

Barquilla de la Santa Maria

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THE ANTE-POTATO FAMINE IRISH-CATHOLICS OF COLUMBUS by Donald M. Schlegel

Celebration of St. Patrick

This March 17 marks the fifteen-hundredth anniversary of the traditional date of the passing of St. Patrick, Apostle of Ireland, to his judgement and reward in the next life. In Ireland, there will be no official celebration of this one-and-a-half millennial date, for the Irish government, on the basis of the then-current studies of many of its scholars, celebrated the event in 1962. However, the very long article by Professor Binchey, which appeared in Studia Hibernica Number 2, issued at the time, shows convincingly that there was no basis for the earlier date. And for us, another reason to celebrate the year 493 rather than 462 is that the Catholic Record Society of the Diocese of Columbus did not exist in 1962, but is flourishing now.

The remarkable accomplishment that the Holy Spirit worked through St. Patrick in those early days was described by the great Catholic historian Hilaire Belloc in the early years of this century in his work, Europe and the Faith (1), in these words:

Ireland "was not compelled to the Christian culture, as were the German barbarians of the Continent, by arms. No Charlemagne with his Gallic armies forced it tardily to accept baptism. It was not savage like the Germans; it was therefore under no necessity to go to school. It was not a morass of shifting tribes; it was a nation. But in a most exceptional fashion, though already possessed, and perhaps because so possessed, of a high pagan culture of its own, it accepted within the lifetime of a man, and by spiritual influences alone, the whole spirit of the Creed. The civilization of the Roman West was accepted by Ireland, not as a command nor as an influence, but as a discovery." (page 169)

Of the significance of this conversion, Belloc has the following to say, in reference to the loss of Britain to the Faith through the effects of the 'Reformation':

"Against the loss of Britain, which had been a Roman province, the Faith, when the smoke of battle cleared off, could discover the astonishing loyalty of Ireland. And over against



1500 Years

this exceptional province -- Britain -- now lost to the Faith, lay an equally exceptional and unique outer part which had never been a Roman province, yet which now remained true to the tradition of Roman men; it balanced the map like a counterweight. The efforts to destroy the Faith in Ireland have exceeded in violence, persistence, and cruelty any persecution in any part or time of the world. They have failed. As I cannot explain why they have failed, so I shall not attempt to explain how and why the Faith in Ireland was saved when the Faith in Britain went under. I do not believe it capable of an historic explanation. It seems to me a phenomenon essentially miraculous in character, not generally attached (as are all historic phenomena) to the general and divine purpose that governs our large political events, but directly and specially attached. It is of great significance; how great, men will be able to see many years hence when another definite battle is joined between the forces of the Church and her opponents. For the Irish race alone of all Europe has maintained a perfect integrity and has kept serene, without internal reactions and without their consequent disturbances, the soul of Europe which is the Catholic Church." (page 181)

The significance of the faith of the Irish nation may yet be seen in our own day. Ireland, as witness the latest decision of its electorate, retains the respect for human life demanded by the Faith. It may again, as in the ninth century, provide the laborers for the re-evangelization of Europe being called for by the Holy Father.

It is to this spirit and purpose that the Irish immigrants who are the subject of this research, who came to Columbus in the nineteenth century, were heir. There were many early inhabitants of Franklinton and Columbus whose names make obvious their Irish ancestry, but we are not concerned with those who arrived here before the early 1830s. The Sullivants of Franklinton obviously were descended from the O'Sullivan kings of Munster. Colonel William Dogherty and his family undoubtedly could claim as ancestor O'Dogherty of Inishowen. The colorful Squire Shields, who preached his Methodism in his upstairs room over the old Market house on West State Street was a native of Ireland, and there are other obvious examples, such as the O'Harras of Franklinton. These are not the subject of our search, for they, or their ancestors, had lost the fullness of the Faith brought and taught to Ireland by the humble St. Patrick.

The Present Project

The purpose of the present research has been to identify and present some of the story and spirit of those Irish who came to Columbus before the Potato Famine, and, as said of Bishop Hartley's parents (who came over slightly later), who had the Catholic Faith ingrained in their hearts and souls. Their Faith was not only an intellectual object but very much a way of life.

Testimony that the Irish immigrants to America before the famine were still of the spirit identified by Belloc can be found. For example, Rev. Peter H. Lemcke, O.S.B., a German priest who came to western Pennsylvania in the 1830s and who was biographer of Prince/priest Demitrius Gallitzin, said of the Irish, "You will look in vain for their equals in hospitality, a natural candor and cordiality, and an unbounded respect for the priesthood, indeed, for everything that in any way has to do with their ancient faith." (2) Another example is found in the work of William H. Lecky. Though not in sympathy with the Catholic Faith or Church, in his History of Ireland in the Eighteenth Century Lecky says that the Irish Catholics made the Church "to

which they belonged the real centre of their affections and their enthusiams. It made the Irish people the most fervent Catholics in Europe." (3)

The potato blight first appeared in Ireland in September of 1845, so the research has been limited to those who were in Columbus by 1846. Two exceptions were allowed, for two families who were in Ohio by 1840 but did not move to Columbus until the late 1840s. Any family appearing as late as the 1845 Columbus directory was considered in the research.

In preparing for a talk on the Early German Catholics of Columbus some years ago (see the Bulletin, Vol. VII, No. 7, August, 1981), the author was able to form the research and the talk around the various German societies, such as the young men's society, the ladies' sodality, the German military companies, and other organizations. The Irish had none of these in the early days. The lack of such organizations appears to have had two reasons. First, before the famine sent large numbers to America, the numbers of Irish Catholics in Columbus were relatively small. Secondly, Irish-Catholic society of that time still lived not under the full effect of but under the shadow of the penal code that had been imposed on them by the Protestant government. That code had weighed heavily on all aspects of their lives and made the organization of societies of any kind dangerous. The physical fabric of the Church, itself, was just being rebuilt when these Irish came to America; many parishes did not even have sacramental registers until the 1830s or later, so there certainly was no tradition of Irish societies, and certainly none with written membership rosters. Therefore, the first and most intensive necessity in this research has been that of simply identifying the early Irish Catholics of Columbus.

Sources from which the religious affiliation of the immigrant Irish could be ascertained are not numerous. Some Irish are mentioned in the historical accounts of the Church in Studer (4), Lee (5), and Hartley (6). A few appear in the sacramental registers of Somerset Holy Trinity of the 1830s, recently published in the Bulletin. (7) The registers of Columbus St. Remigius parish naturally are a prime source. These too have been published in the Bulletin. (8) One other valuable source is the original subscription list for the construction of Holy Cross Church in Columbus. This list, the original of which was given to the Society by the late Monsignor Hakel, for the most part is undated, so to help in interpreting its importance relative to the 1845 cut-off date, the following dates have been culled from Msgr. Kappes's unpublished history of the parish: the lot for the church was purchased on Nov. 10., 1844; the decision to build was reached on Dec. 8, 1844; the foundation masonry was completed Apr. 22, 1845; the builders were ready for brick by June 30, 1845, but money was all spent and \$150 was still owed on the lot. The walls were completed by Oct. 25, 1845. Plastering was begun in the second half of 1847. Thus, any name in the book should represent a family which had arrived here by the end of 1845. (Two Irish subscribers were noted for the plastering, but these two persons also had subscribed previously.)

The Irish nativity of some of the immigrants could not always be established beyond doubt. Sources to identify the Irish as such included the family names, many of which are distinctive of their nation. This does not help, however, with those of Anglo-Irish ancestry, of which several have been identified by other means. Tombstones at Mt. Calvary Cemetery sometimes list the nativity on the older stones. Franklin County naturalization records now

preserved at the Ohio Historical Society often list Ireland as a nativity, distinguished from England or Great Britain. Of course the 1850 census, for those who remained here until that year, lists the country of birth for each person. Obituaries, located after some research, often listed birthplaces.

Using these sources, the names of about fifty heads of early Irish Catholic families of Columbus and vicinity have been found. We know from the histories that among the earliest of these were workers on the Columbus feeder of the Ohio Canal and on the National Road. The first of these projects was completed in 1831 and the latter in 1833. The following thirteen names for various reasons appear to have been related to these projects:

John McCarthy	Nicholas Donely	Roger Roney
William Barry	Bernard McNally	Patrick Tobin
Michael Corcoran	Thomas Martin	Thomas Griffin
James Curren	Thomas O'Hare	B. McGinness
John Curren		

Others who arrived in this period, before 1840, were:

Andrew Murphy	James O'Farrell	Martin Stafford
Charles McKinney	Jane Russell	Owen Turney

The names of another thirty or so who appear in the 1840s have been found:

James Berry	James Handiboe	Joseph Malone
Patrick Brown	John Keegan	Michael Malone
John Burns	Andrew Kelly	Michael Murphy
Margaret Burns	John Kilroy	William O'Driscoll
Thomas Cassady	Patrick McAdam	John Riley
Peter Collins	Michael McDonald	Michael Rogers
John Conroy	James McGuire	Patrick Rogers
John Duffy	Terence McGuire	Timothy Rourke
Edward Fitzsimons	Peter McGuire	Michael Ryan
William Garrett	James McNamee	Timothy Sullivan
John Garrett	John McNamee	

The Cassady and Handiboe families settled elsewhere in Ohio for a few years, before finally settling in Columbus.

Of the above-named fifty-one persons, only sixteen represent families who remained for at least some decades in the Columbus area. Research into these families has proved important, for it is largely through families that ethnic heritage and religion are passed down through time. Of the 1830s road and canal workers, those who remained were John McCarthy, Dennis Corcoran, and Barney McNally. John McCarthy, after living in Columbus for a short time, settled in Newark. Dennis Corcoran, who came here as a child and was probably Michael's son, settled permanently in Mt. Vernon. Barney McNally lived out his allotted years in Columbus. Of the others of the 1830s, James O'Farrell, Jane Russell, and Owen Turney remained here. Those who permanently settled here in the 1840s were: James Berry, Margaret Burns, Thomas Cassady, Peter Collins, James Handiboe, James McGuire, James and John McNamee, John Riley, and Timothy Sullivan. The Turney, Berry, Burns, Cassady, Handiboe, and Sullivan families still have representatives living in Columbus today.

The remainder of this paper will consist of some generalizations about these early settlers, as far as any can be made from the limited numbers who resided in central Ohio for any length of time, followed by particulars of the data found about each family.

General Characteristics

Among these early Irish-Catholics of Columbus, the nuclear family was the norm. Over half of those identified from the 1830s and two-thirds of those from the 1840s fit this pattern. This stands in sharp contrast to the immigrants of the famine period, who are represented by many single men, largely railroad laborers, and single women, represented by domestic servants, who appear in the 1850 census. The families who emigrated before the famine ranged from newly-married couples to couples or widows whose youngest child had been born already in Ireland. Two families (McNamee and O'Driscoll) consisted of adult siblings. The two McGuire families (one represented by Peter and Terence and the other by James) seem to have come here as young nuclear families but by the 1850 census appear as extended families, with parents and siblings of the nuclear couple present. It may be that these kin, who do not appear in the earliest records before 1846, came over and joined the earlier immigrants as a result of the famine. Only one-fourth of the Irish Catholics here in the 1840s appear to have come without family; in some cases that appearance may only reflect a lack of records.

The only sources which name the Irish homes of these immigrants have been tombstones, obituaries, and family stories. The few that have been identified do not indicate any general pattern. For the most part, the origins of the immigrants were scattered across Ireland. One small pattern that could be significant is that three of the 1830s immigrants came from King's County (Offaly), namely the Corcorans, the Handiboers, and Barney McNally. The other origins found were as follows, moving generally from north to south: from County Tyrone came the McNamee brothers; from County Louth, Owen Turney and family; no evidence has been found, but County Fermanagh was probably the home of the McGuires; from County Cavan came James Berry, probably Edward Fitzsimons, and, based on their names, probably John and Mary (Sheridan) Riley; from Queen's County (Laoighis) came Peter Collins; Margaret Burns and her family were from County Kilkenny; and from the maiden name of Mrs. Timothy Sullivan, the unusual name of Nighan, it can be guessed that their origin was the southwest of County Cork.

(To be continued)

NOTES

- 1) Belloc, Hilaire, Europe and the Faith; New York: The Paulist Press, 1920; republished by TAN Books and Publishers, 1992.
- 2) Lemcke, (Rev.) Peter Henry, O.S.B., Life and Work of Prince Demetrius Augustine Gallitzin; New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1940; p. 12.
- 3) Leckey, William E. H., History of Ireland in the Eighteenth Century; New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1893; I/273.
- 4) Studer, Jacob H., Columbus, Ohio: Its History, Resources, and Progress; Columbus: 1873; pp. 162-168.
- 5) Lee, Alfred D., History of the City of Columbus
- 6) Hartley, (Rt. Rev.) James J., The History of Fifty Years; Columbus: 1918; pp. 159-162, 166, and 170.

- 7) Bulletin Vols. XIII and XIV (1988 and 1989), pp. 60, 86, 102, 131.
8) Bulletin, Vols. VII and VIII (1981 and 1982).

ORIGINS OF GERMAN CATHOLICS OF COLUMBUS
FROM THE HOLY CROSS PARISH CENSUS
(Continued from Vol. XVII, Number 11)

Messmer, Friedrich, born 24 June, 1844, son of Anton Messmer (born 1793, died 1835, from Bachern), and of Agatha Kaiser (born 4 Feb., 1807), Breilingen, Wurttemberg. Wife Minnie Kellhofer, born 15 April, 1846, daughter of Jacob Kellhofer and Magdalena Bishard from Kichlingsbergen. Married 17 May, 1868. (five children)

Miller, John (born ca 1830), died 1899. Wife Prisca Zahn, born 18 Jan., 1839, Kirchen, Baden, daughter of John Zahn and Prisca Ehret. (one son)

Miller, John, born 8 July, 1839, Frieberg, Baden, son of John Miller and Rosa Jung. Wife Maria Becherer, born 16 August, 1843, Baden, daughter of Joseph Becherer and Josephina Volz. (two daughters)

Mittelholz, John, born 21 May, 1823, Württemberg, Weitengen, son of Thaddaeus Mittelholz and Mathilda Meyer. Wife Josepha Reinhard, born Nov., 1828, daughter of Michael Reinhard. (two daughters) Theresia Mittelholz, sister of John, died 26 May, 1905, age 78 years.

Mittelholz, Thad. -- see John Pirrung.

Mooschhäuser, Carl, born Altheim, Buchau, Unterfranken, son of Carl; died 1 Aug., 1900. Wife Maria Linder, born 29 June, 1829, Osterburg, Amt Adelsheim, daughter of Caspar Linder and Catharina Gramlich; died 7 Dec., 1918. (five children)

Müller, Leo, born 5 April, 1848, Baiern, son of Johann Müller and Augusta Rippel. Wife Dorothea Schipper, born 9 Sept., 1854. Married at St. Mary's.

Muth, Gilbert, born 15 October, 1835, Rüdemeier, Neustadt, Baiern, son of Kilian Muth and Margaretha. Wife Margaretha Keildoff [Kilduff?], born 23 Nov., 1829, daughter of Edward Keildoff and Agnes McDonald, from Ireland. Married at St. Patrick's, 4 Aug., 1857. (seven children)

Muth, John, born 23 April, 1826; died 1883. Wife Catherine Green, born 1836, daughter of Pat. Green and Bridget Fallon, Rashcommon [Ireland]; died 14 May, 1876. Her sister was Bridget Green. Married at Holy Cross. (eight children)

Nieuzyla, Jacob, born 1 May, 1857, Wronin, Oberschlesien, son of Francis and Josephina (Jahn). Wife, Anna Jahn, born 25 Jan., 1861, Schammerwitz, Oberschlesien, daughter of Joseph and Albertina (Baier). (two children)

Nippel, Willy, born 19 Aug., 1839, Neustadt, Ober-Schlesien, son of John Nippel and Johanna Schuster. Wife Margaretha Frey, born 6 April, 1848. West Jefferson; gone since 1888. (four children)

Olding, Hermann -- see Benedict Trott.

Oshe, John, son of Jacob and Eliz. Oshe from Zanesville; died 31 July, 1867. Wife Elizabeth Grether, born 25 July, 1833 in Elsass, daughter of Nicolaus Grether and Anna Maria. Married 10 Sept., 1857. (four children) Elizabeth married 10 June, 1873 Adam Miller, from Lancaster, Pa.

Osmann, John, born 15 July, 1834, Baiern; died 6 March, 1908. Wife Catharina Herman, born 7 June, 1841, Chillicothe, daughter of Coelestin Herman and Gertrude Haemmerle; died 1888. Married 12 June, 1859. (six children)

Pfeifer, Jacob, born 23 Nov., 1824, Steckweiler, Rockenhausen, Rheinpfalz, son of Johann and Jacobina (Reeb) Pfeifer. Died March 5, 1892.

Pirrung, Franz, born 1825; died 27 Nov., 1880. Wife Marianna Borges, born 31 July, 1824, Essen, Oldenburg, daughter of Gerhard Borges and Marianna Dingreve; died 23 April, 1895. Married in Newark, 19 July, 1852. (four children)

Pirrung, Johann, born 4 Aug., 1817, Oberbexbach bei Zweibrücken, Baiern, son of Anton Pirrung and Barbara Schwarz; died 9 Sept., 1899. Wife Sidonia Mittelholz, born 21 Dec., 1825, daughter of Thaddeus Mittelholz and Mathilda Meyer from Weitingen am Neckar, Württemberg; died 5 May, 1899. Married 1845; arrived in Columbus in 1844. (nine children)

Pirrung, John Jacob, born June, 1821; died 26 July, 1891. Wife Anna Maria Reinhard, born 29 April, 1825, Niedenberg, Aschaffenburg, daughter of Michael Reinhard and Barbara Geis; died 13 Feb., 1893. Married 15 May, 1849. (nine children)

Ranft, George -- see Lorenz Luckhaupt.

Rath, John, born 27 June, 1861, son of John Rath (born 23 Apr., 1823, Alten Essen, Rhpr.) and Sibylla Koch (died 9 May, 1880). Wife Margaret Sauer, born 17 Jan., 1865, daughter of Adam Sauer and Elizabeth Renner. Married at Holy Cross, 25 Nov., 1886. (three children)

Redel, Franz, born 1814, Dalnbach (?), Zweibrücken, Baiern. Wife Barbara Maria Becker, born 15 May, 1830, Busenbach, Baden, daughter of Franz Carl Becker and Cath. Vogel; died 24 March, 1914. Married 4 Sept., 1848. (four children)

Reeb, Jacob, born 8 March, 1851, Columbus, son of Jacob Reeb and Elizabeth Deibel, from Steckweiler, Rhpf. Wife Eliz. Rufing, born 19 Feb., 1852, Columbus, daughter of Peter Rufing and Elizabeth. (two children)

Reible, Anton, born 22 Sept., 1839, Stuttgart, Wtg.; died 21 Jan., 1902. Wife Anna Kessler, born 25 March 1851, b. Kissingen, daughter of Ambrose Kessler and Rosina Schulz. Married at St. Mary's. (six children)

Reidelbach, Joseph, born 12 Oct., 1834, Brückenau, Baiern, son of Conrad Reidelbach and Barbara Schum; died 3 March, 1916. Wife Ida Dorn, born 24 Nov., 1838, Brückenau, daughter of Maria Anna Dorn and Joseph Schneider; died 22 June, 1910. Married 26 June, 1864, Baltimore. (five children)

Reil, Lorenz, born 10 Feb., 1853, Columbus, son of Ulrich Reil and Cath. Franz. Wife Marianne Dienst, born 1856 in Columbus, daughter of Andreas Dienst. Married at St. Mary's. (one son)

Reinhard, Henry A., born 28 Dec., 1845, son of Jacob Reinhard and Catherine Hamann; died 18 Jan., 1911. Wife Loretta C. Dury, born 4 Aug., 1852, Steubenville, O., daughter of Matthias. Married 1 Jan., 1874. (five children)

Reinhard, Jacob, born 28 April, 1815, Niedernberg, Baiern [son of Michael A. Reinhard]. Wife Catharine Hamman, born 25 May, 1825, Danne, Saarbourg, daughter of Franz Joseph Hamman and Maria Schoeb. Married at Somerset, O. (six children)

(To be continued)

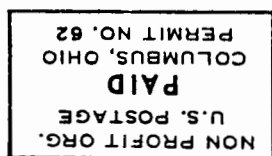
Another Pioneer Catholic Gone: Catholic Columbian, July 15, 1882
(courtesy of the Catholic Times)

Died - at her residence near New Lexington, Perry County, Miss Catherine Crossan, in the 73d year of her age, on Wednesday, June 28th, 1882.

This good lady, who had lived with her two sisters and was the principal manager of their affairs for several years, was a remarkably excellent person. She has been well known by the Catholics of perry County for over sixty years. About the year 1818 her parents left their home in Donegal, Ireland, with a view to carve out for themselves and large family of children a home in this free, new land. Her father, Edward Crossan, had a brother near Baltimore, who had been in this country some years before, and was there a successful contractor. He advised the family to proceed to the West by all means. When they came to Zanesville, John Duggan, a prominent citizen of that place, pointed ou to them the Catholic settlement which was just beginning to grow up around St. Joseph's Chapel, in Perry County. Mr. Crossan at once procured land near this chapel in 1819, only a year after it was built, and this farm is still occupied by his son, John Crossan, brother of the deceased. The family have occupied a most respectable position among the old settlers here; and Catherine has been particularly esteemed. She was highly intelligent and a great reader. She was also sincerely and devotedly attached to the doctrines and practices of her holy faith. In a word, she was a worthy specimen of that grand old army of Catholics who first planted our holy religion in this State.

Her funeral was numerously attended at St. Joseph's, on Friday, June the 30th, and the Requiem Mass was celebrated by the Rev. E. V. Flood, O.S.D. Fathers Stephen Byrne and I. F. Colbert were deacon and subdeacon of the Mass. May she rest in peace. Amen.

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