
Nelson and Mary my parents
Kenneth and Miriam my brother and sister

A quiet reverence during Mass at church in Limerick. By the courtesy of Time-Life Books, Inc.

Chapter 4: Catholicism and the Irish

The Old World Heritage

The American tourist who visits Ireland today finds the place remarkably quaint, an odd mixture of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. He is also struck almost as soon as he begins to roam around Ireland that the place is very small, not as large as the state of Ohio, 32,595 square miles. Yet Ireland today appears to be very rural; people often gather in small villages at night. But they live on farms, frequently in the often depicted thatched roof cottages, most of which are over two centuries old. If one is Irish in origin, he is aware, as was John F. Kennedy when he visited his family's home at New Ross in Wexford, that had his family not migrated, he might still be living in such a cottage, working in the fields by day, gathering in the pub by night and moved by the predominant force in the Irish peasant's life, the Roman Catholic Church, represented by the local parish priest.

This was his tradition, passed on in a tight, clan-like social structure. To deviate from it generally turned one into an outcast with no real alternative in cultural or religious life. Right or wrong, an Irishman was born into a very close community, reinforced by all sorts of social and religious pressures and formed by a tradition in which he placed great pride. Yet this pride, or independence, seems almost ludicrous in the face of the poverty in which, at least by American standards, the Irishman lives today and which surely must have been the starkly real fact of life of his ancestors of a century ago.

Whence came this odd paradox — pride in the face of poverty? To be sure, it came from belonging to an Irish version of the Roman Catholic Church, linked with a special fidelity to the Roman Pope who was seen as an alternative to any form of domination by a temporal king. Added to this was the influence of the climate. The constantly changing sky, the proximity of the sea, and the short life expectancy of the Irish peasant in Ireland made him very much aware of another world, the one he hoped for after death. There he trusted he would become rich in the goods of beatitude. This aspect of the world view of the Irishman in Ireland might be termed the faith component. It may well have been totally incomprehensible to those of the last century who would contempt or oppose him; it could be totally lost by those who do not have that same vision but who so frequently try to write about him today. For example, Leon Uris in his book Trinity.

In any case, to separate Irish culture from Irish Roman Catholicism is to miss the very core of the self-understanding of

the Irish immigrant who came to America. It would appear that when he did come here, he valued his Catholicism as his greatest gift. His labor, his wit, his moods, often black moods, were not really factors which he considered ultimately marketable. The preservation of his faith was his top value; and for the most part he kept it during the process of immigration.

Basic Problems of the Irish in America

To be sure there were Irish immigrants who were not Roman Catholics. They came mostly from Ulster and generally arrived in this country prior to the Irish Catholic. These people, Often called Orangemen by the Irish Catholics, were able to merge with the Yankee American Protestants far better than the Irish Catholic who quickly saw the Orangeman here as an enemy far more dangerous than the Orangeman in Ireland. The nineteenth Century saw all kinds of Irish Catholic-Orange Irish hostility, especially in the major urban centers where most of the Irish of both sides settled. But for at least two generations after immigration, the Catholic Irish were virtually without power; the Orangeman often acquired power easily by joining with the Yankees or Wasps with whom he had a cultural affinity both here and in Ireland. In this country, the Roman Church urged the Catholic Irish immigrant to forget the animosities of the old country and to get on with the business of becoming an American. Oddly enough, the Catholic Irish immigrant generally followed this lead of his Church. Occasionally he undertook to aid the cause of freedom for the Irish in Ireland but with no great ardor. Some American Catholic Irish joined in the Fenian cause in 1665 and 1866; more leagued with Charles Stewart

Parnell's Irish League movement in the 1880's (althogh Parnell himself was a Protestant). But it was the American-born children and grandchildren of the Irish Catholic immigrant who were forced to take sides during the years of the Irish rebellion against England and the creation of Eire between 1916 and 1922. Many supported the Rebellion, a few opposed it, and large numbers remained indifferent or aloof, probably because the Rebellion was against England at a time when the British were the ally of the United States in the First World War. It must have seemed terribly important for many Irish in this country to appear to be almost superpatriots in war lest the accusation by the Yankees, made for nearly 50 years, that the Irish were not good citizens be proven true.

Again, one must cite the policy of the American Catholic Church as the primary promoter of this acculturation; most American bishops struggled to urge their people to acculturate as soon as possible. Thus they hoped to gain respectability for their people, all newly immigrated, so as to overcome the opprobrium often attributed to American Catholics generally who were accused by native Americans as having at best a divided loyalty to the foreign Pope of their religious beliefs and to the American government of their adopted country. American Catholics struggled with this difficult dilemma right up to 1960 when John Kennedy, in his campaign for the Presidency, met with a group of Southern Protestants to answer questions about his loyalty to this country should the Pope order him to do something contrary to the general good of all the American People. Kennedy faced the issue squarely and stated he would regard his oath of office as his highest moral obligation. Al Smith had foundered on

the same issue in the 1928 presidential campaign and really never had Kennedy's opportunity to gain a hearing to explain his position, which was much the same as Kennedy's.

Without doubt, anti-Catholic and anti-Irish prejudice still existed well into this century and shaped much of the thinking of the Irish immigrant in the last century. On the one hand his bishops were encouraging him to take up the American dream of liberty. Yet on the other hand, the prejudice of the native American often prevented him from moving freely into the mainstream of opportunity in American life.

Cleveland Prior to Irish Immigration

There were few American cities where the story of the frustration and corresponding over-achievement of the Irish Catholic immigrant was enacted with greater drama than in Cleveland. Here the Irish Catholic immigrant's political heritage (together with his ability to acculturate in the light of this heritage), and the cause of his immigration, came together in a unique way. We shall begin with a look at the background of the city of Cleveland prior to his arrival.

One is struck at once with the fact that Cleveland was part of a strange colonialism in its very origin. In July, 1796, a surveying party of about forty men from Connecticut, headed by General Moses Cleaveland, arrived by canoe at the mouth of the Cuyahoga River with the specific task of surveying the land in Northern Ohio. This land was commonly called the Western Reserve of the State of Connecticut. The surveying

party was sent by the Connecticut Land Company, a speculating company of businessmen who had purchased land in what was the Northwest Territory in the State of Ohio. The land had been awarded by the Federal Government for one of two reasons: either to individual citizens of Connecticut to compensate for losses suffered in the Revolutionary War, or given to the State itself to replenish the financial losses suffered by the State in supporting its own army and militia in the war. The land in question included all of Northern Ohio from Pennsylvania's western boundary to the Cuyahoga River and from Lake Erie south to the forty-first parallel North Latitude. Later this land grant was extended west to the Sandusky River by a purchase of the so-called Firelands by the Land Company, a purchase in total violation of the treaty made by General Cleaveland with the Indians who occupied the area when he first encountered them at Conneaut, Ohio, in 1796.

When the survey was completed by General Cleaveland and his surveyors in October, 1796, they returned to Connecticut, and many of them, General Cleaveland included, never saw Cleveland again. Some members of his company did return the following year, lured by the promise of very inexpensive land offered by the Land Company, which in the winter of 1796-97 set about selling the lots the survey party had laid out.

The hardships, the painfully slow growth and the desolation endured by the early settlers is a story in itself and in many ways has been told before by the wilderness historians, often in romantic terms. The fact was that Wasp people from Connecticut came to Cleveland because they had been enticed by lurid

advertising (which bore little resemblance to the reality of the frontier) into purchasing the land, and then had no other choice but to occupy it. So they came west, generally in Conestoga wagons, fearing to trust their belongings to a ship or canoe voyage on treacherous Lake Erie, and grimly determined to make the city of Cleveland prosper. It did, but not until after the lifetimes of the original settlers, who lived short lives and never saw or envisioned what the city of Cleveland was to become.

A study of Cleveland's history reveals that the city perhaps never would have grown at all had it not been for the theory of covenant the first settlers made with one another, an idea borrowed from The Congregational Church of New England. The early settlers could not go home except in disgrace for failing to keep the covenant. In the case of Cleveland's early settlers, the covenant was one of money and community as much as of Covenant in Spirit with God and neighbor.

In any case, the settlers stayed, enduring cholera, fever, family tragedy through premature death, dreadful winters, homesickness and separation from the dynamics that were forming the Eastern Seaboard into the United States. However, they were free to organize themselves into a confederation which could apply to Congress for statehood, which they did in 1803. The statehood petition of Ohio was granted that year and ratified by the other states, and thus Ohio joined the Union; The effort in Cleveland was accomplished through great statesmanship by men like Alfred Kelley and Thomas Worthington, and the process of gaining statehood was based on a political device the

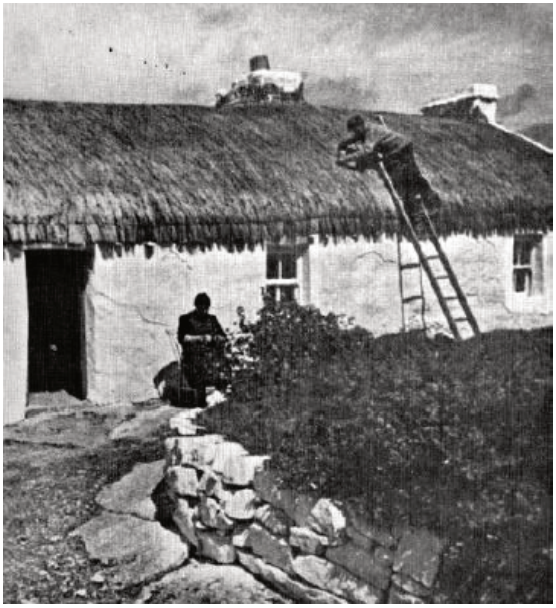
settlers recalled from their youths on the East Coast, the town meeting.

All of this caused a very tightly-knit Yankee community to become extremely proud of itself, homogeneous and confident in its future in the Connecticut Western Reserve. On the other hand, it all but guaranteed the failure of later non-Yankee arrivals in the Western Reserve to become a part of this community for perhaps the entire remainder of the Nineteenth Century. These facts are important since they provide significant background to understand the several ways in which the Irish immigrants in Cleveland, confronted by the original Yankee community, turned in upon themselves and how these Irish struggled to maintain their ethnicity, or how some failed to preserve any ethnic consciousness, between the years 1845 and 1899.

The Great Famine and the Subsequent Emigration

It seems that just as the recall of the Nazi years in Europe precipitates in Jews everywhere a profound sense of anguish (and rightly so), so the recall of the Great Famine in Ireland between the years 1845 and 1853 produces a similar anguish in Irish people even to this day, allowing of course for the fact that the details of this catastrophe are dulled both by time and by some romanticism. One hesitates to pause for any length of time to describe the Famine, but at the same time it must be noted that it was the sole and pivotal cause of Irish immigration to the United States in the middle of the last century.

There were some Irish who had come to this country in the seventeenth, eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Some of them were Catholics but very few. The English Penal Laws for Irish Catholics, which were not abrogated until 1829, all put precluded the Catholic Irish from even thinking about such a violent break with their past, bad as that past was. Moreover, the traditional clanishness of the Irish family made the prospect of emigrating even less likely. There were laborers who came here In the 1820's to work on the canals of Ohio, but they came from Belfast. Many of these people had been drafted by the English from the poor in the South of Ireland to work on the channels of Belfast. Once these were dug, they were free to return to the poverty from which they had come, or to emigrate from Belfast to work on the canals in America. Some did emigrate, only to find that the fevers and the inhuman conditions with which the canal workers lived in Ohio brought them an early death.



Lonely independence is still the rule in remote regions of the land. Whitewashed cottage — three rooms on one level — a home in County Donegal.

Spotless interior is headed by a peat-burning fireplace and oven. By the courtesy of Time-Life Books, Inc.

Cemeteries along the Ohio Canal at places like Peninsula reveal the marked graves of a few of these men; most of them, however, were buried in unmarked graves. They seldom married, they had no time for courting, and there are few descendants here today who can trace their roots back to these early Irish Catholic canal workers. Their story is basically a tragedy about which, except for the research of William Hickey, has yet to be written.

It was a different thing with the Famine Irish. They were free to emigrate if they could raise the money to do so. The pattern of their stories was much the same for all. They were driven by

a sense of desperation and a very real fear that the very tight family, deprived of its livelihood by a suddenly unproductive land, might become extinct. They did not particularly want to leave Ireland; they knew little, if anything, about America other than the hope that it might allow them to survive. No other immigrant group came to this Country moved by such a crisis and with such reluctance than did the Famine Irish.

Statistics perhaps tell the story best. There were over eight million people living in Ireland in 1845; by 1853 there were five million people living in Ireland. Eighty-five percent of those who left Ireland listed their place of designation as the United States. In the subsequent half century, another three million Irish came to America although it is true that in the Famine years more Germans came to the United States than Irish, for every German who came here, 33 remained at home. The unique thing about the Irish emigration is that during a fifty-year period one of every five people emigrated.

This massive flow of Irish immigrants to America had special characteristics. Most of the people who left were young, usually between age fifteen and thirty-five. Thus the very young and the elderly were left behind, hoping that the emigrant would earn enough money in his first year here to bring the rest of the family out to America. There was a certain urgency in ail of this. In the presence of the Famine, a family generally liquidated all its assets, and sent out its strongest member who had the burden of finding and keeping a job in America. He, or often she, was expected to earn enough money to bring the rest of his family to this country within a year. The time limit was important since

there was very little left for the family in Ireland to live on once it had sold all its possessions. Most families could not last much more than a year without starving. This procedure placed a great burden on the one chosen to go to America first. Often enough, he or she failed. Sometimes the problem was an inability to get a job; sometimes money earned to be sent back to Ireland was squandered on alcohol, and sometimes illness precluded any saving of money. As a result, families waiting in Ireland died, and the quilt of the first immigrant was so overwhelming that the immigrant was rendered useless in his new country, which was hardly the land of milk and honey about which he had dreamed.

The voyage to the United States on the Cunard Sailing Ships for the Famine Irish was of special importance. The conditions on these ships were the worst encountered by any immigrant group. The whole ordeal cost $37 in steerage. The immigrant was expected to bring enough food to last the six weeks journey from Queenstown to New York, Boston, Philadelphia or Montreal. He was to buy fresh water, when it was available, from the ship's captain. He was allowed only two hours a day on deck. Worst of all, in the steerage of these ships, deadly and contagious diseases often sprung up; sometimes only one in ten survived the voyage. The survivors landed here ill and feeble, hardly able to begin the backbreaking work which was all that was available to them in their new-found land.

Arriving in Cleveland

By 1848 the Famine Irish knew that there was no place for them at the ports of arrival on the Eastern Seaboard, so they began to

drift inland looking for the jobs on the frontier that would sustain them. They worked on the railroad being built from New York to Chicago by Commodore Vanderbilt. They stopped in cities such as Cleveland, Chicago, Pittsburgh and even St. Louis, to settle down to do the laboring jobs which were opening up in these places. In these cities the Irishman's labor was wanted; his presence was not wanted.

Cleveland was such a city. In 1855 the Locks at St. Marie were opened and the city suddenly became a boom town. Iron ore could be cheaply brought to the docks on the Cuyahoga River where it was processed into steel. Strong men were needed desperately to unload the ore boats (by wheelbarrow), which were arriving daily at the docks; even stronger men were needed to work in the steel mills, which in 1855 were located in Newburgh, south of Cleveland. The jobs in these places fell to the Irish immigrants, the least skilled of all European peoples. Thus the early Irish settlements were located near the docks on the near West Side; here they formed St. Patrick Parish on Bridge Avenue in 1853. Or the Irish settled near the steel mills in Newburgh where they formed the parish of The Holy Name in 1854.

Thus, the early Irish immigrants in Cleveland were already twice displaced. They had found no room and no opportunity for work at the cities on the Eastern Seaboard where they had first tried to settle. It became clear to them very quickly that the jobs were in the rapidly developing Midwest. Raw physical labor was the primary requisite, and this gift they were willing and able to trade on the open market for the opportunity to work.

They probably got here on the railroad, sometimes by helping to lay tracks for the New York Central which came through Cleveland in 1849. In any case, the vast majority who settled in Cleveland stayed. But in Cleveland, the Irish who were Catholic found a situation which resembled to a remarkable degree the same caste system they had known and fled from in Ireland. They had jobs, but there was little chance of upward mobility, mostly because of their lack of skills and their own lawlessness. Moreover, at the top of the system were the Yankees who recalled for the Irish the landlords from whom they had sought to escape in Ireland and whom the Irish firmly believed were close kin to the people who had oppressed them for close to two centuries in Ireland.

For their part, the third generation Yankees or Wasps or whatever one chooses to call them, saw in the arrival of the Irish, to Cleveland the beginning of a vast threat to their American enclave. Perhaps no city in the United States had its serenity broken as violently as did Cleveland by the first Irish immigrants. The disparity between these newly arrived immigrants and the native American was dramatic.

The Irish were at least culturally Roman Catholic; the native Clevelanders were not, and feared greatly the possibility of a segment of the people being dominated by the Papal States, the Church of Rome, and its Pope.

The Irish had no skills, were total strangers to the developing industrial revolution, and were generally illiterate, although they spoke the English language. This latter fact was to their advantage over later immigrants, but to their disadvantage with

the native Americans who were bewildered to find people who spoke English well but who could not read nor write it, and who apparently never comprehended that it was their ancestors in England who had promoted illiteracy in Ireland.

The Irish were the first large group of immigrants who were not Wasps to arrive in Cleveland. Thus, neither they nor the native Americans had any previous memory of patterns of acculturation in which they could find hope of becoming "like us" or "like them," depending on one's point of view.

The Famine Irish in Cleveland were at first remarkably unruly. It has been stated in the Cleveland Leader, a notoriously arti-Irish newspaper, that between 1850 and 1870, 90% of the violent crimes in Cleveland were done by Irish.

The Irish had no previous experience with representative government, orderly town meetings or consensus in decision making, and yet they were given the vote with little preparation or knowledge of issues. The native Americans saw the Irish voting power and the Irish reputation for revolutionary tactics in the presence of tyranny in Ireland as a positive threat to the whole system of state and national political life.

The immigrant Irish found, when they arrived in Cleveland, no organized societies of their kinsmen to welcome them, nor were there any agencies which could even help them think through the trauma of immigration. Nearly all ethnic groups that arrived in Cleveland after the Irish found such agencies or organizations.

The voyage across the sea all by itself had to be an event loaded

with fear and risk. Babies were born aboard ship, mothers and fathers died aboard ship, and the whole event for each of the survivors became an experience one never spoke of once in America. It was hardly the passage for which the immigrant might have hoped, and by the time he arrived in Cleveland he surely must have wondered whether the whole attempt at making a new life was worth it. The native Americans understood none of this and were genuinely puzzled at the total rootlessness and consequent psychological disorientation of the Irish immigrant.

Due to the laws of Catholic suppression, most Irish immigrants had never been able to own property in Ireland. At first they saw no value whatever to owning property in Cleveland, hence their instability in the city. Also, because of the Famine, they generally refused to settle on farmland, which was often almost free to the Germans who had arrived in the Western Reserve as early as 1848. For the native American, ownership of land and the frugal management of it were central values, and indeed virtues.

Without making any attempt to excuse the fact, it must be admitted that the Famine Irish arriving in Cleveland (and perhaps many Irishmen descended from them) had a serious problem, either real or potential, with the abuse of alcohol, which in 1847 in Cleveland was easily as cheap as water. For the descendant of the Puritan living in Cleveland at that same time, sobriety was one of his most cherished virtues. For him, any lack of sobriety among the Irish was much more than a troublesome annoyance; it was a sin which he simply could not tolerate. And

thus did the Famine Irish encounter the native American, rooted in New England Puritanism, in Cleveland.

Early Irish Settlements in Cleveland

And what happened? Power was in the hands of the nativeborn American in Cleveland. His reaction to the Irish immigrant followed several somewhat predictable stages, First, he generally withdrew altogether from any part of "his" city in which the Irish settled. Thus he consigned to the Irish territory which he had once felt was his own, or areas which had previously been uninhabitable. On the West Side he gave the Irish the territory near the Cuyahoga River, including a peninsula running along the shore of Lake Erie which the Indians a half century earlier had abandoned because of its fever breeding swamps. It was called Whiskey Island, and it soon became a major shantytown, honeycombed with saloons and infested with prostitutes. Next the Irish were given the west side of the Cuyahoga River bluffs and there built a ghetto of tar paper shacks, pictures of which still exist in Cleveland's Main Library. This area was called Irishtown Bend. And on the East Side of the river, where the mercantile city was beginning to bloom, the Irish were forced into ghettos along the shore of the lake or in the swampland north of what is today the financial center of the city but what was in the 1840's and 1850's considered out of town, east of East 9th (or Erie) street and north of Superior Avenue. In 1845 the area was generally considered unhealthy. It too was mostly swamp.

These areas of Irish settlement became so densely populated that

they had to be noticed by the native Americans of Cleveland, and indeed they were noticed, the newspapers of the day gave a graphic picture of the scene, condemning the squalor, crime and general lack of good citizenship displayed by the Irish. There was, however, no effort to help the new immigrants and no sympathy evidenced for their plight: there were no organized programs of public health, sanitation, adequate housing, job opportunity or even any hope on the part of the native Americans of Cleveland that the immigrant Irish might ever become useful citizens of their new land and city. Quite the contrary was true. Political forces already in motion in other cities of the country, in the form of the Nativist American Movement, came alive in Cleveland, and all sorts of laws which have been well described by Carleton Beals in his book *The Brass Knuckle Crusade* became part of the legal and punitive system in Cleveland. The immigrant Irish responded with more violence and with a deep interior hopelessness.

Development of the Catholic Diocese of Cleveland

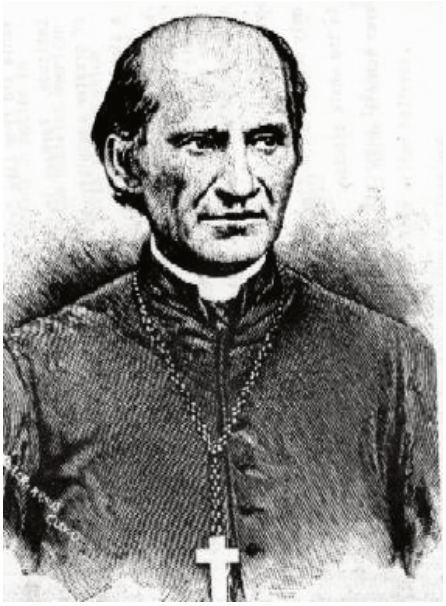
Then a vastly significant, and for the immigrant Irish, a providential event took place which was, this writer believes, to ultimately shape their whole destiny in Cleveland.

Far away in Rome on April 9, 1847, Pope Pius IX, at the request of John Purcell, Bishop of the Diocese of Cincinnati, which up to that time embraced all of the State of Ohio, divided the Cincinnati Diocese and created the new Roman Catholic Diocese of Cleveland. To be bishop of this new diocese, the Pope named Father Amadeus Rappe, a French-born missionary

priest who had come to work on the Ohio Mission in 1840 at the request of Bishop Purcell, and who had been laboring among the struggling Irish workers in the Toledo area. They were engaged in digging the new canal connecting the Wabash River in Indiana with the Maumee River near Toledo, and among them, because of his special concern for the problems of the Irish, Rappe had developed a good reputation.

The new Diocese of Cleveland extended from Indiana to Pennsylvania and from Lake Erie south to the fortieth parallel of North Latitude. Perhaps in retrospect, Rome might have chosen a man of greater administrative ability, but Rappe was a good man, a simple priest of the people, and was remarkably aware of the needs of his people. When he came to Cleveland to take possession of his See he found seventeen churches in the whole diocese, only one of which was in Cleveland, Saint Mary's of the Flats on Columbus Road at Girard Street (demolished in 1886); he found only one priest in Cleveland, and less than twenty-five priests in the whole diocese. There were no Catholic institutions, not even schools which could be called parochial.

St. Mary's of the Flats. The first Catholic Church and Cathedral in Cleveland. Picture taken approximately 1884 (Our Lady of the Lake built in 1839).



Bishop Amadeus Rappe. First Bishop of Cleveland; concentrated October 10, 1847; resigned August 22, 1870; died September 8, 1877.

As soon as he got to Cleveland, however, the new bishop began a remarkable building program which was, at first, designed to aid the most urgent needs of his Irish people. In Cleveland alone during his first ten years as bishop, Rappe, with the help of money he collected in France:

1. Built a new Cathedral to replace Saint Mary's. It was located at East 9th and Superior, occupying the ground where the remodeled Saint John Cathedral stands today. It was begun in 1848 and was completed amid great rejoicing by the Irish people of

the East Side in 1852.

2. Established Saint Patrick's on Bridge Avenue in 1853 for the Irish on the West Side.

3. Began a convent school for girls in 1850 under the direction of the Ursuline Sisters in an old mansion on the south side of Euclid Avenue near East 6th Street. He had persuaded these nuns to come from France to take this missionary charge.

4. Established an orphanage in 1851 on the West Side at Fulton and Monroe Streets and staffed it with a community of sisters he founded as an offspring of the French Ursulines. It was to care for the Irish children who survived the immigration voyage but whose parents did not. Connected with the orphanage the bishop began a hospital under the care of these same sisters. The hospital failed for a time, but was opened for good with the aid of money Publicly subscribed by the whole Population of Cleveland in 1864. Bishop Rappe called it Saint Vincent Charity Hospital, and he staffed it with the Sisters of Charity of Saint Augustine who had begun the orphanage. This was the first public hospital in the city; it was opened originally to care for wounded Union Army soldiers who were generally discharged when wounded in the Civil War and sent home to find medical care as best they could. There was none in Cleveland until Charity Hospital was opened. The hospital marked a radical departure from the Catholic policy in the new Diocese of Cleveland which up to

> this time cared only for its own people. This was the first sign of a developing diocesan maturity, albeit thrust upon the diocese by the Civil War.

Bishop Rappe lived a block from his new cathedral on East 9th Street and was, in fact, pastor of this cathedral parish. This parish was in his time the largest parish in the diocese, and was a territorial, which is to say, an English speaking parish. This meant that all the Irish immigrants on the East Side belonged to the parish, and for them the bishop developed a specific policy. The Irish immigrants in the cathedral parish were to acculturate with their American neighbors as best they could. They were to seek as soon as possible such things as steady jobs, frugality, home ownership and what we might call upward mobility. Only in the matter of temperance did the bishop permit the cathedral Irish to form their own ethnic society.

That rather popular society took the name of Father Matthew, the Irish-born temperance crusader who had preached a mission at the Cathedral in 1851, at which thousands, including the bishop himself, took the temperance pledge. It would seem that these people kept this pledge; crime among the Irish suddenly decreased. They began to become home owners and to develop a sense of frugality urged to deposit or invest their money by the existence of the bishop's bank (which lasted no more than a decade). It took no more than a generation for the Irish on the East Side to see themselves as upwardly mobile and capable of competing for jobs, not with one another, but with the native-born Yankee Clevelanders. They accepted the urging of Bishop

Rappe that they should no longer see themselves as Irish or even Irish American, but simply as American.

Any priest stationed at the Cathedral during Bishop Rappe's time who saw himself as an Irish leader in an Irish parish was quickly transferred to the most rural parish which could be found where he was told to practice his nationalism among farmers. A case in point was that of Father T.P. Thorpe who, while at the Cathedral in 1864-65, became active in the Fenian movement. His efforts got him transferred in 1866 to Norwalk, Ohio. The Cathedral and two new parishes which were founded in the decade between 1855 and 1865, Saint Bridget's on East 22nd Street near Charity Hospital and the Immaculate Conception at East 41st and Superior, each comprised totally of Irish immigrants, were to be American at once.

St. Colman's Church — (The Old Church).

The Holy Rosary Church, the first church of the Holy Name Parish.

Saint Patrick Parish

This was not the case at all on the West Side. To be first pastor of Saint Patrick's on Bridge Avenue in 1853 the bishop appointed Father James Conlon, an Irish-born, quiet, conciliatory man whom the bishop seems to have trusted implicitly. Conlon organized his parish as an Irish parish from the very beginning. He encouraged the preservation of Irish culture more by tacit approval than by any other means, but he made it quite clear during the twenty-two years of his pastorate at Saint Patrick's that his people were Irish Catholics. They were not to go to worship at the German Church of Saint Mary's on West 30th Street nearby, nor were they to mingle with their native American neighbors. Above all, Conlon felt, his people were not to marry nor even to, "keep company" (his words) with the Yankees. Catholics were to marry one another. In this he seems

to have succeeded; in no year during his pastorate does one find more than two religiously "mixed marriages" in the parish records of St. Patrick.

At Saint Patrick's there were Irish literary, dramatic, cultural and musical societies as well as a temperance society. There were Irish benevolent societies in the parish as early as 1855, and most importantly perhaps, the people at Saint Patrick's were urged by Conlon to build their church as an exact duplicate of one he had known as a boy in Ireland. It still stands, although Conlon did not live to see it completed, a gaunt high-ceilinged building in sharp architectural contrast with the warm French Gothic design of the original Saint John's Cathedral. If all of this meant that the people of Saint Patrick's were to sacrifice upward mobility to preserve the clannish neighborhood of the parish, Conlon seems to have said, "So be it." Thus, not one, but three generations of Saint Patrick's men continued to work as laborers on the docks unloading the ships coming to Cleveland laden with the newly discovered iron ore from Minnesota. Or they found employment in the new steel mills rising in the flais near the parish. Their neighborhood stayed tightly Irish nearly halfway into this century; it was proud, independent and aloof, long after James Conlon died in Charity Hospital in 1875.

Saint Malachi Parish

Perhaps none of this could have continued had an Americanist of the persuasion of Bishop Rappe succeeded Conlon or had pastors of an Americanist bent founded the parishes split off from Saint Patrick's. This was, in fact, not the case. In 1865

Bishop Rappe appointed Father James Molony to begin a new parish east of Saint Patrick. He called it Saint Malachi, and it embraced the poorest of the poor in what came to be called by old Clevelanders, “The Angle.” This parish overlooked the docks as did Saint Patrick’s, but was closer to them, indeed within walking distance of the men to their work. Molony, himself a quiet man like Conlon, remained pastor of Saint Malachi from 1865 to 1903. Toward the end of his life he came to be regarded, perhaps because of his remoteness from his people, as something of a neighborhood saint. He permitted this Irish reverence for himself and held his parish together, not so much by force of positive leadership, though he gave that in a quiet way, but rather because of this reverence in which his parishioners held him.

Early Cleveland Priests all born in Ireland, 1871. Top row: Thomas M. Smyth, Ed J. Mears, Henry Brown, Walter Gibbons, John P. Carrol, Thomas F. Hally, Joseph O'Reilly. Bottom row: John Hannon, Robert A. Sidley, Eugene M. O'Callahan, James Monahan, James P. Maloney.

Fiftieth jubilee of St. Malachi's Catholic parish. November 7, 1915.

In any case, Saint Malachi became an even more intensely Irish parish ghetto than did Saint Patrick, so much so that the territory

of the parish was more or less closed by force to all outsiders and remained so until after the death of Father Molony in 1903. Second and even third generations of its sons and daughters married one another and remained members of the parish by building additions to the rear of their parents' homes, or by buying houses made vacant by the deaths of older parishioners.

Summary of Differences Between West Side and East Side Parishes

Here then is a summary of the early differences between the West and East Side Irish communities: first, the East Side Irish immigrants of the 1850's and 1860's, had really only one parish to which they could belong. The pastor of that parish, Saint John's Cathedral, was the French-born bishop who desired that the Irish people of the parish should become American as soon as possible. He continued this policy in the two Irish territorial parishes which he founded as offshoots of the Cathedral and appointed as pastors of these parishes men who he felt would extend and reinforce this policy. But on the West Side he permitted Father Conlon and Father Molony to go their own way in union with their people; thus both their parishes became centers of Irish nationalism in the absence of any acculturating leadership.

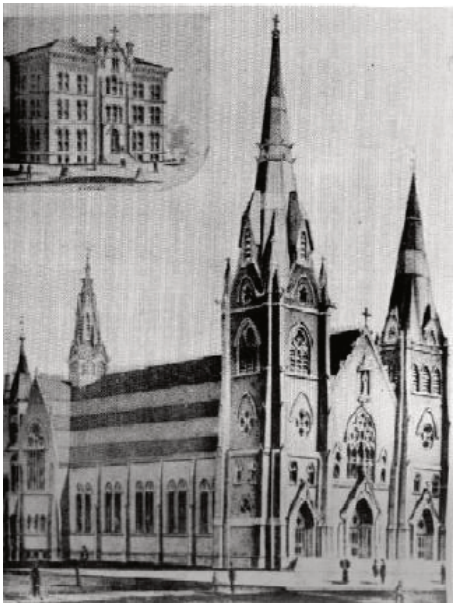
Second, when Father Conlon died with his parish church uncompleted, Bishop Rappe's successor, Bishop Richard Gilmour, sent to Saint Patrick's a priest who had developed a modest reputation as a builder in Youngstown a decade earlier, Father Eugene O'Callaghan. While he completed the building of

the church Father Conlon had begun at Saint Patrick's by heroic effort Father O'Callaghan drew the parishioners together during his three year pastorate (1877-1880) by appealing to their Irish nationalism and sense of community which had been rooted in the parish since Father Conlon's time. O'Callaghan never was an Irish nationalist himself in his previous assignments; indeed he was even more of an Americanist than Rappe, but at Saint Patrick's he adapted himself to the character of his people and to their aspirations, and encouraged their Irish nationalism, albeit without much heart. When the church at Saint Patrick was completed in 1880, O'Callaghan promptly resigned the parish, which was by that time second in size only to the Cathedral (Saint Patrick had thirteen hundred families, the Cathedral two thousand families), and founded at his own request Saint Colman's parish at West 65th Street near Lorain Avenue. Here he spent the last twenty-one years of his life serving the most neglected of Cleveland's Irish poor who had immigrated to the city after the second major famine in Ireland in 1878. At Saint Colman he had no choice but to continue his policy begun at Saint Patrick. He encouraged his people to preserve their Irish heritage in every way they could, and indeed Saint Colman remained an Irish parish and community right up to World War II, forty years after O'Callaghan's death in 1901.

One might speculate that this occurred for two reasons: O'Callaghan's people were so poor that a nostalgia for the land of their birth was often all that sustained them, and Bishop Gilmour was not at all the Americanist Bishop Rappe was. Although he wished the Cathedral parish to be American, he never imposed this view on pastors of any ethnic parishes.

Indeed, the Bishop founded many of these ethnic parishes, and unlike his predecessor he encouraged the non-English speaking parish. Hence he hardly could stifle the same aspirations of the English-speaking ethnics at Saint Patrick's and Saint Malachi's.

The Cathdral of St. John the Evangelist in 1870.



Church of the Immaculate Conception and the school in the 1880's.

A third difference between East and West Side parishes is that, quite unlike the newly formed parishes of the native born Irish on the East Side which continued Bishop Rappe's policy, the major West Side Irish parishes of Saint Patrick and its offshoots, Saint Malachi and Saint Colman, all continued, each for reasons which were somewhat similar, the Irish character which was present at their founding, right up to our own time. One need note only that the annual Saint Patrick's Day Parade, begun in 1875 as a purely West Side Irish event (it did not become a downtown demonstration until 1878) continues to have its origin in the West Side Irish American Club and in the Gaelic Civic Society. Both organizations are led today by Irish who

live on the West Side and who seek, at least in this somewhat flamboyant way, to recall their heritage in Cleveland, a heritage they have kept alive, if only one day a year.

The fourth and final difference is that during the crucial years of the maturing of the Famine Irish on the East Side, that is to say in the period between 1875 and 1895 when the children of the original Irish of the 1840's and 1850's were beginning to marry and to move out of the parishes of St. John's Cathedral, St. Bridget and Immaculate Conception, they formed new parishes which were to continue the logical consequences of Bishop Rappe's Americanist policies. These new parishes were St. Aqnes at East 79th and Euclid in 1893; St. Thomas Aquinas at Superior and Ansel Road in 1898; St. Edward on Woodland Avenue at East 69th Street in 1885; and St. Philomena on Euclid at Wellesley in East Cleveland in 1902.

In spite of the fact that all these parishes were mostly Irish in makeup, they were American in style. Perhaps a major contributing cause for this was the fact that these new parishes also embraced the American born children from the German parishes of the East Side, St. Peter's at Superior and East 17th Street and St. Joseph on Woodland Avenue at East 24th Street. These people, relegated by Bishop Rappe to a secondary role in the Cleveland Church until they could learn the language and culture of their new land, seem to have desired to become as much American as did their Irish neighbors on the East Side. A pastor in one of the new East Side parishes could hardly feel free to imitate the style of the Irish parishes on the West Side.

Interior of St. Bridget's Church The most elaborate church the Irish ever built in Cleveland in 1880's.

Interior of the Church of the Holy Name in 1880's.

Father Gilbert Jennings, who founded St. Agnes parish in 1893, is a case in point. Jennings was born in Ravenna, Ohio, in 1856 of Irish-born parents. He was ordained in 1884 and immediately

assigned at pastor in Jefferson, Ohio, the home of Josh Giddings and Senator Ben Wade, who were instrumental in founding the Republican Party in 1856. When he was assigned to form the new parish of St. Agnes, Jennings brought with him some unique ideas on parish administration and organization. Influenced by his experience with the Yankees in Jefferson and by the radical Americanism of Archbishop John Ireland of Saint Paul, and Bishop John Lancaster Spalding of Peroria, both of whom lectured at St. Agnes frequently, Jennings adopted the town meeting theory of village government to parish administration. All the people were invited to meet and decide on parish policy. They formed a covenant with their pastor and with one another before God, mirroring the style of the Congregational Churches of the Yankee a half century earlier. They agreed to tithe in order to construct their new church buildings, thus eliminating the frequently obnoxious system of collection by envelope and family pew rent in vogue elsewhere in the diocese.

Jennings favored a parochial school and built one, but only after he reminded the people that the school had to be excellent and not a mere Catholic alternative to the public school. He opened the first kindergarten of the diocese in his school and laid special emphasis on adult education in the parish to continue the upward mobility of his people. In his public addresses, specifically in one given at the graduation exercises at the University of Notre Dame in 1907, he asked for the first time the question echoed by John Tracy Ellis forty-nine years later, “Where are America’s Catholic intellectual leaders?”

Jennings saw his parish as a community of resources to be used by all his people to enable them to move beyond the middle class laboring-man model of the West Side Irish. He urged his parishioners to become involved in the professions, in government, in social leadership and to bring to these enterprises a Christian presence. Many of them did this and in doing so doomed Father Jennings parish: as soon as they began to achieve wealth comparable with that of the Yankees, St. Agnes' original parishioners moved out into the new and exclusive suburbs of Cleveland Heights and Shaker Heights. By 1941, when he died, Jennings had seen his parish go from a tight community of upward bound young Irish and German families to an incipient slum of boarding houses and tenements which would one day become the Hugh area. If this disturbed him, he never showed it. On the contrary, he seems to have been proud and happy that his people were doing so well in the city; he enjoyed conversation with them when they came back to visit him to give him donations to pay for the great stone and marble church he built unwisely in 1916, the precise year that his people of wealth were beginning their exodus to the suburbs. This church, beautiful as it once was, was demolished in 1975 for want of financial support.

East and West Side Differences in the Twentieth Century

The twentieth century saw some startling changes in the attitude of ethnic consciousness among Cleveland's Irish population. For some, newly found wealth and upward mobility had finally brought many third generation Irish to a position where they

completely forgot or denied their Irish heritage. For them, the immigrant church was ended. They moved to the suburbs and gave great loyalty to their churches. However, they no longer saw themselves as Irish Americans, but simply as Americans. There are great numbers of descendants of the original East Side Irish who now live in the eastern suburbs. They often can trace their names back to the founding families of the first East Side parishes, the Cathedral, St. Bridget, Immaculate Conception, St. Edward and Holy Name. But for them, St. Patrick's Day passes unnoticed or is observed at the Cleveland Athletic Club as they vaguely recall some heritage long since forgotten. They resemble more often than not the Wasps with whom they try to compete, usually without success. A visit to the West Side Irish American Club would be for most of them unthinkable. Perhaps this is a pity.

But for a second group, generally rooted in the near West Side parishes, acculturation and assimilation have not come so completely. St. Patrick's Day and its parade belong to them; they continue to support the West Side Irish American Club. They keep alive at least some semblance of their heritage in their dances, their radio programs, their contact with relatives in Ireland and a sense of the community their ancestors had experienced in their old parishes. Sixty years ago their ancestors actually aided the Irish Rebellion in Ireland and they poured considerable money into the process of the formation of the Irish Free State. Significantly, many of these West Side Irish who now live in Cleveland's western suburbs are related to one another and are aware of these relationships. Weddings of their children, more often than not, have a tendency to show a familial focus

on the transmission of a heritage. Funerals, and the wakes that go with them, continue to be the occasion of a gathering of the clans and the remembering of past days. It still is difficult for a young person to break out of the clan, and if he should do so, he usually feels alone and suddenly rootless.

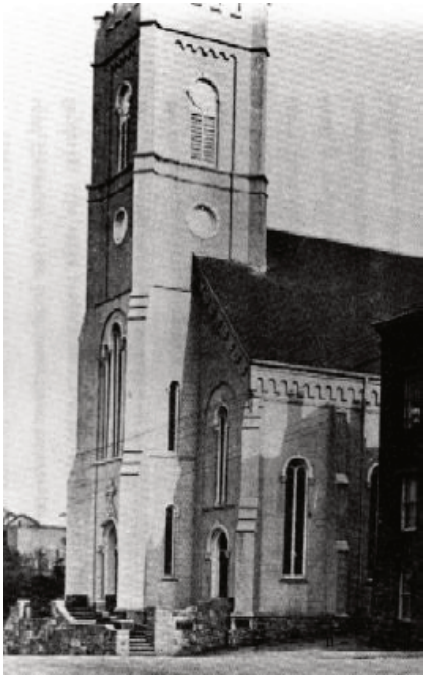
Now what is one to make of all this? To a considerable degree, a basic and radical difference in mentality between East and West Side Irish exists to this day. Surprisingly enough, the truth of this difference has been tested by the black man. It was he who on the East Side replaced the second and third generation Irish in their strongest parishes — at St. Agnes St. Thomas, St. Aloysius and St. Philomena. Many factors are involved in this phenomenon but perhaps a major part of it is that the East Side Irish were willing to sell their houses to the black man when they moved out. On the West Side it was clear that to sell one's home to the black man was, and still is, regarded as a betrayal of one's neighbors and of the community.

This seems to be precisely the point of difference between East and West Side Irish today. Neighborhoods change slowly on the West Side, because they are to a far greater degree "communities" than those on the East Side. These West Side communities are rooted in church affiliation which one must see as church or parish centered.

For example, rarely does one find the equal of the sense of community generated by the building of Saint Patrick's church on Bridge Avenue between 1877 and 1880.[1] When the people of Saint Patrick's found they could not afford to build the church

1. This writer has noted this phenomenon in his book (*Alba House*, 1971).

Father Conlon envisioned for them before his death in 1875, they sought, under the leadership of Father O'Callaghan, to do the work themselves. The church, which is of momumental proportions, is built of Sandusky limestone because O'Callaghan could obtain that stone free from a quarry in Sandusky. The people organized themselves into teams in which every man who was able participated. They cut the stone themselves, and even used the wagon of the local undertaker to transport the stone from Sandusky. The whole project took two years; each trip took one week — over 100 trips were made. The church was under roof by late 1878; then those who had been stone cutters earlier became the carpenters, glass workers, altar builders and plasterers.



St. Malachi's Church. 75th Anniversary 1943.

St. Patrick's Church with Paster's Residence. West 32rd and Bridge — The Largest and Central Irish Parish.

The whole project was pretty well completed by 1880, and much of the work of the builders remains visible to this day. One notices that the stones are poorly cut and that the roof, which is really a giant A frame, covers over a set of fine clerestory windows which the builders installed but could not devise a way to roof properly — they had no architect. Even the pillars in the church tell a story. To get wooden beams to support the roof, Father O'Callaghan sent buyers to New York to purchase

the main masts of the Cunard sailing ships which were being dismantled in favor of the new transatlantic steam ships. These were the very sailing ships which had brought the original Famine Irish to this country. Once they were in place holding up Saint Patrick's roof, the people of the famine time could look at the pillars and recall their own immigrant experience, an event which they had seldom if ever allowed themselves to think about until it was made so graphic to them.

Thus their church, which they had built by hand, and their past were all symbolically visible as they worshiped. Both had generated a remarkable sense of community and of recall. The building itself held the people to the neighborhood for years: no East Side church built by contract could achieve this sense of neighborhood and community of service, no matter how expensive or ornate its style. In spite of its classic beauty and design, and its cost, the great stone church at St. Agnes held very few of its original people to the neighborhood. In fact, it was demolished in 1975 by the Diocese of Cleveland because it, as with St. Thomas church, had become a useless financial burden to the Diocese.

On the East Side upward mobility was predominant in the minds of both priests and people; churches, no matter what their wealth, were in the long run irrelevant. This was not true on the West Side where selling one's home to move to the suburbs seemed to have been an abandonment of one's heritage as well as one's peers. It may well be that all of this is changing today. Yet still the West Side Irish who have moved out from their immigrant parishes seek the same sense of community in their

new parishes in Lakewood, Rocky River and West Park, Fairview, North Olmsted, and Bay Village much more so than do the Irish of the East Side.

By contrast, the East Side Irish are today generally invisible as ethnics as they blend with their equally invisible fellow ethnics in Cleveland's East and Southeast suburbs. These Irish people, who more often than not can trace their roots back to the parishes of the Cathedral, St. Bridget and Immaculate Conception, have little or no sense of their ethnic background. They continue to seek an ongoing upward mobility. Their parishes are large and usually impersonal and they often fit perfectly the description given by sociologists to the modern suburban Wasps who also have forgotten their roots — the "rootless Americans."

Somehow the pattern on the East Side for the Irish in the long run seems to resemble that of the native Americans on the East Side, probably by imitation. If so, then one must conclude that the Wasps have unconsciously achieved the thing their ancestors could never achieve in three centuries in England with regard to the Irish, the total eradication of Irish nationalism and ethnic consciousness. If this is so, one also must conclude that the Wasps achieved this incredible result at the price of the loss of their own ethnic consciousness. The Wasps have been forced into the role of the paradigmatic group by countless social, political and religious pressures as they live in the presence of the vast diversity of ethnic groups, all of whom have come to Cleveland since the time of the Connecticut Land Company. For this reason, the Wasps of today fail to lead the city politically in spite of their long-standing wealth in the community.

Occasionally one of them will venture into Cleveland politics as did Seth Taft in a mayoralty election, only to be badly defeated by a black man like Carl Stokes, or a man whose origin lies in the non-English speaking community like Ralph Perk.

Because the Irish and the Wasps on the East Side are so similar and so locked in competition with each other, they seem unable to form any kind of political coalition. The West Side Irish, who to this day are more united in their ethnicity and their Politics, are still not numerous enough to win with a candidate of their own the office of Mayor of Cleveland. They can produce Congressmen like Jim Stanton and Michael Feighan to represent them in Washington, but they have produced no mayor of Cleveland.

Thus we see that the contrast in vision regarding acculturation begun by Bishop Rappo on the East Side and Father James Conlon on the West Side over a century ago have contributed profoundly to the fundamental difference which remains to this day between the East and the West Side of Cleveland.

However, the East Side Irish today cannot claim any real success in their competition with the Wasps. Many East Side Irish have achieved considerable personal wealth. That wealth does not really match proportionally the wealth of the descendants of the original Western Reserve families. For the most part the East Side Irish have always disdained politics; the Wasps have not. But they are seldom elected. If social acceptability is what the wealthy East Side Irish seek, they have failed in this also. One searches in vain for any significant number of Irish names in the membership lists of the clubs of prestige on the East Side.

Very few families of Irish origin belong to the Union Club or to the Country Club, both of which require new members to pass a board of review.

St. Ignatius College on West 30th and Carrol in 1880's.

St. Joseph's Church in 1880's.

The issue is more than one hundred and twenty years old. The Wasps will not socialize with the people whom they never accepted, the Irish. The East Side Irish have no club to receive them as peers among peers, and for them to join the West Side Irish American Club would be an unthinkable step backward. Indeed, they have lost their heritage and they cannot relocate it at the precise time when, at least socially, every other ethnic group in Cleveland is rediscovering its heritage and exploiting it.

None of this is presented to extoll either the West Side Irish or

the East Side Irish. It is simply a set of observations about both groups and an effort to raise the question as to whether either was right. This writer suspects that each was right in the course they pursued insofar as each had at least achieved the goals they (or their clergy) set for themselves a century ago. It is the sense of identity for the future, about which we shall speak later, that causes one to wonder.

Chapter 5: The Cleveland Irish and Their Place or Origin

Certain family names seem to keep reappearing among the Cleveland Irish and, at the same time, other Irish family names, somewhat common elsewhere, are seldom to be found here. At first glance this phenomenon seems baffling to the non-Irish. But the explanation is rather simple: The vast majority of Cleveland's Irish have their family origin in County Mayo in the west of Ireland. For reasons that can only be explained by the clannishness of the first immigrants who came out to America during the two great famines (1845-53 and 1874-79), it seems apparent that some people from one county decided to go to one inland American city and others to another. Chicago, for example, was settled by people whose names indicate they were almost exclusively from County Galway. New York is populated by Irish from Cork, Tipperary and Killarney; and South Boston by people from Wexford and Rosscommon. The pattern of settlement by the Irish in the United States followed to a remarkable degree the clannishness of the counties in Ireland.

Few counties in Ireland were and are as poor as County Mayo. It is part of the Province of Connaught, that barren, rock strewn coastal area where the views of mountains, sky and sea are breathtaking, but where the land is so Poor that few can live off it. There are no cities in Mayo, only towns and crossroads, each with its own personality. The families who lived in Mayo in the time of the famines were descendants of the people banished by Oliver Cromwell, who could not subdue them when they lived in the eastern counties of Ireland. To them he said in exasperation, “Go to hell or Connaught.” They chose the latter, although one suspects the former choice had some advantages.

Mayo was not electrified until the 1920’s; it was always isolated from the rest of Ireland and developed a fiercely independent people. They were hot as much affected by the 1845 famine as were the people of the East and South of Ireland. But by 1874, when the second famine struck Ireland, the Mayo Irish were all but decimated. They fled in huge numbers to America and came directly to Cleveland because the jobs were here; so too were a few of their relatives who had come out earlier. And, it should be noted that the Mayo Irish did not want to even attempt to break into the enclaves of the more sophisticated of the 1845 famine Irish whose children were already becoming upwardly mobile in the major cities on the Eastern Seaboard.

The Mayo Irish who came to Cleveland in the 1870’s settled mostly on the West Side, especially in St. Malachi and St. Colman parishes. They were more dutiful in the practice of their faith than were the Irish who preceded them here in 1845. Perhaps they were not as lawless, but they were surely more

clannish. They remembered Ireland more fondly than did the 1845 famine Irish; they kept much more closely in touch with what was going on back in Mayo. Today they are to be found scattered throughout the Whole of Cleveland's West Side and the West suburbs as well. Maybe their ethnicity is dying, but nothing has replaced it; given a cause they could become very ethnic Irish, far more so than their East Side counterparts. They seem to yearn for their old neighborhoods, almost begging someone to call them back into being in their new suburban developments. Their names make them conspicuous: Corrigan, Kilbane, O'Malley, Stanton,, O'Connor, McGovern, Gallagher, Sweeney, Patton, Murphy, Lavolle, Gibbons and so many more. The story of each family might well become subject matter for a first rate novel. Regrettably these stories have been lost due to lack of records and a failure on the part of later generations to preserve oral history. But the feeling about being identified as Irish, as we have already pointed out, still runs high.

We know more about the Mayo Irish on the West Side of Cleveland than we do about the Irish from the other counties of Ireland whose descendants live in other parts of our city mainly because the Mayo Irish seek to keep alive at least the tradition and fierce pride of their county. Elsewhere in Cleveland, especially on the East Side, those Irish who know and, at times, celebrate their Irishness have forgotten their place of orlain and, one suspects, consider this information of little real concern.

We emphasize this point because this loss of old country ties has, it would seem, made Cleveland's Irish who are not from their peculiarly rootless.

Chapter 6: The Early Irish Neighborhoods

We noted previously that in describing the initial impact of the Famine Irish upon the city of Cleveland in the years 1845-1853, original Yankee population of the city ceded by withdrawal to the Irish certain sections of what is today the downtown commercial and industrial city. A description of these areas which become Irish ghettos in the 19th Century seems to be in order. This is in no way to be construed as a census tract study, but rather an effort to locate and give some flavor to parts of our city which are quite different today from the neighborhoods where Cleveland's early Irish lived.

1) *North of Superior most to the bluff above the lake*. In this section the Irish Catholics built their Cathedral which stands today on the same ground as it did when it was first begun in 1849. The Cathedral was remodeled in 1947, long after the neighborhood had ceased to be a residential area. But at one time this church and its school were the most populous in the

Diocese. Today's Chancery Building, once the Cathedral School, was for many years the largest school in the Diocese of Cleveland; between 1867 and 1890, the enrollment of boys and girls, all of Irish parentage, numbered over 1,000. The families of these children lived in tightly packed A-frame houses, none of which survive today, on streets such as Rockwell, Lakeside, Hamilton and St. Clair, a sight hard to visualize as one beholds the vast parking lots which now occupy the same land. Babies were born in these homes, the elderly died in them and an Irish neighborhood thrived amidst the squalor of poverty born of an immigrant ghetto. To recapture the way these people lived, one must go to the picture collection of the Cleveland Public Library and there find the scenes known to Clevelanders a century ago. By 1890 commercial buildings and warehouses had begun to change this neighborhood; the children of these Irish immigrants had no intention of remaining behind in the old neighborhood. They sought and built new housing, moving out Superior, St. Clair, and Euclid to the streets east of East 55th.

2) *The area bounded by East 22nd Street, south of Prospect and north of Woodland extending east to the city limits at East 55th Street.* This was St. Bridget parish, once the home of the Irish of moderate wealth. It lasted as an Irish neighborhood until about 1900. These homes in many cases still stand. They are to be found on Cedar and Central Avenues and the numbered streets running perpendicular to them. One finds it difficult to visualize on Central Avenue, however, the fact that fine lawns and gardens on this street once caused it to be called Garden Street. Cleveland's first street cars ran along Central, at first drawn by horses and later powered by electricity. They turned

around at their eastern terminal at East 89th Street. This form of public transportation, quite popular in the 1870's and 1880's, caused the area it served to prosper as a residential development. This phenomenon gave the impetus to the Van Swearanger Brothers to build their new development in Shaker Heights in the 1920's.

However, St. Bridget Parish did not last as an Irish enclave much more than one generation. The children of the neighborhood never resettled there; rather they moved east, first to the new developments around St. Agnes Church at East 79th and Euclid and then to the Heights, where their children are generally to be found even to this day. And St. Bridget parish plant, once the heart of this neighborhood, fell first into decline, then was merged with the Italian parish of St. Anthony, and finally was torn down in 1961 to make room for the Inherbelt freeway.

3) *On the West Side was St. Patrick, on Bridge Avenue, the mother parish of the Irish, as has been already noted.* The Irish settled here as early as 1850, as they found the area conveniently within walking distance of the iron ore docks on Whiskey Island, where most of them worked. Here, as we have already pointed out, a different style of neighborhood developed. It was much more closely knit; its work force was much poorer than its counterpart on the East Side and it was much more consciously Irish. The homogeneity of the neighborhood lasted right up to the end of World War II. Upward mobility, better jobs or housing were not regarded as desirable goals for the children and even grandchildren of the original settlers. Some of the third generation St. Patrick people began to relocate in the western

suburbs, especially in Lakewood and later in Rocky River and Bay Village, but enough remained behind to give the area an Irish caste until very recently when Puerto Ricans began to occupy hundreds of Irish-built A-frame houses on Fulton, Franklin, Carroll and the numbered streets running off them. Perhaps the richest Irish heritage in Cleveland emanates from St. Patrick's. It is, however, rapidly being forgotten. One suspects that this is a pity.

Arial view of Cuyahoga River looking South from the lake in late 1920's. Note St. Malachi area upper right is beginning to be a district of waterhouses.

4) *"The Angle," located north of Detroit, east of West 28th Street and down Washington Avenue to Whiskey Island, which it included.* More flamboyant than the area around St. Patrick's, this neighborhood centered around St. Malachi Church, built in 1868, destroyed by fire in 1943 and rebuilt in 1945. Here

was perhaps the truest Irish ghetto, secretive, closely knit and proud in spite of its poverty. Tom Patton, future President of Republic Steel, was born and raised in The Angle, as was the boxing champion, Johnny Kilbane. So were countless numbers of professional men, doctors, lawyers, priests and politicians. The early Irish settlers here also worked on the ore docks, to which they could walk from their homes. Many of them also worked on the harbor tugs, a business which their grandchildren still control. Often they began their life in the United States living in tar paper shacks on the side of what is still referred to as Irishtown Bend on the Cuyahoga River, just south of Detroit Avenue and east of West 25th Street. The shacks are all gone at Irishtown Bend; they are gone too on Whiskey Island where an exciting style of Irish frontier life existed between 1865 and 1910. The neighborhood gave way to warehouses and, in 1938, to the government housing in Lakeview Terrace. Yet of all the early Irish parishes, St. Malachi is the healthiest today. It is kept alive by old timers with roots there who return in great numbers from their homes in Lakewood and elsewhere to worship weekly. St. Malachi is also the only officially approved Community Parish where any person, regardless of his national background or parish affiliation, is free to join. St. Malachi School also prospers, aided by constant grants and fund raisings under the title Urban Community School. One is tempted to add that few Cleveland neighborhood parishes are more intriguing than St. Malachi and at the same time so little researched. A few of the original houses in The Angle still remain. Should one seek merely to document the history of the people who lived in them, Cleveland urban history would be much enriched. In The Angle,

there are outhouses still extant and functioning beneath the Main Avenue Bridge and within sight of the Terminal Tower.

5) *The area from West 58th Street to the Lakewood City Limit (West 117th Street) from Lorain north to Lake Erie*. After 1880 this was St. Colman Parish. Its great stone church, built in 1916 on West 65th Street, still stands, as do most of the houses where the people of this once densely Irish neighborhood lived. But since 1950 the Irish have nearly all moved out, mostly to the western suburbs, and the neighborhood is today predominantly composed of people recently moved to Cleveland from Appalachia. St. Colman School, in 1920 the largest in the Cleveland Diocese, closed in 1974 due to a lack of students. One might romanticize the past at St. Colman, but one is also reminded that the poverty of the original Irish there was quite similar to the poverty of the Appalachians there today.

6) *The area of the old city of Newburgh centered around East 93rd and Broadway and extending from Kingsbury Run on the North to the Cuyahoga River Valley on the South and from East 77th Street to East 116th Street.* This was Holy Name Parish; it flourished from 1865 until 1960. Many of the original houses built by the Irish still stand but are in dreadful disrepair, and are lived in by black people today. The Newburgh Irish settled there to be close to the Newburgh Rolling Mills where they worked until they were displaced by Poles who were willing to labor for cheaper wages at the Mill in the 1880's. These Irish left the Mills for good at that time and were, for many years, the backbone of the Police and Fire Departments of the City of Cleveland.

Today most of their descendants live in the Heights. They seem to recall their Newburgh heritage only dimly.

7) *The area north of Superior Avenue between East 30th and East 60th Streets.* Again, the heart of this neighborhood was a parish, that of the Immaculate Conception. The modest stone church built by this Irish neighborhood in 1881 still stands at East 41st and Superior. There is a flourishing school next to the church. Some few descendants of the original Irish families live in the neighborhood, but Immaculate Conception had pretty well ceased to be an Irish parish by the turn of the present century. Actually, it was a very early parish, founded in 1855 to accommodate those Irish in the East End who found it too far to travel to the Cathedral. Most of the early settlers in this neighborhood were from the East and South of Ireland, quite unlike their counterparts on the West Side, almost all of whom were at first from County Mayo. The houses built by the Irish founding families of the neighborhood generally still stand. Few reflect any sort of wealth. But here, too, there was a peculiar pride of neighborhood, one suspects, and yet the neighborhood as an Irish enclave lasted less than 50 years.

What one makes of all of this is problematic. As has already been noted, there are a few very obvious points.

1) It is clear enough that none of the early Irish neighborhoods exist today.

2) The drive toward upward mobility, more intense on the East Side, but just as inexorable, however delayed by neighborhood loyalty, on the West Side, has caused

neighborhoods to be abandoned in less than 50 years by the children they produced.

3) The culture of the Irish neighborhood of the 19th Century was just that, a neighborhood culture. It had no deep roots in European ethnic pride in place of origin. Ireland was really too cruel to those who had to immigrate and the insecurity of the immigrants caused them seldom to look backward.

4) Unlike the non-English speaking groups, the Irish had no native language, little remembered heritage, and little culture to preserve. It well may be that neighborhood culture cannot survive the surge toward upward mobility for any length of time. While the Irish of today may regard their past as quaint, or with nostalgia, or forget it altogether, they do not, in any case, wish to go backward. Perhaps they have given up too much in order to be accepted as Americans. If so, one wonders about their self-concept. But the evidence in Cleveland today seems to indicate that the Irish neighborhood of the 19th and early 20th Century is just about over on both sides of town. This would appear to be especially true insofar as that neighborhood was centered around a parish church and school.

5) But the same thing cannot be said for Irish ethnicity. That continues, perhaps as strong as ever, in Cleveland. It is not reinforced by any visible forms of cultural Catholicism as it once was. The Irish pastor or curate in the suburban parish may be respected because he is a priest, but it seems more likely that he must earn that respect from his Irish parishioners primarily because of his desire to live and serve his faith. There is, however, Irish ethnicity still very much alive in Irish families no matter where they live. This ethnicity is not overt, often it is not even consciously lived. Yet it is visible to the non-Irish. Its sociological patterns endure. Irish families continue to produce children who tend more often than any other group

to clan. They gather at the houses of brothers and sisters and at parents' houses whenever possible on any pretext. Holidays and birthdays are celebrated in highly ritualistic ways. Extended family is perceived to be a value. "Cousins" are constantly referred to if they are successful or prominent and are claimed beyond all normal bounds of actual relationship. More recently one finds the college and even high school children of Irish heritage doing genealogy into family background, taking oral history and searching with great diligence for the immigrant in their family past. This does not seem to be a desire on the part of these young people to revert to any vague past; more likely it is an effort to rediscover a heritage once lost and now regarded as a source of identity and perceived as a value. Today's Irish in Cleveland seem to show some special form of pride if their family name is noticed to be Irish by one who is not Irish. Nothing much results from this in itself, but it is a far cry from what their grandfathers must have felt when they found many job opportunities blocked for them with the words on many help wanted advertisements at the turn of the century — "No Irish need apply."

Chapter 7: Irish in Politics and Professions

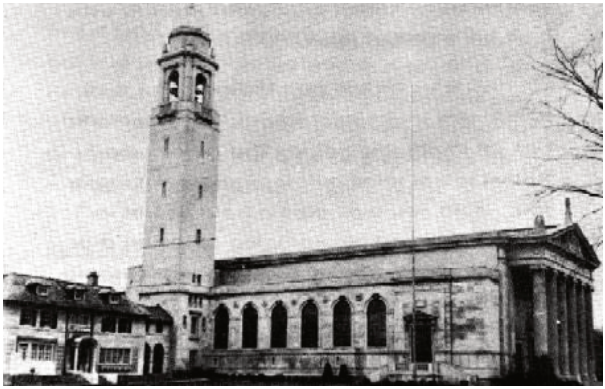
The occupations of today's Irish in Cleveland represent to a great degree the very high premium placed on education by Irish families here from the very beginning. Few of the Irish immigrants to this city were able to rise much higher on the labor and social scale than their meager education in Ireland would take them. But they seemed to know intuitively that a good education for their children was the key to upward mobility. It is interesting to note that the Cleveland Irish community did not produce its first physician until 1887. Today the number of physicians, dentists and nurses, as well as many other practitioners in the field of health care, is remarkably high in comparison with the total Irish population. The same thing can be said for clergy and religious women, although that proportional dominance seems to be shifting as young people of Irish background discover that the advantages of being Irish in the clergy or religious life no longer exist as they once did.

The Influence of Archbishop John Ireland

Perhaps a topic especially intriguing to the non-Irish in Cleveland is the peculiar position occupied by those of Irish background in the practice of law. Some suspect a genuine political conspiracy here, rooted no doubt in the relationship between the Irish in New York active in Tammany Hall and political office, but Cleveland has no Tammany Hall and never did. There are more Irish lawyers and judges than the Irish numbers would warrant. This has been true for much of this century. But unlike Tammany, where the real unifying factor was the Democratic Party, Cleveland's Irish lawyers, Judges and politicians more likely than not are apt to be Republicans. One can only speculate on this phenomenon. A possible explanation might be found in the politics of the presidential election of 1896. In that year, Archbishop John Ireland of St. Paul, perhaps the most influential bishop of his time, urged all Catholics to abandon the Democratic party candidate, William Jennings Bryan, and to support the Republican William McKinley. He had several reasons for urging this switch in political support.

First, he was convinced that a mindless adherence to any political party by any minority group was to waste the political clout that minority group might have if it challenged each political party to address itself to the needs of that minority group. In this case, he had very much in mind the Irish who had so faithfully voted Democratic in most urban centers of the North, East and Midwest, but who had received no great advantage for doing so.

St. Colman's Church around 1928.



St. Ann's, last Irish parish on east side. View from Cedar and Coventry.

Second, he believed that if the Irish followed his lead and did actually support the Republican candidate in 1896, the Democrats would lose in national, state and local elections. The result of this election would then influence both parties to seek

to woo Irish voters in the election of 1900; thus the Irish would no longer be taken for granted by the one party and ignored by the other, and the Irish would profit from all of this.

It seems that he had in mind especially federal aid to the parochial schools, a problem he had struggled with for nearly 25 years. In 1890 he had established the Fairbault-Stillwater plan for support of the schools. Essentially this was an appeal to the state of Minnesota and the local public school systems of the state to rent and to support the parochial schools in both these towns for $1.00 per year on condition that the Catholic students be given released time during school hours to obtain religious instruction at a site on or near the parochial school property.

The idea was a good one, it would seem. It was a development of a statement Ireland had made in 1890, widely carried in the press, that it was not the building of Catholic schools but their maintenance which would bankrupt the Church in the United States within 100 years (One notes that his prediction still has 15 years to go and yet it is already at least partly true).

But still, Ireland's solution was a novel one. Catholics were to give up the absolute control of the parochial schools they had built. The curriculum, the accreditation of teaching sisters, the methods of teaching secular subjects and the administrative role of the parish pastor in the school was to be handed over to the state. The parish was to retain control only of religious education. Many Irish pastors in Cleveland, recognizing the validity of Ireland's prediction, backed him. In doing so they brought politics to the parochial level. Whole parishes turned Republican in their voting, and the descendants of these 1896

voters remain to this day Republican in their voting. One such parish was the Immaculate Conception where the pastor, Cleveland's second monsignor, Thomas P. Thorpe, influenced whole families to vote Republican, many of whom do so to this day, reinforced by the politics of big business of which they have become a part. One thinks of the late Judge James Connell in particular in this regard.

A further development of this phenomenon of Irish Republican politicians is to be found in the deep-seated Irish fear of any politics that might border on socialism. The Irish had struggled out of poverty and had become convinced of the value of private ownership of land and in some cases, of laissez faire capitalism. For many of them to relinquish their hard won gains to the State was unthinkable. Thus even in the 1950's, many Cleveland Irish supported Senator Joseph McCarthy in his attacks on Communism, just as many of them had supported Father Coughlin two decades earlier when he broke with Franklin Roosevelt. One might have trouble justifying this seeming conflict with the Irish revolutionary past in Ireland, but it made sense for those who might have forgotten that past. In so doing they became vulnerable to all sorts of demagoguery about which their grandparents might have laughed.

Judge Martin Foran

A different and very special kind of Irish American emerged in politics very early in the history of the Irish immigrant. He was the political independent. In Cleveland his prototype was Martin A. Foran, a member of the Cathedral parish, who ran

for Congressman and won, and ultimately became a judge in Cleveland (born in 1844 in Pennsylvania, died in Cleveland in 1921).

He remained a faithful member of the Catholic Church and yet sent his children to the public school; he spurned any overtures of the Cleveland bishops to advocate causes peculiarly Catholic and was branded by Bishop Richard Gilmour, who never grasped Foran's theory of separation of Church and State, as a rebel. Foran, more than any other 19th Century Cleveland Irish Catholic, moved freely in the world of the Wasps. He was the first Catholic invited to join the Union Club; he was a charter member of the City Club.

But Foran's independence was at the same time both his credential to the non-Catholic community and his burden with at least some of the Catholic community. His refusal to be dominated by what he considered the arbitrary politics of Bishop Gilmour set him apart from most Irish Catholic politicians who, at least by giving lip service to the bishop, played the game. They thus gained the Catholic vote. The other side of the coin found Foran espousing certain Irish causes without necessarily admitting to the Catholic nature of these causes. This paradox in Foran's life bewildered Gilmour, who regarded all Irish nationalism independent of the directives of the bishops as subversive. The issue between Gilmour and Foran came to a head In 1887 when Foran declared his support of the Single Tax Theory of Henry George. Dr. Edward McGlynn, Pastor of St. Stephen Church in New York, perhaps the most influential Irish priest in the country at the time, espoused the same cause and

indeed campaigned for the election of George in the mayoralty election in New York in 1886. McGlynn was first suspended from his priestly functions in 1886 by Archbishop Michael Corrigan, a close friend of Gilmour, for dabbling in politics. In 1887 McGlynn was excommunicated for his part in the George campaign. He founded the short-lived Anti-Poverty Society in New York after George lost the election and was finally reinstated with the Church by the Apostolic Delegate in 1892.

There were many Irish who followed McGlynn in New York and whose espousal of the George cause came perhaps as close to a schism as the American Church has seen thus far. The reason behind the whole event was the fear of Archbishop Corrigan that the George theory bordered on socialism. This was not the case, really, as the Delegate said in reinstating McGlynn, but in 1891 the conflict did produce Pope Leo XIII's great Encyclical *Rerum Novarum*, concerned with the rights of the working man.

But Gilmour's reaction to Foran was a mirror of Corrigan's reaction to McGlynn, although Gilmour never went as far as Corrigan in sanctioning Foran. Foran harbored his admiration for the cause of Henry George all the rest of his days. In Cleveland, Foran had the opportunity to support one of George's truest disciples, Tom Johnson, when Johnson successfully campaigned for mayor of Cleveland through four terms from 1900 to 1908.

It was in the 1900 Johnson campaign that the old political lines which we have noted previously were once and for all broken among the Irish in Cleveland. The divisions remain to this day. Some Irish vote Democrat as they always have, some vote

Republican as John Ireland first suggested in 1896, and many, adhering to the concept of a moderate independent which Johnson was, continue to vote for an independent Democrat (sometimes a Republican though less likely). Frank Lausche and Anthony Celebrezze were two such successful mayoral candidates.

The point of all of this is that in Cleveland, politics, especially as they involve the Irish, are unique and they are deeply, though often unconsciously, rooted in the past. There has never been a unified Catholic vote along party lines in Cleveland and surely there has not been a unified Irish vote here since the 1890's. Machine politics never seem to have gotten off the ground in this city. Those who today do superficial research and who stand outside the history of the Irish in Cleveland suspect at times a clergy-led conspiracy in Cleveland Irish Catholic voting patterns. There is no evidence that would bear this out in the Irish community other than that already noted about some parts of the 19th and early 20th Centuries.

Cleveland's bishops have failed to understand the politics of the city, and of the Irish, and have sought by the use of power to urge the Irish to vote as though they were Americans with a Wasp background. This tactic simply has never worked. On the contrary, if the local bishops urged a course contrary to the three forms of Irish voting patterns already cited, those patterns were usually intensified. In any case, voting patterns among ethnic groups and especially among the Irish in Cleveland are a subject that is yet to be researched. One suspects that such research would be well worth the effort.

Chapter 8: The Irish and Education

The Catholic School System

In Cleveland the Irish have in every instance been especially loyal to the Catholic school system. This support is something of a paradox. The school system here was clearly founded by German Catholics who firmly believed that should their children lose their German language, they well might lose their faith. As we have already observed, the Irish immigrants had no language to lose; they spoke English when they arrived here. They never had sermons in Gaelic; they never heard Gaelic spoken, at least publicly, nor did they ever seem to yearn for Gaelic as a part of their culture. Yet they considered themselves more American than the Germans, or for that matter any other non-English speaking immigrant group, simply because they did speak English when they arrived. The irony of this position seems particularly evident since these immigrant Famine Irish rarely could read or write the English language. The Germans and most

other non-English speaking immigrants could read and write the language of their country of origin. But from the beginning the Irish made common cause with the Germans and others in the support of the parochial school. Not one of the early Irish parishes in the Cleveland Diocese was without a parish school, subsidized out of parish collections and tuition free.

Such was not always the case in New York and in many other Eastern Seaboard Dioceses. There are several reasons for this phenomenon. First, most of the bishops of the eastern dioceses wished their people to acculturate with what they thought was true Americanism as soon as possible. The ethnic pluralism of the Catholic population here made the bishops of Cleveland acutely aware of the need to preserve the language and customs of their people, which to a great degree were perpetuated in the schools. It would seem that Cleveland's bishops were anxious to see their people of all nationalities blend with the Americans, but those who followed Bishop Rappe also seem to have displayed a very high degree of sensitivity to the needs of the immigrants to find a home in their parishes which gave these immigrants at least some ties with their European heritage. They felt that acculturation would come gradually in time. Thus, they permitted the national parishes to flourish on their own energy and actively sought pastors for these parishes in Europe if none could be found here. In many cases the national parishes continue to function in Cleveland, serving congregations today which often find themselves comprised of people who are four generations in this country. Second, in response to these national parishes, the Irish or territorial parishes were anxious to offer the same school advantage to their own people's children. These

schools assumed an even greater significance as they began to accept the children of people who had once attended the non-English-speaking parish and school or when these people sought admission to the territorial (or Irish) parish when they moved to the suburbs. In the suburbs, ethnic peoples no longer found it feasible to return to their former parish for either worship or school.

Moreover, the Irish or territorial parish schools were maintained by their people because they feared that faith might well be lost should their children attend the "Ciodless Public Schools," a phrase the Irish often heard from their pastors. Although there were some pastors and people who believed the public school system was a touchstone of American democracy. However, it is the first group that prevails even to this day. Only since 1964 have territorial parishes founded in Cleveland failed to build schools, but this recent development is traced, more likely than not, to the shortage of religious women to staff new schools, making them too expensive to begin, rather than to the idea that Catholics no longer support the parochial school. Indeed, Fr. Andrew Greeley's recent research indicates that Catholics want parochial schools as much as they ever did, but a fear on the part of the hierarchy exists that new schools are impossible to staff and maintain, so they are not built.

Higher Education

Here the role of the Irish becomes a good deal more difficult to trace. In the East, there can be little doubt that the Boston and the New York Irish solidly supported the Catholic high schools and

colleges, especially those staffed by the Jesuits. Still it is obvious that schools like Boston College, Holy Cross and Fordham were patronized predominantly by the children of Irish immigrants seeking upward mobility, especially through the professions.

In Cleveland, by the 1880's various forms of high schools began to evolve. At first they were two year extensions of the parochial grade school. As the public schools began to evolve through a series of compulsory education laws into four year programs, the Catholic schools followed suit. As early as 1876 the parish of Holy Name in Newburgh had a four year high school for boys and girls of the parish who wished to attend. But the first central high school for Catholic girls was founded in 1871 at the Ursuline Convent, which then stood on the south side of Euclid Avenue near East 6th Street. This was similar to the girls' academies that had sprung up in the eastern cities, modeled on the academies France. St. Ignatius was the first central high school for young men. It was opened in 1886 by the Jesuits in the same building the school occupies today at West 30th and Lorain Avenue.

By the 1890's both Ursuline Academy and St. Ignatius High School had developed, first a two year and then a four year curriculum. At neither of these schools was the student body very large, often numbering no more than 100 pupils each, nor was the enrollment exclusively Irish in origin. But the majority of students at both institutions prior to 1910 was generally either Irish or German.

On the whole it really was not until after World War II that Catholics in general and the Irish in particular began to attend

colleges in any large numbers. We are aware of no statistics which would indicate what proportion of either Catholics generally or Irish specifically attended the secular colleges prior to 1910, or who attended Catholic colleges outside of Cleveland. We do know that a few young Irish men, destined to become priests, were attending the University of Notre Dame as early as 1849. But this fact only highlights the reality in the second half of the last century that the Catholic clergy were generally the best educated people in the parishes they served. To their credit, it must also be noted, it was the clergy who urged upon their people the need for higher education. In no ethnic group was this urging more apparent than in the Irish parishes. The Irish clergy became acutely aware that education was the key to upward mobility, and, as they encouraged the rising generation in their parishes at the turn of this century to enter colleges of any sort, they knew that they were at the same time breaking up the neighborhood enclave of their parishes and limiting the lifetime of these parishes to perhaps no more than a generation and a half. Educated men did not return to the ghetto to live and the pastors knew it.

Today, of course, the priest is rarely the only well educated person in his parish. Not only the Irish, but most other ethnic groups continue to place a high premium on a college education. Perhaps as high as 42% of the Catholic population of Cleveland is sending its young people to college. As a resultthe Irish, the Italians and the Poles are among the top six most upwardly mobile minorities in the country. Surely this trend will change the dynamics of parish life in the future.

Finally, we must take notice of the Catholic college graduate school. This phenomenon appeared early in the Jesuit colleges and peaked in the late 1940's. Dental schools, medical schools and law schools emerged in the Jesuit colleges as early as the 1920's. Again, these schools were not populated totally by the Irish, but their enrollment was predominantly Irish until the middle 1950's. Today the question has rightly been asked: What is Catholic about a law, a dental or a medical education? The answer is not at all clear. But when these schools were established at a time early in this century, Catholics were not welcome in the graduate and professional schools which were part of private and usually sectarian colleges. At that same time, graduate and professional schools had not been fully accepted or welcomed in the state universities. Thus, the Catholic college with a graduate professional school was the primary means and hope of upward mobility for most of the children of the immigrant Catholics and surely for the children of the Irish immigrants between the years 1890 and 1945. For one to lose sight of the role played by these Catholic colleges and universities is to miss altogether the critical role the Church played in the acculturation of the children of the immigrant Catholics. The loyalty these graduates felt, and to this day continue to feel, toward the schools that produced their careers demonstrates how important they were. One need only note the remarkable tradition of loyalty to be found in the alumni of the University of Notre Dame or of Georgetown, and the constantly recurring mystique of "a Jesuit education" to ascertain this fact. Still, it seems unlikely that any new Catholic colleges or universities will be founded in our lifetime; moreover, some of the older and smaller Catholic colleges have closed and will

continue to close. They simply cannot compete financially with the inexpensive education now available to nearly everyone at the state universities and the community colleges. But while the demise of the small Catholic college may signal the end of one form of the immigrant period of Catholic Irish life, one wonders if the absence of these schools is not an unfortunate loss for the whole of higher education insofar as it takes away an important option for many young people.

Chapter 9: Lost Opportunities of the Irish

One would be inclined to say, at least by way of generalization, that the Irish in America, including the Irish in Cleveland, were often very close to many forms of radicalism between 1845 and 1933. The fact that this radicalism never became a full blown social and political rebellion against authority in the United States seems due to several causes.

First, the leadership of these radical causes was, as we have noted in the case of Dr. Edward McGlynn, confined to clerics who had little staying power in the political life of the country over the long run. For a cleric or priest to be a radical often exposed him to hierarchical sanction, a burden the cleric generally found almost unbearable.

Second, the cleric who espoused radical causes, especially in the 19th Century, seldom understood the need to form political coalitions to carry on the cause, and, even if he tried to do so, he

found the laity generally too timid and unlettered to assume any leadership in such a group, even if it was organized.

Third, the social encyclicals of Pope Leo XIII, while proposing the idea of justice in the distribution of wealth, cautioned against any activity which might undo the established order of things in any country. So, in the United States, the Papal Encyclicals were more often than not interpreted as cautionary documents, full of speculative theory but never interpreted by the upwardly mobile Irish as a call for radical political action on their part.

As a case in point, Fr. John A. Ryan, who began teaching economics at the Catholic University of America, as early as 1906 tried to translate the Papal theory into practice; his insights remain remarkably true even to this day. But he never sought to organize any political activist movements, even among his most gifted students. For the most part, Ryan urged his students to acquire the skills, the ruthlessness and the drive of the Wasps with whom he hoped they would compete, but he took these students one step further. As an Americanizing priest, he retained something of the 19th Century Catholic belief (which had its origin in the Puritan Covenant theory of the 17th Century) that, regardless of the secularism perceived by the Catholic Irish in American business and professional life, there was something basically good and noble in the American spirit. He saw this country, as did the Puritans, as a vast undeveloped force for good, uninhibited by the petty church-state squabbles that plagued the nations of Europe.

So Ryan wanted his students to bring to the market place of the United States their own unique Catholic values. He wanted

them to seek to transform laissez faire capitalism into a force that would support and make great the strong and, at the same time, alleviate and equalize the plight of laboring men and of the poor. He urged programs of welfare, relief, equal housing, job opportunity and all the other social reform measures with which we today take for granted, but which were thought to be wildely liberal and impossible at the beginning of this century. Ryan taw rightly that the social gospel preached by some of the Protestant churches in the 19th Century had failed, mainly because the churches were neither organized nor unified in the understanding of social reform, and they had no cohesive plan rooted in political leverage to carry it out. Ryan firmly believed that the Catholic Church had not only a program of social reform rooted in the Papal Encyclicals, but also that these programs could be implemented by the impact his students would have on the business and political life of this country. One would have to say that, in the end, his dream failed. There are several reasons that explain this failure.

a) Ryan's students were too few to make a real difference in the power structure of American capitalism.

b) These students rarely rose to positions of real decision and policy-making in either political or corporation life in this country. The ancient hostility of the Wasp establishment toward Catholics, especially Irish Catholics, saw to this.

c) If any Irish Catholics did rise to a position of real Power and wealth in the American establishment, they sacrificed so much of their commitment to the social teachings of their church that they became corrupted

or blinded by self-seeking. To push for reform became for them unthinkable. For the few successful Irish in the business and political world there occurred in their lives an absolute separation between their religious beliefs and their lives in the market place. It was not until the 1960's that this dichotomy in the lives of successful Irish came ever so slightly to be challenged by the social doctrines of Vatican II.

d) The American bishops themselves during the first half of this century rarely put forth any sort of practical plan of action that would support Ryan's basic thesis. Indeed, the contrary was true. The bishops, by their silence, seemed to be often the partners with the worst of the laissez faire capitalists. The people followed the lead of the bishops, not of the priest.

e) One must also take into consideration the climate of the times in which Ryan was proposing his dreams to his students. They were, by the very nature of events, a small, somewhat elite group. The vast majority of Irish Catholics were struggling laboring men who regarded all phases of social reform as a threat to their very survival and more often than not as having the overtones of Communism, which they knew was the enemy of their Church. Ryan was teaching during the years of the First World War when the country held patriotism as a far greater value than that if social reform. Then the boom years of the 1920's seduced many Irish Catholics into believing there might be something in that boom for them. The poor they benignly ignored, especially if the poor were not Catholic.

f) It was the chaos of the Great Depression and the despair which it generated in so many walks of life that finally caused Catholics, and the Irish in particular, to look to their Church for either guidance or reassurance. The guidance was there in the person and the teachings of Fr. John A. Ryan. The

reassurance began in the soothing radio voice of Fr. Charles Coughlin of Royal Oak, Michigan. Ryan continued to be ignored by the majority of Catholics. They needed more than social reform programs, right as these programs may have been. These people needed to know that there was an enemy causing their financial crisis. Coughlin provided the enemy. At first, Coughlin told his audiences, which numbered into the millions on Sunday afternoons in the 1930's, that it was vague and ill-defined international bankers whose avarice had created the Great Depression. He cited the social encyclical *Quadregesmo Anno*, written by Pope Pius XI in 1929 on the rights of the laboring class and of the poor, as the solution to the greed of these bankers. He never named these bankers. Many of Coughlin's Irish Catholic listeners believed him completely; indeed he may have been at least half right. But soon enough Coughlin took a swerve to the far right. He condemned the Jewish bankers in particular; then he broke with Franklin D. Roosevelt whom he had supported in the 1932 election, claiming Roosevelt had become the tool of the Jewish bankers, and in 1936 Coughlin helped create a pathetic third party which nominated Louis Lemke for the Presidency. Roosevelt, of course, crushed Lemke in the election and Coughlin continued to denounce the President until Archbishop Edward Mooney of Detroit ordered him silenced in 1939-40.

But John Ryan did not go entirely unnoticed. When Franklin Roosevelt became President he surrounded himself in his first year in office with the most able and innovative men he could find. They were to brainstorm the economic and social problems created by the Great Depression and suggest programs to help extricate the country from what may have been its worst crisis ever. Among these men chosen by Roosevelt was John A. Ryan. Coughlin called Ryan "The Right Reverend New Dealer," the

title given years later to Ryan's biography. The book suggests two basic themes about Ryan. The first is that he was a man twenty-five years ahead of his time and that when he was finally recognized, it was really too late. Ryan died in 1945, in limbo after Coughlin's attacks on him. The second was that if Ryan had been teaching at a secular university, he would have been listened to by the young liberals of these schools. As it was, at Catholic University during Ryan's tenure there, few young liberals were to be found. More was the pity, Ryan's biography suggests. He was wasted at the Catholic University, dominated by the bishops. Their policy at the University was to protect the Church from her adversaries, not to address her wisdom and social teachings to the secular world which was so badly in need of these social principles. We must note that the bishops were not much in favor of Father Coughlin either, but since his only platform, large as it was through the use of radio, could be eroded only by his bishop, there was nobody to check Coughlin's plunge into demagoguery. And when Coughlin was checked by his bishop, it was 1939; the damage was done. A Church which had as its spokesman in social affairs a man like Coughlin was hardly to be taken seriously by the decision makers of this country. They erroneously saw Coughlin as the personification of the parish priest, rooted in anti-intellectualism and condemning the course of social reform begun by Roosevelt. Coughlin's personal animosity, toward Roosevelt was out of touch with the real needs of the working people Coughlin claimed to represent.

The victory of Coughlin over Ryan in the eyes of the leading men of the New Deal lost for the American Catholic Church

(and specifically the Irish who followed Coughlin in the Church) one of the greatest opportunities of the Irish in America to truly come of age and become an integral part of what the Federal Government had finally decided to do. When the United States became involved in World War II, the American Church and the Irish in the Church were surpassed by no minority group in their patriotism and sacrifice. Still, at the end of the war, the contribution of the Catholics and of the Irish to the war effort was regarded as something less than wholehearted by many in government. Its leaders felt that Catholics and Irish had espoused the cause of fascism and even Naziism by supporting Coughlin in the years just prior to the outbreak of the war.

The connection between Catholicism and Populism and Coughlin in the eyes of the men who ran the government durinq the early 1950's seemed clear when Senator Joseph McCarthy conducted, for all to see on television, his peculiar probe into the integrity of many honest and sincere men as he waged a strongly paranoid search for Communists and traitors in the government. When the Senate censured McCarthy there was a feeling that the last elements of the residue of the Coughlin poison had been purged from the Catholic body politic. It should be remembered that a high percentage of Irish Catholics felt a sympathy with McCarthy's unfair probes at the time they occurred. These Catholics seem to have reversed their position quickly when the McCarthy censure was passed in the Senate in 1955. This only underscored in the eyes of the non-Catholic power structure in Washington the evident lack of perspective of Catholic voters (again noting Irish in particular). The facts seemed to have been clearly pointed up to those who measured

the political climate of minority groups, that the Irish Catholic population in the 1940's and the 1950's was troubled by a peculiar schizophrenia. Subsequent revisionist historians attributed this phenomenon to the insecurity that had always been a part of the Irish experience in America. They may have been right.

John F. Kennedy

But at the same time that Joseph McCarthy was gaining his notoriety, another Irish Catholic Senator was preparing very carefully to run for the nation's highest office. His name was John F. Kennedy. Kennedy made a strong run for the Vice Presidential nomination at the 1956 Democratic Convention but lost. In 1960, however, working on a broad base earned in countless primaries, Kennedy won the Democratic nomination for the Presidency. He had to convince his own party first that he held no brief for either Joseph McCarthy or Fr. Coughlin. Then he had to convince the electorate that a Catholic in the White House would not betray the country to the Papacy, nor compromise his oath of office in favor of his personal religious beliefs. The people believed him and elected him President, but by the closest of margins.

It is not our task here to analyze voting patterns in the Kennedy-Nixon election of 1960, nor to evaluate the Kennedy Presidency. We might make note however of Irish reaction to his candidacy and his Presidency. What we observe here is true of Cleveland Irish in particular and, to a degree, of the nation's Irish in general. At first, they simply did not seem to grasp the fact

that the non-Catholic, non-Irish establishment could actually question Kennedy's loyalty to the country and to his oath of office. To be sure, many Irish were aware that some in the Church hierarchy, notably Cardinal Spellman of New York, did not favor Kennedy's election. But they were also aware, sometimes with some embarrassment that another Cardinal, Richard Cushing of Boston, seemed to be all but a personal chaplain to the Kennedy family. Such a division at the top of the American Church's hierarchy appeared normal enough to Irish Catholic Americans. It startled non-Catholics who felt that the Catholic vote was dictated by either bishops or priests. The myth that the Irish, or Catholics in general, voted as a block was really focused upon by Gallup and Harris for the first time in the 1960 election. Kennedy watched their ongoing polls carefully, noting in a speech to the Catholic Youth Organization in New York just before he left for Dallas in November 1963, that his strongest support came from young Catholics, priests and nuns. He ruefully observed that he had little support from the American bishops and less from American cardinals.

Kennedy brought to the Presidency a form of Irish Catholicism which was not at all rooted in the parochialism that had shaped the lives of most of his fellow Irish Catholics in America. He had never attended a parochial grade school; he never attended a Catholic high school or university. He was a Harvard man and when he received an honorary Yale doctorate, he noted that he had finally achieved the best of two worlds, a Harvard education and a Yale degree.

Oddly enough, Irish American Catholics did not seem to resent

this seeming betrayal of their educational enclaves. On the contrary, they seemed to respect it without, in any sense, denying the validity of their own struggle for Catholic education. Perhaps they allowed him this luxury since he was wealthy, and more likely, they felt pleased that a Catholic could achieve success in the most prestigious of the nation's private non-Catholic schools. Finally, the University of Notre Dame awarded Kennedy an honorary doctorate. But for the most part, the Irish American Catholics were proud to note that Kennedy attended Mass each Sunday and generally went to communion. More than this they did not require of him.

There were anti-Kennedy people among Cleveland's Irish to be sure; one suspects that these people were basically Republicans in politics. Their dissent was rarely made public. But after Kennedy'a assassination these people were especially subdued, knowing that such dissent implied a failure to support a man regarded at least as a secular martyr. It is worthy of note that to this day, in many American Irish homes, Kennedy's picture is enshrined in a special place of honor, often with that of his brother Robert and Martin Luther King. Perhaps it is not far from the mark to say that once Kennedy became President, and surely after he was killed, Irish Americans no longer regarded him as their man; they knew he belonged to the whole country. Its grief told them that.

Oddly enough, it was the Irish in County Wexford and elsewhere in Ireland who regarded Kennedy as their son, especially after his visit to Ireland in August of 1963. He addressed the Irish parliament (or Dial) as a visiting chief of a foreign country;

but most Irishmen in Ireland simply saw him as an immigrant's grandson who had made good. For his part, Kennedy was captured by an Irish ethnicity long dormant during the years after his family's immigration to Boston. So thoroughly did the Kennedy family seek to become Americanized that all strains of Irish heritage seem to have been lost. The only Irish loyalty John Kennedy appears to have cherished was that derived from his Irish advisors, all of whom had been in this country for several generations. Thus, when Kennedy went to Ireland, felt the spirit of the place and recalled the romance of the people, he did what so many latter day Irish Americans who visit Ireland do. He began to go back to the Famine, to reconstruct the history of his family and to learn just how far his family had come from the poverty that caused it to leave Ireland in the 1850's. Whether for ill or good, John Kennedy was much more aware of his Irish background just before he was killed than at any other time in his life. And to all of this the American Irish, and the Cleveland Irish in particular, hardly knew how to respond. The saddest part of the whole event seems to have been that they had only 3 months to make any sort of response before the tragic day in Dallas on November 22, 1963. And after that day, It was too late altogether.

Chapter 10: The Role of Cleveland Bishops in Shaping the Ethnicity of Cleveland's Irish

As we have already observed, both Bishop Amadeus Rappe, who presided over the Diocese from 1847 to 1870, and Bishop Richard Gilmour, who was bishop here from 1872 until 1891, were relatively strong Americanizers. They dealt with the Irish ethnicity in Cleveland with severity. They allowed exceptions, already mentioned, to their policy, but for the most part they wanted their Irish people to become part of the American mainstream as soon as possible.

Bishop Ignatius Horstmann

This was not quite the policy of Bishop Ignatius Horstmann who was Bishop of Cleveland from 1892 until 1908. He saw his diocese rife with nationalism, mostly rooted in a genuine hostility between the children of the Irish immigrants and the

children of the German immigrants. Horstmann too professed to be an Americanizer. Although he himself had been born in Germany, he came to this country as a very young boy with his parents who settled in Philadelphia. Horstmann did his studies for the priesthood at the Urban College of the Propaganda in Rome, and returned to work in the Philadelphia archdiocese as a curate, pastor, seminary professor and chancellor from 1863 until his appointment to Cleveland in 1892. He was profoundly influenced by the transcultural experience that was his at the Urban College where students from all over the world were educated in an environment that bore no resemblance at all to the provincialism of the seminaries in Ireland, Germany or in the United States which trained most of the American priests of his day. At the Urban College, a young seminarian was taught the following:

> 1) He was told to regard himself as a missionary in his own country. He was to respect the culture of his country which he was urged to study thoroughly.
>
> 2) He was to seek to adopt the teaching of the Catholic Church to the culture of his country, assimilate its good insights and incorporate this culture into the discipline of the Church as it was to be lived in the missionary environment.
>
> 3) At the same time, the Urban College exposed the seminarian to the diversity of the cultures of other churches within the world-wide influence of Roman Catholicism. He learned that differences of culture led to differences of style, especially in the liturgy, without doing any violence to the doctrine of Catholicism. Thus, for example, the alumnus of the Urban College knew that a Mass celebrated by

> Coptics in Aramaic was just as valid as a Mass celebrated in Latin by the Pope in Rome or by an isolated priest in rural or urban America.
>
> 4) An alumnus of the Urban College in Rome was also taught that when he returned to America he was to treat the cultures of all the different nationalities with an equal respect. He had no desire to destroy either the language or culture of any national group in order to make that group something it had not yet become, in this case, American.
>
> 5) This approach, extremely sophisticated for its own time, was bound to be misunderstood by any immigrant group who might seek to impose its culture or language on any other diverse though Catholic immigrant group. Hence, the alumnus of the Urban College was rarely understood by priests who had a monolithic or narrowly ultra-national seminary training of their own. And if the Urban College alumnus brought these views to the Episcopacy, especially in a diocese like Cleveland, one could predict that he might well alienate many of his people. The irony of this situation became compounded if the Urban College alumnus bishop found himself unable to convince either the pastors or people of his parishes that, in fact, he favored that all should become American in time. He did not want to rush into an Americanism that had not yet become culturally mature.

This was basically the thrust of the episcopate of Bishop Horstmann. He allowed that the Irish were moving more quickly toward some sort of American Catholic culture in their parishes but he would not force the Germans to join them. He made extraordinary efforts to care for the countless other immigrant groups from middle and eastern Europe, often making genuine efforts to obtain for these recently arrived immigrants priests

from Europe to come here to take charge of their needs. For the most part, he succeeded in doing so. But once these parishes were begun, they antagonized the Irish or territorial pastors. For their part, the Irish claimed that the new immigrants were frequently lawless, that they formed all but schismatic churches in that they did not follow diocesan rules, especially with regard to the observation of parish boundaries. One need hardly note that these same criticisms might have been leveled against the Irish themselves when they arrived in Cleveland forty years earlier. But at the same time, as we have observed earlier, the rush toward upward mobility by the Irish in the second half of the last century appears to have cost them a real loss of their historical roots. Maybe they wanted it that way. But if some Irish narrowly condemned the immigrants who came after them, they must stand before the tribunal of history as being intolerant of the very same hardships of immigration they themselves had endured. The fact that the Irish had overcome these hardships by sheer determination did not make them more understanding. Their fear of falling back into the poverty of the Famine times seems to have often cost the Irish their great natural gift of compassion.

There were exceptions. In 1886 when a parish was begun for the Italians at East 13th and Central, called St. Anthony, it was the pastor and the people of the Cathedral Parish that supported the venture financially and taught Sunday School there. They made the terrible mistake, however, of trying to turn Italian immigrants into Americans in one generation. They failed, of course, and the Italian culture preserved in Murray Hill today is a monument to that failure.

Bishop John Farrelly

Bishop John P. Farrelly succeeded Bishop Horstmann in 1909. He was also a Propaganda alumnus and had the same View of transculturalism as did his predecessor. But he did not pursue it in the same way as Horstmann did. Farrelly wanted the new parishes he had begun in the developing suburbs around the core city to be truly American — that is to say, territorial parishes. In spite of the fact that immigration statistics indicate that more than half of the Catholic immigrants to this country came here after 1900, these newly arriving people in the Cleveland area received scant attention from Bishop Farrelly. But like his predecessor Bishop Horstmann, Bishop Farrelly did continue to encourage the national parishes which had already been begun. He focused his attention primarily on the upwardly mobile children of the immigrants of the nineteenth century and carried on the work of acculturation which had already begun especially in the Irish and German communities.

It was during his episcopate that the First World War occurred, however, and much of his sensitivity with regard to the incoming European Catholics was dulled by the superpatriotic fervor which swept the country during the war. This was especially true after the United States declared war on the Central Powers, Germany and the Austro-Hungarian Empire. For peoples from these countries to seek to preserve their ethnicity was especially difficult during the war. Perhaps the Germans suffered the most. In their churches the German language sermons and devotions were done away with, so much so that today there is precious little preserved of the German culture in the older German

parishes. It was crucial to Bishop Farrelly that the Catholics of Cleveland be seen as loyal Americans. He therefore urged, although he did not order, German pastors to preach in English. He urged the use of English in the German schools with no consideration for the values in culture that the preservation of German might have represented. Strangely enough, the German pastors went along with this violence done to their culture, although they continued to lead private devotions and hear confessions in German to accommodate the needs of their people.

Most Rev. John P. Farrelly, Bishop of Cleveland.

For his part, Bishop Farrelly really never perceived this to be a problem. He himself came from Nashville, Tennessee, where there were only Catholics and Protestants. Nationality in Tennessee made little difference. Only religious affiliation made a difference. Farrelly lacked therefore any real sense of sympathy for the cultural needs of his newly arrived people and this lack of sympathy was accented by the partisan feelings generated in this country by the war.

When the war ended and the Central Powers were subjected to a stern and divisive peace which, in some cases, totally wiped out old and proud cultures (as was the case in Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia), Bishop Farrelly reflected no difference of opinion from the decisions of the men who formulated the Treaty of Versailles. So he gave little recognition to the Croatians, Slovenians, Slovaks and countless other peoples who had come to the United States and who found themselves without a homeland with which to identify in Europe. The result of all of this seems to have caused these peoples to see in Bishop Farrelly's failure to protest the policies of President Wilson as a calculated indifference which forced non-English speaking peoples into the territorial parishes, composed mostly of second and third generation Irish and Germans. These new Americans could do little about this situation other than to protest and to try to keep their parishes together, hoping for a more understanding bishop.

Bishop Joseph Schrembs

Bishop Farrelly died suddenly in Knoxville, Tennessee, in

February of 1921. The non-English speaking Catholics of Cleveland begged Rome to send as new bishop to the Diocese of Cleveland one who would give greater care to the preservation of their cultures and who would have a familiarity with the history of their various countries of origin. Rome, it would seem, responded at least in part to this plea and appointed to the vacant diocese Bishop Joseph Schrembs. His arrival in Cleveland on September 8, 1921, gave him occasion to verbalize what would be his policy in dealing with the continuing immigration to Cleveland from the war-torn countries of Europe. Schrembs, who was himself born in Germany but educated in the United States, urged upon all newcomers to the country and their descendants to adapt to their new environment, become citizens, and get involved in American life.

The immigrant who came to Cleveland after World War I posed a different problem than that which had faced Bishop Schrembs' predecessors who tried to deal with the nineteenth centuny immigrant. The post World War I immigrant often came to this country and to Cleveland with a profound sense of the social upheaval which followed the war in Europe. This was compounded by the fact we have noted earlier that many of the countries from which these immigrants came no longer existed because of the harsh peace of Versailles, and also because of the Communistic influence coming from the Russian Revolution of October, 1917, which touched directly or indirectly so many people from the countries of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. These new Clevelanders were frequently political exiles. They come to the United States harboring a hope rarely found in the immigrant of the last century. These new arrivals intended

to return to their homelands as soon as the political climate was favorable for them to do so. The fact is that very few of them ever did return since the situations they fled have not really changed but have often worsened in the intervening years. Schrembs, who knew Europe well and who was a realist, saw this. But he also wisely saw that the cultures and the languages of these post World War I immigrants could and should be preserved here. And he also saw that the Church was perhaps the most vital force in this effort.

Schrembs had a special fondness for the Germans in America, urging them to recapture their language and culture so abruptly taken from them during the war. In this, one would have to say he failed. The Germans in Cleveland, with few exceptions, had become assimilated into American life and Schrembs founded no new German parishes in Cleveland. None were needed. But he was more successful in helping the Germans in Germany. A great deal of diocesan charity was sent, mostly in the form of money, to that war-ravaged country in the 1920's.

Irish nationalism was rekindled in the diocese after the war as a result of the creation of the Irish Free State in 1921. In the 1920's Schrembs gave his support to movements to fund the Irish Free State, although he never sent diocesan money to aid this cause. In failing to do so he alienated many of Cleveland's Irish. In retrospect, one can easily see the loaic of his reasoning as he held back diocesan funds to support a violent political revolution in Ireland, but at the same time sending diocesan funds to help the needy in Germany. Still, he allowed money to be collected here for Ireland, an event to which history gives scant notice.

The bishop embarked on a different course with other non English speaking peoples in his diocese. He urged the older groups, particularly the Slovaks, to establish strong fraternal societies; he gave special care to the Italians, the Hungarians, the Slovenians, the Serbians, the Ukrainians, and the Lithuanians. He had reason to do so since these were the most recently immigrated peoples in Cleveland. For them the bishop began anew the processes inaugurated by Bishops Gilmour and Horstmann. Bishop Schrembs sincerely urged the establishment of the national parish once again to preserve the faith, language and culture of the new immigrants. At the same time, he continued to provide for these parishes pastors of the language and nationality of the congregation. But the bishop went one step further than his predecessors. He was very much aware of the necessity of welcoming the new immigrants to the diocese and of helping them find jobs and housing. To this purpose he established as an adjunct of the Catholic Charities the Catholic Immigrants' Relief Service, an agency of high professionalism which continues to function today and which has offered the resources of the Cleveland Church to thousands of immigrants who have come to this country since 1924.

It was Bishop Schrembs who applied the basic concept of the national parish to the black Catholics who were beginning to arrive in large numbers on Cleveland's East Side. For them, at their request, he established in 1922 the parish of Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament on East 79th Street near Quincy Avenue. This parish implied the concept of segregation and its very existence caused great controversy. Bishop Schrembs' reasoning was consistent with his policy regarding the national parishes

but it was not, it would seem, clearly thought through. He felt that black Catholics, like any other newly arrived cultural minority in Cleveland, needed time, perhaps one generation, before they might integrate with the territorial parishes within whose boundaries they were living. These territorial parishes, as we have already noted, were predominantly composed of upwardly mobile second generation Irish and German.

There was one difference between the black parish and the national parish and it was a crucial one. In the national parish the clergy and people were committed to the preservation of a European language and culture. This was done well within the context of faith. But in the black parish there were no black clergy; none could be found. As a consequence, white clergy, more often than not of Irish or German background, volunteered to work in the black parishes. But in doing so they learned nothing of black culture and incorporated none of the black culture into the liturgy. To them this culture must have seemed either too Protestant or too childlike. In any case, black culture was neither taken seriously nor was it absorbed. As a result the black parish, begun as a national parish, assumed the worship form of the Irish territorial parish. The blacks heard sermons in English and Mass in Latin. Nobody seemed to take black culture seriously. Not until 1961 was black music integrated into Catholic liturgy, but by that time there was nobody in the parishes to profit from it except black people. The whites had all fled to the suburbs. They missed some exciting liturgy and a real opportunity for exposure to another culture.

Such then was Bishop Schrembs' legacy to ethnicity of all forms

in Cleveland; it was full of ambiguities which reflected the chaotic times of his episcopate.

Bishop Edward Hoban

Schrembs' successor as Bishop of Cleveland was Edward F. Hoban. One would have to classify him as a modern Americanizer formed and directed by his mentor in Chicago, Cardinal George Mundelein. Bishop Hoban came to Cleveland from Rockford Illinois, in 1943. He had been bishop in Rockford since 1928, but his roots were in Chicago where he was ordained in 1903. He quickly captured the attention of Mundelein who made him his auxiliary bishop in 1921. Mundelein's policy in Chicago was much like that of Horstmann in Cleveland. Mundelein was a Propaganda student in Rome, recognized the value of all cultures and yet he wished ardently to make his priests thoroughly Americanist regardless of their ethnic background. But at the same time he attached great worth to the uniqueness of every nationality and appointed men from every ethnic group in Chicago to positions of responsibility in his administration. Bishop Hoban learned to respect these men with whom he worked closely and seemed blind to any nationalism in the Church. He brought this fresh vision to Cleveland at a time when he was already sixty-five years old.

Most Rev. Bishop Edward F. Hoban.

When Edward Hoban was installed at St. John Cathedral as Bishop Of Cleveland on January 21, 1944, he preached a sermon which utlined clearly the course he would follow with regard to ethnicity. He took for granted that all who knew him also knew he was the son of parents who had immigrated from Ireland. But at the same time, he also made it clear that in his administration he would favor no nationality, including his own. The best men would be appointed to his staff. The old Irish-German feuds were to be forgotten. It was the work of the building up of the Post World War II Church in the Cleveland Diocese that would enlist his concern.

Quickly he named a Pole, Fr. John Krol, who later became Archbishop of Philadelphia, as his chancellor. There then followed a whole series of clerical appointments that recognized that all Americans were equal in law and in the eyes of the new bishop. Nationality had nothing to do with these appointments; the bishop, true to his promise, chose the best men. Bishop Hoban visited Ireland and the birthplace of his parents there when he traveled to Europe and to Rome after the war, but he made it clear that these visits were personal to him. His sense of Irish ethnicity reached no further than his personal life.

As Bishop of Cleveland, Hoban took special interest in those who were displaced by the ravages of the war; he welcomed them to Cleveland and sent priests from his diocese to seek after the people languishing in government-built Displaced Persons camps, urging them to come to Cleveland to resettle. The people came. For them he built a new cluster of national parishes. Still he followed the pattern of his predecessors in urging these new Americans to seek to become American Catholics. To achieve this policy, Bishop Hoban added more staff to the Catholic Resettlement Bureau. This work continues to bear fruit in parishes like St. Vitus for Slovenians and St. Paul's at East 40th and St. Clair Street for Croatians.

There was one difference in the non-English speaking parishes Bishop Hoban encouraged or founded. They were to build schools, but, although ethnic culture might be urged, there was no question that the language of these schools was to be, in all classes, English. Older people, newly immigrated, could

continue their language in prayers, devotions and singing, but their children were to learn English.

Perhaps like no other Cleveland bishop, Edward Hoban grasped the meaning of ethnic culture. He approved and encouraged it. There was, however, no doubt in his mind that the children of these immigrants needed to assimilate with the American culture they were to merge with in the territorial parishes.

To all of this, Cleveland's Irish people seem to have given monumental support. Ireland had no post-war crisis of poverty for which aid was needed from abroad, hence the Irish gave generously and in the name of Christian charity to the needy of Europe. This was primarily done through the Catholic Charities Bureau.

Bishop Hoban healed what was left of the national strife in the Cleveland Diocese by urging all patriotic Cleveland Catholics to come to the aid of their needy co-religionists in Europe. By the time he died in 1966, one heard very little of nationalities competing with one another. Whatever sense of domination of church affairs the Irish Catholics in Cleveland might have sought earlier in the history of the diocese, it had all but disappeared by the time of Bishop Hoban's death.

This is not to say, however, as we have noted earlier, that Irish ethnicity had died among the Irish by 1966. It simply had begun to manifest itself in areas other than those closely associated with the Roman Catholic Church with which it had once been so strongly identified and which had so profoundly shaped it. We have already pointed out that in the decade of the 1960's, the rise

of black consciousness gave impetus to a corresponding rise in ethnic consciousness among the other racial and ethnic groups in Cleveland. Loyalty to the Church had produced a special kind of ethnicity among Cleveland's Irish on the East and West Sides in the immigrant and post-immigrant period. With the end of the immigrant and post-immigrant period, the Church no longer plays the central role it once did in Irish ethnicity. This does not seem to indicate that in the continuing Irish ethnic consciousness in this city the Church no longer plays any part at all. In fact, the contrary seems to be true. The Irish who recall their heritage, and indeed those who do not, retain, it would seem, a loyalty to their church and to their parishes . But new patterns of Irish ethnicity are emerging. Where they will lead we cannot speculate with much hope of accuracy.

What does seem certain is that there are no longer any Irish parishes nor Irish neighborhoods. Thus it must follow that Irish ethnicity will manifest itself In social, familial, cultural and organizational events. Ethnicity, including Irish ethnicity, has often been narrow, arrogant and, even self-serving in Cleveland over the last one hundred years. One would hope that these faults would disappear as ethnicity seeks to lead to some sort of American identity. This American identity has not yet emerged fully. When it does, it hopefully will be built on a respect for the diversity of our cultures and traditions and the preservation of what is of worth in each of them.

Surely such a search for the worth of the Irish heritage is of specific value for the Cleveland Irish. It should be clear that enormous research is necessary to complete this search. And

it would seem that this research must be done by the young scholars of today who have barely tapped the reserve of meaning which lies yet to be revealed in the Irish experience of the past in this city. One cannot doubt that this research will be done and that it will, without either arrogance or apology, be made available to all who might inquire in the future about the meaning of the heritage of Cleveland's Irish.

Chapter 11: Relationships Between Cleveland Irish and Irish Who Came to Cleveland From Other American Cities

Sociologists and scientists of many other disciplines tell us that our society today is a mobile society. Without going into detail to describe that mobility, it seems safe to say that many of the descendants of the immigrant Irish who came to Cleveland no longer live in this area. The other side of the coin appears to be just as true: there are many people of Irish origin who live in this city today whose ancestors and consequent unique Irish experiences are to be found in cities other than Cleveland. One might honestly wonder how these Irish from other parts of the country have blended with the Cleveland Irish, and how displaced Cleveland Irish have blended with the Irish of other major U.S. urban centers.

We simply have no real data which might speak to the second group mentioned above. We do have some data about the first group, that is to say, the people of Irish origin who have come here from other cities in the United States. Concerning them we find two somewhat conflicting historical and contemporary developments.

As we observed earlier, Irish settlement In Cleveland at the time of the 1845-53 Famine took place because those who came here first could find no place for themselves in the cities of the Eastern Seaboard. This was due to the lack of job opportunity and to the basic poverty of all the Famine Irish. The Famine Irish in New York, for example, were hardly in any position to help the late arriving Irish victims of that same Famine. All they could advise was to go West. Cleveland's Famine Irish came here because they accepted that advice. Twenty years later, in 1878 when the second wave of Famine Irish immigrants came to this country, they never even bothered to stop in New York; some did stop here. Many more were on their way West, going both by train and boat to settle lands which the government had made available to them in Illinois, Wisconsin and Minnesota. As they passed through Cleveland, their countrymen who had been here no more than one or two decades met their trains and boats, fed and clothed their westward bound countrymen and did all they could to aid them in their journey.

One thing these Cleveland Irish did not do, however, was to urge these westward bound immigrants to stop or settle in Cleveland. It would seem that there was some selfishness in this: jobs on the docks and in the mills were simply too scarce. For the

1878 immigrants (called Connemara immigrants, signifying that they had had as their place of origin the counties in the West of Ireland), the Cleveland Irish showed great good will but little more. Some Connemara immigrants did stop and take up residence in Cleveland, usually on the West Side, and they formed the nucleus of St. Colman parish. But as we have already seen, they were the poorest of the poor. They lived in hovels on the outskirts of the city and they were often regarded by the Irish of the Famine time as the offscourings of their own country, sometimes lumped together with the Poles and Jews who began to come here at about the same time, in the early 1880's.

At a later time the Cleveland Irish showed a great deal more hospitality to their immigrating fellow countrymen. This was particularly true of the Irish who came here after World War I and the concomitant Irish Revolution. By the 1920's Cleveland's 19th Century Irish immigrants felt sufficiently secure in the United States to freely refer to newly arriving Irish with some good humor as "greenhorns." Nevertheless, the 1920 "greenhorns" received a great deal more help — especially temporary housing in the homes of earlier arrivals and aid from them in finding jobs — than did the 1878 Connemara immigrants. It would seem that this has been the case ever since.

Today immigration quotas limit the numbers of Irish who may immigrate to the United States, and their number is but a fraction of what it was one hundred years ago. But when they do come here they are welcomed and helped and they seem to fit quickly into American life. Irish immigrants today are literate; they are generally skilled in some sort of craft or trade. They continue to

speak the language of our country and are products of a country vastly improved industrially over what it was in the middle of the last century.

Oddly enough, the Cleveland Irish do not show the same hospitality to American-born Irish who come here from other cities in the United States. Indeed, these new Clevelanders often are far more lonely than are their countrymen who come here directly from Ireland. One is inclined to look to the loss of the sense of neighborhood, and often of parish, to explain this phenomenon. A person of Irish background who comes here from New York or Chicago is treated as a welcomed newcomer by the Cleveland Irish, but he becomes one with them only if he was perhaps a member of an Irish fraternal association in New York or Chicago or wherever. Otherwise he is regarded basically as an outsider. One suspects that all of this might indicate that there is still a clannishness existing among the Cleveland Irish which is as hard to break into as it ever was.

Chapter 12: Irish Organizations in Cleveland

The penchant of the Irish to form and develop various esoteric and often secret societies, rooted in the experience of the Irish in Ireland struggling with the English, appears to have been carried to this country by the Irish immigrants of the last century. These societies were generally oath-bound to secrecy, mostly to guard against the age-old Irish fear of the informer. Usually they were harmless enough, but not always was this so, as we shall see. These societies usually fell into two classes. The first were the radical militants, such as those who formed *The Ancient Order of Hibernians.* The A.O.H. dates back to the 1830's in Ireland and was organized to fight against landlords. It had as its purpose the ultimate freedom of Ireland from Great Britain. It failed in Ireland to achieve its purposes. During the 19th Century in this country its headquarters was in Pittsburgh, where it purported to be a social and insurance benevolent organization. It had, however, a political arm which also had its origin in Ireland called the Molly Maguires. The Molly Maguires nearly

destroyed the reputation of the Irish in the United States by their murderous doings in the coal fields in Pennsylvania in the early 1870's. For them the issue was justice for the miners, most of whom were Irish. The enemy was the Reading Railroad which owned the mines. The railroad refused to acknowledge a union of miners; it shut down the mines when the miners, seeking to unionize for higher wages, went on strike. The Reading Railroad infiltrated the Molly Maguires with a Pinkerton Detective posing as a member of the oath-bound secret society who revealed the whole internal structure of the striking miners to a court of law. Executions followed; the force of the striking miners was completely destroyed and the Irish in the coal fields sunk to a level of existence bordering on despair.

This lesson was not lost on the Cleveland Irish who were, in most cases, working under somewhat similar conditions in the steel mills and on the ore docks of the city. It was often alleged, but never proved, that the Molly Maguires were a revolutionary arm of the *Ancient Order of Hibernians*. Membership in the A.O.H. involved large numbers of Cleveland Irish. The organization functioned in Cleveland, viewed with great suspicion but never proscribed by Bishop Richard Gilmour through the last quarter of the last century. By the turn of the century, the A.O.H. was no longer headquartered in Pittsburgh; the social and benevolent aspects of the organization came to be regarded as quaint but respectable, and today one finds its membership loyal but relatively inactive in the nation and in Cleveland. Often they are the best-dressed contingent in the St. Patrick's Day Parade. Their possible connection with the Molly Maguires or or the subsequent labor efforts of Samuel Gompers

and the origins of the American Federation of Labor have been forgotten, save for the research of Dr. Harry Browne done in the late 1940's.

A second organization is *The West Side Irish American Club*. This group, to which reference has already been made, is a purely local organization. It flourishes at its headquarters at West 93rd and Madison Avenue where social events seem to go on nearly every night of the year. By its very title one can guess that its membership is drawn almost exclusively from the Irish of the West Side, although recently the young people of Irish origin who live on the East Side and in its suburbs may frequently be seen at the dances the Club sponsors. One wonders if their presence at such events is not a sign of their desire to rediscover their ethnic roots forgotten by their parents. In any case, the West Side I.A., as it is called by its habituees, flourishes at many different levels and recently has purchased a large tract of land in Middleburg Heights for a new clubhouse, picnic grounds, museum, and a lake for swimming. The Club had little difficulty raising over one million dollars to finance the enterprise.

There are innumerable other smaller Irish societies meeting in Cleveland today. Most have their roots in rather recent times and thier functions range from a once-a-year participation in the St. Patrick's Day Parade and the ceremonies that occur that day, to meetings organized on a regular basis for the study of Irish and Anglo-Irish literature. It would be a mistake to take these groups lightly, and yet one wonders why they have come into existence if not to reflect the growing resurgence in interest in Irish ethnicity by the Irish of this city. One can only guess what

their direction will be. Were they to become political, it could well be that they might quickly emulate similar organizations found in abundance in modern American Jewish society. Like their Jewish counterparts, they see nothing in America which would attract their loyalty to the degree that their Irish heritage does. The case is especially true if this loyalty makes' them perceive themselves as Irish Catholics at a time when, unlike the time of their grandparents when the words Irish Catholic constituted a barrier to upward mobility, the words Irish Catholic constitute a position of identity in a world devoid of any other comparable form of identity. Andrew Greeley calls later day American Irish Catholics "communal Catholics." One suspects that his insights are correct and that Cleveland's Irish population is showing a rapid shift to a new and open-ended form of Irish ethnicity hitherto unseen in their history.

Final Note

Greeley observes that the recent rise of ethnic consciousness among most ethnic Catholic groups in the U.S. seems to put to an end, at least for the present, the melting pot theory so long accepted as a fact in American self-understanding. Indeed, if the melting pot has not yet happened in this country, then one suspects there is a reawakening of a new form of ethnic consciousness, especially among the young and about which we have already made note, that bespeaks an event of social significance of extraordinary proportions. If each ethnic group is suddenly pausing in its assimilation of its own social and cultural experience in the United States, if the poignant impact of Alexander Haley's Roots upon black people as well as white

people is as massive as the critics tell us it has been, if each ethnic and racial group in this country is finding anew the richness of its values and culture through a rediscovery of its all but forgotten history, if "truths" which these groups accepted as given when they really were not all that true, one would be forced to conclude that the data is not at all in. Nor has it been even researched. Until it is, the melting pot theory will have to wait.

Appendix A: Masters of Language

Masters of Language

For a small and poor nation, Ireland has produced an astonishing number of the world's greatest writers. Many of the leading literary figures before 1900 were Irish or of Irish background: Jonathan Swift, Oliver Goldsmith, George Berkeley, William Coongreve, Oscar Wilde. Then, in the next 25 years came a spectacular outburst of writing talent from Ireland that gave the English literature of the 20th century its best dramatists; George Bernard Shaw, John Millington Synge and Sean O'Casey; its best poet, William Butler Yeates; and the giant of modern novelists, James Joyce, who has been described as the greatest master of the English language since Milton. This sparkling array of Irish authors, which also included George Moore, Æ (George Russell), James Stephens, Liam O'Flaherty, Lady Augusta Gregory and Frank O'Connor, emerged suddenly to a position of leadership in the literary world of the new century

because they filled a sorely felt need of their time. In the 1890's, literature generally was divided into two extreme schools of writing. One was represented by the murky, romantic lyricism of the French poet Stephane Mallarme and the dramas of Oscar Wilde, ornate, artificial and detached from the troublesome problems of life. At the opposite, distant pole was the realism of the plays of Henrik Ibsen of Norway and the naturalism of the novels of Émile Zola of France. There was a yearning for writing that would close the wide gap between these two extremes, for the creation of poems, plays, and novels dealing with reality and real people, but in rich and colorful language.

The Irish writers were well-equipped to satisfy that need. They had poetry; they had humor; they had a hard realism. They reflected the hopes and dreams of common people because their literary movement was linked chronologically and spiritually to the rise of Irish nationalism in the rebellion against Britain. Even the writers themselves were bound up in the nationalist cause. James Joyce's first published piece of writing, composed when he was only nine years old, was *Et Tu, Healy*, a diatribe against a political betrayer of Charles Stewart Parnell, the Home Rule leader. A Parnell admirer, Joyce's father had it privately printed and proudly handed it out to his friends. William Butler Yeates wrote with deep feeling about the Easter Week uprising of 1916. Two poets prominent in the literary movement, Padraic Pearse and Joseph Mary Plunkett, were executed for their leading parts in that revolt. Sean O'Casey was one of the original organizers of the Irish Citizen Army.

Part of the nationalist movement was the Gaelic League,

founded in 1893 to revive Ireland interest in the Gaelic language and the forgotten native literature of the middle ages. This patriotic effort had far-reaching effects. The unearthing of the heroic epics composed by ancient Celtic poets stirred in Yeats, the real father of the modern Irish literary revival, a new appreciation of his native country's heritage, and turned film back to Ireland from the studies of William Blake and theosophy that he had been pursuing in London. Yeats took another look at the Sligo country, where he had spent much of his youth, and visited the bleak Aran islands off the western coast of Ireland. He became engrossed in the possibilities for literary material in the dignity, colorful language, and rough struggle for existence of the peasants in the west of Ireland. In 1896, Yeats came across Synge studying Racine and other French dramatists in Paris, the accepted course in that period for young men of literary ambitions. He convinced Synge that there was more to be gained from a study of people on the Aran islands than from reading in French libraries.

Irish Authors' Names

Below is a guide to the pronunciation of the names of some of the more prominent Irish authors who are mentioned in this chapter.

Brendan Behan: Brendan "Bee'-an"
Sean O'Casey: "Shawn" O'Casey
Sean O'Faolain: "Shawn O'Fway-Lawn"
Padraic Pears: "Paw-drick Pierce"

John Millington Synge: John Millington "Sing"
William Butler Yeats: William Butler "Yates"

"That meeting of two Irishmen in Paris, agreeing that the life of those most remote and barren Aran Islands was the full material for literature, is a parable that marks the final stage of growth of the Irish mind," as the author Shawn O'Faolain wrote later. "It was an entirely new thing for men to realize the full and complete dignity of the simplest life of the simplest people. Once they had acknowledged that then they were free to do anything they liked with it in literature, treat in naturalistically, fantastically, romantically, see it in any light they chose. They had conquered their material by accepting it."

Out of this realization and acceptance came such plays as Synge's *Riders to the Sea* and *The Playboy of the Western World*, both first produced at the Abbey Theater in Dublin. The Abbey, in which Yeats and Lady Augusta Gregory were important figures, brought a fresh breath of real life to theater audiences long jakled by the fashionable comedies of Wilde, the problem plans of Sir Arthur Wing Pinero, and the flashy melodramas of Dion Boucicault, an Irishman who had enjoyed success in London. The extraordinary freshness, as George Bernard Shaw pointed out approvingly, was due to Yeats and Lady Gregory's holding ruthlessly "to my formula of making the audience believe that real things were happening to real people."

Shaw himself, who was furiously busy in London writing plays, was no slavish follower of his own "formula." His characters speak with a superhuman articulateness and wit, and they are

sometimes more embodiments of an idea than believable human beings. But the ideas, frequently paradoxical and outrageous, flash and crackle, and the characters carom off one another with such vigor that they frequently seem more than alive. Especially in such turn-of-the-century plays as *Candida*, *Arms and the Alan*, *Caesar and Cleopatra* and *Man and Superman*, Shaw performed the extraordinary feat of turning "problem plays" — dramas designed to preach one of the author's social doctrines — into delightful and satisfying theater. Starting with an idea, such as the notion that munitions makers do the world more good by providing employment than the Salvation Army can ever do with Christian uplift and soup kitchens, Shaw so effectively illustrated the idea with vivid characters and lively scenes in *Major Barbara* that he succeeded in turning propaganda into something very close to great art.

Much of the attraction of the Abbey Theater and its great early days between 1904 and the 1920s was attributed to Yeats's stern dictum, gladly followed by such dramatists as Synge and O'Casey, that the most realistic plays should employ the magic language of poetry. Synge wrote in an introduction to *The Playboy of the Western World* his disapproval of the practice of Ibsen and Zola of dealing with the reality "in joyless and pallid words." Every speech in a good play, he contended, should be as fully flavored as a nut or an apple.

To Yeats, the theater was an important medium of artistic expression, but his own main function as a writer was in lyric poetry. His technical skill and his talent for combining controversial ease of expression and noble emotion within the

strict framework of rhyme and poetic form was so rare that many modern critics now consider him not only the greatest poet of the century but perhaps the greatest since Elizabethan times.

Unlike such lyric poets as John Keats or Dylan Thomas, who died young, or as Wordsworth, who faded in his middle years, Yeats improved with age. Much of his best work was written in his fifties and sixties. A woolly romanticist in his youth, he moved on to stern, symbolic realism dealing with "the chaos of the world," full of powerful intensity and chilling images, and far more exalted than the pleasant verse with which some readers associate him:

> I will arise and go now, and go to Innisfree,
> And a small cabin build there, of clay and wattles made;
> Nine bean-rows will I have there, a hive for the honey-bee,
> And live alone in the bee-loud glade.

Such lyricism stands in strong contrast to lines like these, composed in later life:

> Turning and turning in the widening gyre
> The falcon cannot hear the falconer;
> Things fall apart; the center cannot hold;
> Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
> The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
> The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
> The best lack all conviction, while the worst
> Are fall of passionate intensity.

Yeats and Synge, like Shaw, Lady Gregory and George Moore, were from upper-class Anglo-Irish protestant families. Before the turn of the century, most Catholics in Ireland were too underprivileged culturally, as well as economically and socially, to nourish an interest in the creative arts. The rise of James Joyce to literary greatness from an impoverished Catholic home in Dublin is a striking example of inborn genius triumphing over harsh and discouraging environment, almost like a rose blooming from an ash heap.

As a youngster, Joyce was not exposed with his family or at school to any intellectual stimulation that might have urged him to become a precedent-breaking experimenter in modern writing. His mother was a devoutly religious woman with no consuming interest in intellectual matters; his father was a music lover and witty raconteur. At the local Jesuit schools, Joyce was taught by conventional and dogmatic classicists. Whatever knowledge he had of contemporary writing was gained from unguided reading on his own.

Yet when he was 18 years old, an obscure student at University College Dublin, Joyce read Henrik Ibsen's new play, *When We Dead Awaken*, in its original Norwegian text (he had taught himself the language just to be able to read Ibsen), and wrote a long critical essay on the play which was immediately accepted by the *Fortnightly Review*, the most important literary periodical in London at that time. Ibsen was so impressed by the understanding of work shown in the article — rare in the English-speaking world of 1900 — that he wrote a message of

gratitude to his English translator William Archer, which Archer passed on to Joyce.

Like Shaw before him, and many young writers after him, Joyce left Ireland at an early age to spend the rest of his life in self-exile abroad. The atmosphere of Dublin 60 years ago, much more narrowly provincial and stiffly conventional than it is nowadays, was stifling to a highly individual and nonconforming artist. Explaining his own departure from Dublin at the age of 20, Shaw once wrote, "Every Irishman who felt that his business in life was on the higher planes of the cultural professions felt that he must have a metropolitan domicile and an international culture: that is, he felt that his first business was to get out of Ireland."

Shaw's Irish upbringing and Irish point of view is often cited, however, as a main factor behind his success as a London critic and dramatist. Joyce's Irishness is an even more dominating force in his literary work because in all four of the books that made him famous — *Dubliners*, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, *Ulysses* and *Finnigans Wake* — he never left Ireland. Although he lived in France, Austria and Switzerland during his creative years, all of his stories and novels take place in the Dublin of his youth.

Joyce bitterly resented the banning of his books in Dublin during his lifetime, a ban that has recently expired. His first book, *Dubliners*, a collection of ironic and acid short stories, was rejected by Irish printers because they feared its references to living Dubliners and believed that one disrespectful mention of King Edward VII might cause legal repercussions. *Ulysses* and

A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man were ruled out on the grounds of immorality and impiety. Never formally censored, *Finnigans Wake* was too difficult to be a popular book in Ireland or in any country. After the suppression of *Dubliners*, Joyce wrote a long protest in doggerel, which he called *Gas From a Burner*, describing Ireland as:

> This lovely land that always sent
> Writers and artists to banishment
> And in the spirit of Irish fun
> Betrayed her own leaders, one by one.
> 'Twas Irish humor, wet and dry,
> Flung quicklime into Parnell's eye…
> O Ireland my first and only love
> Where Christ and Cesar are hand and glove!

For all his indignation, Joyce remained obsessed with Ireland until his death in Zürich in 1941; he eagerly begged for its latest news and gossip and looked back on Dublin with admiration. In a letter to his brother, Stanislaus Joyce, he once expressed regret that he had not written in *Dubliners* of the attractiveness of his native city. "I have not been just to its beauty," Joyce said of Dublin, "for it is more beautiful naturally, in my opinion, than what I have seen of England, Switzerland, France, Austria and Italy."

Joyce's writings are often assumed to be to obscure for an average reader. Actually, the clear and hard-hitting stories in *Dubliners* are easier to read than much of the fiction now published in *The New Yorker*. *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, Joyce's account of his own soul-struggle as he

was seeking his course in life as an independent artist, is not a difficult book. He begins to navigate more murky and puzzling depths in *Ulysses* when he explores the streams of his characters' conscious thinking, and then goes into still deeper waters in *Finnigans Wake*, a probing of one man's unconscious and sleeping mind.

In *Ulysses*, which he modeled after Homer's *Odyssey*, Joyce tells a simple story of one day in the lives of two men in Dublin. The day happens to be June 16, 1904. One of the two men, Stephen Dedalus, is Joyce himself at the age of 22, after the death of his mother summoned him from a literary exile in Paris. He is at loose ends, isolated, alone, seeking a father. The other man, Leopold Blume, a Jew and therefore an alien among the Irish, is the wandering Odysseus, or Ulysses, not in search of home, as in the *Odyssey*, but of a son. A third prominent character is Bloom's lusty wife, Molly. Stephen is the intellect, Blume is Everyman, both sensual and thoughtful, and Molly is the flesh and the earth.

The book follows Stephen and Bloom along their separate ways through the day, showing not only their encounters with a great gallery of other colorful, comic and tragic characters, but their innermost fleeting thoughts and impressions. Joyce divides their travels into a series of episodes, each designed after a scene in *The Odyssey* and each writte in a different style. The book includes parodies, allegories, dialogues, stream of consciousness soliloquies, symbolism and catechtical questions and answers. The two men meet at night and a Dublin hospital and proceed to a brothel. Bloom takes Stephen to his home for a cup of cocoa;

the son finds the father and the father finds the son. Discovering Bloom — Everyman — Stephen discovers mankind and sees and understands what he himself is going to be, a mature man, no longer imprisoned in a cell of childish ego and intellectual pride.

The Famous Trial of *Ulysses*

James Joyce's *Ulysses* has a special significance for Americans, for it was the subject of one of the most celebrated court decisions in U.S. jurisprudence, the Woolsey Decision of 1933. Shortly after the novel was published in Paris in 1922, it was banned in England and America. In 1933 a U.S. publishing house determined to bring the matter into court and, if successful, to publish an American edition. The decision, rendered by Judge John M. Woolsey, is a masterpiece of brevity and cool logic, and has remained a cornerstone of subsequent rulings on censorship. Woolsey said, in effect, that even though there are repeated frank references to sex and repeated use of four-letter words in *Ulysses*, this normally offensive material is there as a necessary part of Joyce's "sincere and serious" attempt to render fully and honestly the way people act and think.

Unlike other novelists, Joyce does not use the passage of time to show changes and development of characters. Like a dramatist or a screenwriter, he presents his people and scenes in the present tense. The men and women in *Ulysses*, like the

characters of Shakespeare, come before the readers fully formed and bursting with life, and the sounds, smells and feelings of the June day in the Dublin of 1904 rise from the printed pages with the reality of a color movie. Because it uses words to reproduce visual and audible as well as mental sensations, *Ulysses* baffles the quick and casual reader, but many students of literature agree that it is probably the greatest book of our time.

Joyce's last work, *Finnigans Wake*, is harder going because it takes up where *Ulysses* leaves off and tries to follow a man's mind through a night of sleep. Just as our unconscious mind makes no attempt to explain its jumbled images and thoughts, Joyce leaves the meanings of his tangled dreamworld's words and phrases undeciphered. The title of the book itself is a play on words; one of its interpretations is "Finn Again Awake," meaning that the heroism of Finn MaCool should return to Ireland.

For all its difficult shaded meanings and verbal puzzles, *Finnigans Wake* is a tour de force of psychological insight expressed in apoetic prose that continually fascinates creative writers. Thronton Wilder, the American playwright and novelist, devotes part of every day to study of the book. The famed Welsh lyric poet, Dylan Thomas, replied when asked what he thought of *Finnegans Wake*, "Why read anything else?"

Ireland today is no longer the center of literature that it was when Yeats, Synge and Joyce were producing a body of writing which, in the opinion of Harry Leven, the distinguished Harvard professor of comparative literature, defies comparison for intermingling of imaginative expression and closeness to

familiar experience without going back to the Elizabethans. Sean O'Casey, the self-styled "Green Cow" whose *Juno and the Paycock* and *The Plow and the Stars* were among the most powerful plays produced by Yeats in the old Abbey Theatre, has been living and writing in England for many years. The best-known Irish prose writers still close to the Irish scene are Frank O'Connor in Sean O'Faolain, versatile men of letters who are both regarded as outstanding short story creators.

George Bernard Shaw

James Joyce

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Appendix B

The Volume of Overseas Emigration

Year[1]	Irish Emigration to United States (1,000s)	% of Annual Emigration	Irish Emigration to British North America (1,000s)	% of Annual Emigration	Irish Emigration to Australia (1,000s)	% of Annua Emigra
1841	12	70.4	2	10.7	3	18.8
1842	49	55.9	39	44.0	1	1.1
1843	23	62.4	14	36.2	0.5	1.4
1844	37	68.6	16	30.4	5	1.0
1845	50	66.9	25	23.0		
1846	68	64.2	38	35.8		
1847	117	54.3	97	45.2	1	0.5
1848	154	86.2	23	13.8	2	1.0
1849	177	82.4	31	14.3	7	3.3
1850	181	86.4	24	11.7	4	1.9
1851	216	86.3	29	11.8	5	1.9
1852	193	81.4	22	9.8	6	2.8
1853	157	81.5	22	11.6	13	6.6
1854	111	73.9	23	15.3	16	10.8
1855	57	72.4	6	7.9	16	19.6
Totals (1,000s) and Average	1,601	76.7	412	19.7	75	3.6

1. From July 30th of that year only.

Note — These statistics are taken from the Census of Ireland, 1951, part vi, p. iv. They almost cetainly fall short of the true totals, though the margin of error may not be very great. No allowance was made for stowaways, illegal embarkations or illegal sailing, although there are many references to these practices. Moreover, the returns assume that only 90% of the emigration from Liverpool (by far the most important of the embarkation ports) was Irish in origin. This was a distinct underestimate for the years 1845-50, though it may have been an onverestimate for the years 1852-5, when the German emigration from Liverpool appears to have been considerable. We should note, too, that no account was taken of Irish emigration form the Clyde until 1850, despite the practice of Ulster and North Connacht emigrants of embarking at Glasgow or Greenock. To allow for these ommissions we should perhaps add something like 5% to the annual totals.

10^{th} rep. C.L.E.C., 5, {1204}, H.C. 1850 xxiii; 11^{th} rep. C.L.E.C., 1, {1383}, H.C. 1851 xxii.

Ireland's Population Size From the Census of 1821 to the Census of 1971

Year	Population of the Twenty-Six Counties of the Republic of Ireland in Thousands	Percentage of Change in Preceding Ten-Year Period	Population of all Thirty-Two Counties of Ireland in Thousands
1821	5,421		6,802
1831	6,193	+41.2	7,767
1841	6,529	+5.4	8,175
1851	5,112	-21.7	
1861	4,402	-13.9	5,798
1871	4,053	-7.9	
1881	3,870	-4.5	5,175
1891	3,469	-10.4	
1901	3,222	-7.1	4,450
1916	3,140	-2.5	
1926	2,972	-5.4	4,220
1936	2,968	-0.1	
1946	2,955	-0.4	4,332
1951	2,961	-0.2	
1961	2,818	-4.8	4,243
1971	2,881	+2.2	

Source: Robert E. Kennedy, Jr., "Irish Emigration, Marriage, and

Fertility" (PhD Dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 1967), p. 4; and *The Census of Population*, 1971, Preliminary Report.

Annual Irish Immigration to the United States, 1831-1860

Year	Number of Immigrants
1831	5,772
1832	12,436
1833	8,648
1834	24,474
1835	20,927
1836	30,578
1837	28,508
1838	12,645
1839	23,963
1840	39,430
1841	37,772
1842	51,342
1843	19,670
1844	33,490
1845	44,821
1846	51,752
1847	105,536
1848	112,934
1849	159,398
1850	164,004
1851	221,253
1852	159,548
1853	162,649

1854	101,606
1855	49,627
1856	54,349
1857	54,361
1858	26,873
1859	35,216

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Historical Statistics of the United States: Colonial Times to 1957*, p. 57.

Irish Immigration to the United States by Decade, 1820-1970

Year	Number of Immigrants	Percentage of Total Immigrants to United States during Decade
1820-1830	54,338	35.8
1831-1840	207,381	34.6
1841-1850	780,719	45.6
1851-1860	914,109	35.2
1861-1870	435,998	18.6
1871-1880	655,482	12.5
1881-1900	388,416	10.5
1901-1910	388,977	4.4
1911-1920	146,131	2.5
1921-1930	220,591	5.4
1931-1940	13,167	2.5
1941-1950	27,503	2.6
1951-1960	57,332	2.3
1961-1970	37,461	1.1
Total, 1820-1970	4,764,476	10.4

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Historical Statistics of the United States: Colonial Times to 1957*, (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1960),

pp. 56-57, and *Statistical Abstract of the United States: 1971* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1971), p. 92.

Sources

Seldom is refrence made in this book to source materials. For those who wish to know, the authors have consulted: Cleveland Public Library, Western Reserve Historical Society, Archives of the Catholic Diocese of Cleveland, Archives of the Cleveland Plain Dealer, countless interviews with Irish immigrants and their children (the contents of which are in the possession of the authors). Andrew Greeley's books "Most Distressful People" and "The American Catholic – A Social Portrait" have been given special attention.

N. J. C. and W. F. H.