

Jersey City: The Irish Across the River

By John T. Ridge

John T. Ridge is a founding member and past president of the NYIHR. He is the author of Erin's Sons in America: The Ancient Order of Hibernians, The Flatbush Irish and The St. Patrick's Day Parade in New York. He is currently at work on a book of Irish landmarks in New York.

The presence of such a large number of Irish in New York City has so often obscured the visibility of other cities with large Irish communities across America. This has been particularly true of the towns and cities close enough to the metropolis to be considered part of Greater New York. One of New York's nearest neighbors is Jersey City, separated only by a few miles from it and lying directly across the Hudson River. The connections between Jersey City and New York are numerous and unavoidable. Indeed, the origins of Jersey City in 1804 came as a result of the efforts of a group of real estate men who felt that the new link by ferry (there would eventually be some half dozen ferry lines by the early twentieth century) and the wide availability of cheap land in contrast to New York assured it a prosperous future.

The Hudson River as a natural feature helped Jersey City develop by creating a formidable barrier to the railroads reaching out from New York. For much of the nineteenth century the railroad tracks heading out of the metropolis had to take a long detour northward until they could cross the river at a narrow point where bridges could be easily built. Consequently Jersey City, because of its easy access by ferry, developed into a rail head serving all of the points west of New York for both passengers and freight. For the Irish it meant jobs in two of the major industries where they sought employment in large numbers in the nineteenth century—the railroads and the waterfront.

Industry and commerce combined to make Jersey City with 206,433 people in 1900 the seventeenth largest city in the United States, but it was still relatively small compared to New York's just under three and a half million. At the same time the number of Irish-born residents numbered a very respectable 19,314, nearly 10 percent of the total. If Jersey City had been a town in Ireland the number of Irish-born alone would have made it the seventh largest city in the country and only surpassed by Dublin, Belfast, Cork, Derry, Limerick and Waterford. It would have also placed Jersey City considerably ahead of the ancient towns of Galway, Newry, Wexford, Sligo, Dundalk and Kilkenny.

The Early Years

Although there was Irish settlement from the days of its foundation, and Irish residents and their friends were involved in organizing a branch of the Dan O'Connell's Repeal Association in 1844 when the city's population was barely three thousand, the bulk of the Irish came to Jersey City in the 1850s and succeeding decades. Their arrival was somewhat of a dramatic occasion for this rapidly changing residential suburb of New York. Residents watched the Irish literally dig their way into the city when a massive railway tunnel was begun in 1856 by the Erie Railroad, which had a very large Irish work force. The tunnel was designed to connect the lowlands beyond with the docks being built on the Hudson.

While Connachtmen and Munstermen were sometimes ranged rather noticeably against each other in competition for jobs and living space on Bergen Hill, the arrival of the Irish was most clearly

brought to the attention of every citizen by events surrounding a "riot" on the tunnel work site. It was suddenly announced by the contractor that all the wages due in September of 1859 would be delayed until the following month. For laborers living an almost hand-to-mouth existence these words were life threatening. The workers not only stopped work but proceeded to block the tracks preventing all movement along the way. The militia was called out and the laborers met their arrival with a hail of stones, but when the soldiers moved from the railroad cars that had brought them to the site, the crowd dispersed. Nevertheless, the authorities arrested some seventy of the leaders and levied harsh fines or prison sentences on most of them.

For the native community the "riot," which had actually caused only two slight injuries to the authorities, became a legend which grew out of all proportion to the reality of events. The disturbances were seen by the ruling elite and their supporters as nothing short of a direct challenge to them and their way of life. The event was committed to their version of history as a climactic victory of law and order over the forces of anarchy, i.e. the Irish.

JUSTICE TO IRELAND !!!



Jersey City, 30th May, 1844.

THE Undersigned have received instructions from the Repeal Committees, to request you will honor the REPEAL MEETING, which is called for the 6th JUNE next, with your presence.

The Meeting will be held in **WASHINGTON HALL**, in this City at 7 1/2 o'clock in the Evening. The purpose for which it is convened is to obtain **JUSTICE FOR IRELAND !!!**

For several hundred years her task-masters have ruled Ireland by *disorder*, and embroiled her by *system*. Her history displays *savage force*, succeeded by *savage policy* on the one side—and on the other, an *insulted*, a *plundered*, a *down trodden* people.

The iron hand of her oppressor is raised even now, over our most beloved and venerable patriots. They were accused of having demanded a portion of their Civil Rights—and for THIS CRIME were branded "**TRAITORS !!!**" They dared to petition for the Repeal of an Act of Parliament;—an Act written in *Blood*—voted in *Perjury*, and supported by *Corruption !!!*—an Act pronounced *Unconstitutional* and *Unbinding* by Attorney-General Saurin, and Lord Chancellor Plunkett;—and for THIS CRIME they stand convicted of treasonable conspiracy !!!

Ireland's bonds are loosed—the nation has arisen—but she has arisen only to her knees. Aid her that she may stand erect, and cast away the badge of her servitude.

With the profoundest respect,

We remain your most obedient servants,

WILLIAM BROWN,
M. NOWLAN,
MILES McCARTIN,
JAMES WALSH.

} Committee of
correspondence.

PRINTED AT THE "IRISH VOLUNTEER" OFFICE, CROSS-STREET, N. Y.

Reproduction of a rare handbill announcing a meeting of the Jersey City Repeal Association in 1844. The "Irish Volunteer" was a short-lived weekly newspaper in New York. Courtesy of John T. Ridge.

Nativist Reaction

The tunnelmen's taking events into their own hands polarized the community and enhanced the siege mentality that first came to the surface in the political successes of the powerful Know Nothing movement in Jersey City in the 1850s. But the city was changing fast. Ethnically it was truly an immigrant city by 1870 and this fact was evident at city hall where Irishmen and their descendants constituted just under half of the aldermen. The son of immigrants, Mayor Charles H. O'Neill was first elected in 1868.

Defeated at the polls, the nativist element found a friend in the New Jersey state legislature and had passed there a new charter for Jersey City which in one stroke broke the advances of the Irish and their immigrant allies. The Irish had little influence in the state capital and their enemies could do what they wanted there. Legislation was passed late in the year 1870 to set up a new charter for Jersey City which effectively placed it under state control.

The new charter vested real power in the hands of a board of commissioners appointed directly by the state legislature. Not unexpectedly, the Irish were excluded from this body and what remained of the city local government was changed to reduce Irish power. The number of aldermanic districts was reduced to just six, including the infamous "horseshoe," a district gerrymandered in that shape to lump the bulk of the Irish in a single district. Encouraged by what a Republican legislature could do, the nativist element of the Democratic Party acted to oust the Irish from the ruling circles in that party. Never have the Irish in politics suffered a more overwhelming defeat. It was not just a political defeat, for with the loss of power went hundreds of valued jobs on the city payroll.

Curiously, the dramatic political events are linked at least in time with the appearance of the Orange Order in Jersey City. While there is no evidence to suggest the order had any part in the political changes of 1870 and early 1871, it has been documented that other secret societies which shared similar anti-Catholic sentiments had at least a part to play in that drama. In July of 1871 sectarian feeling was rising rapidly as Orangemen's Day, the 12th of July, approached. One year before in New York City several people had died following an Orange parade and picnic, so Orange lodges from nearby cities including the lodge in Jersey City were pledging to march with their brethren in New York.

A see-saw battle waged in New York with the politicians maneuvering to support one side or the other. When the mayor of New York ultimately banned the parade as a danger to public safety, he was overruled by the governor of the state. It was clear to almost everyone that trouble was ahead and the Jersey City Orangemen wisely decided to accept the offer of state militia protection from New Jersey Governor Randolph if they chose to parade in their home city instead.

The 12th dawned with an air of excitement in Jersey City as troops and police patrolled the streets. The march itself got under way with a full escort of nine companies of militia and other military while platoons of police lined the streets. Despite all the protection the Orangemen were charged at Hamilton Square where shots were discharged in a brief skirmish, but overall the city remained relatively peaceful with only minor injuries and thirty-two arrests to tally at the end of the day. In New York, by contrast, more than fifty people were killed when the militia panicked and fired on spectators.

Ireland in Jersey City

As was inevitable local government returned to Jersey City in 1877 and the combative spirit in the community lessened

somewhat. The Irish had long made a practice of parading on St. Patrick's Day at least from the 1850s, but more often than not local groups crossed the river to celebrate in Manhattan. By the 1870s a parade on March 17th was a regular feature and included contingents of the major local Irish societies: the Ancient Order of Hibernians, the Father Mathew Temperance men, the St. Patrick's Mutual Alliance and various smaller groups from the city's Roman Catholic churches. While the parade numbered between two and three thousand men, it was a respectable turnout in comparison to New York's ten to twenty thousand in the same period. Some of the Hudson County Irish societies nevertheless continued to patronize the parade of the big metropolis.

The Jersey parades often combined with organizations from other Hudson County cities. The route march in the 1870s went up Jersey Avenue to Hamilton Park, Newark Avenue, the ferry landing, city hall, and then on to Hoboken. Occasionally, the local parade would be given up in favor of a decision to march in Newark, but the tradition of a Jersey City St. Patrick's Day parade continued until World War I.

Irish life was very much centered around the neighborhood parishes. Suspicion of secret Irish societies like the Clan na Gael, a revolutionary group steeped in Irish nationalism, and even the Ancient Order of Hibernians caused many of the clergy to promote parish societies as a counterweight to those groups operating among the Irish independent of church influence or control. In Jersey City this condition existed until just after the turn of the century when, as in other communities, the Catholic Church became more open to outside societies.

In the late nineteenth century AOH units sought out a number of local halls because only parish societies were permitted to use the facilities at St. Peter's, St. Patrick's or St. Michael's, some of the leading "Irish" churches of the city. The Hibernians in the 1870s and 1880s composed anywhere from nine to eleven branches or divisions in the city with a membership of about two thousand. The temperance men, who enjoyed the use of church facilities more often than not, were less numerous but occupied a social position a notch above the AOH. The St. Patrick's Mutual Alliance was a branch of a group which began in New York as a tool to win influence in the Democratic Party and was closely aligned with Boss Tweed's machine there. The Alliance never quite made the splash it made in New York but managed to survive in Jersey City until World War I. At the top of the social scale among the Irish societies was the Friendly Sons of St. Patrick whose main activity consisted of a grand St. Patrick's Day dinner.

The city's Irish considered themselves to be in a major Irish center and tried to mirror to the best of their abilities their big city neighbor. Many of the Irish who came to Jersey City in the 1850s were exiles of the terrible conditions in Irish land tenure which culminated in 1847 and succeeding years in what is generally known as "the great famine." In 1863 the churches of the city and throughout the diocese of Newark collected for relief of conditions for another famine, this time much less catastrophic. Of the \$7,360 raised at this special collection from more than fifty churches, St. Peter's Parish in Jersey City alone raised \$1,234. The total amount was conveyed to Ireland with some curious special instructions. One fourth was directed to be sent to Co. Donegal, one seventh to Co. Kerry and the remainder split between the dioceses of Tuam and Galway.

By 1879 similar distress in Ireland was handled in a different manner. Not only were relief collections made, but the root causes of the suffering were addressed with the formation of several branches

of the Irish American Land League in the city. The Land League in Ireland, the parent body, sought to win through political concessions in the British Parliament the ownership of the land most farmers occupied as mere tenants. Although but a short-lived organization such nationalist agitation in Jersey City operated at a high level into the 1920s.

Irish Nationalism

For many the resolution of the land question and other key issues affecting the country rested on breaking the connection with England. The Home Rule movement was embraced by many Irish in the city in the 1880s and 90s and was bolstered by what seemed a never-ending series of public meetings which attracted the Irish community and, significantly, those they sought to influence and those that sought to influence them. Irish influence was strong enough to bring former foes into their camp. Mayor Orestes Cleveland, who was a Know Nothing in the 1850s, found himself acting as chairman of one such Irish public meeting on the Home Rule movement in the hall of St. Michael's Church. Cleveland led the enthusiastic Irish in the passing of a resolution to the British Prime Minister in London:

Resolved, that this mass meeting of American citizens of Jersey City, with the mayor of the city presiding, offers its deepest sympathy to the Irish tenantry in their struggle for existence and to all Ireland in the great fight for Home Rule now in progress. (*Irish World*, 4/9/1887)

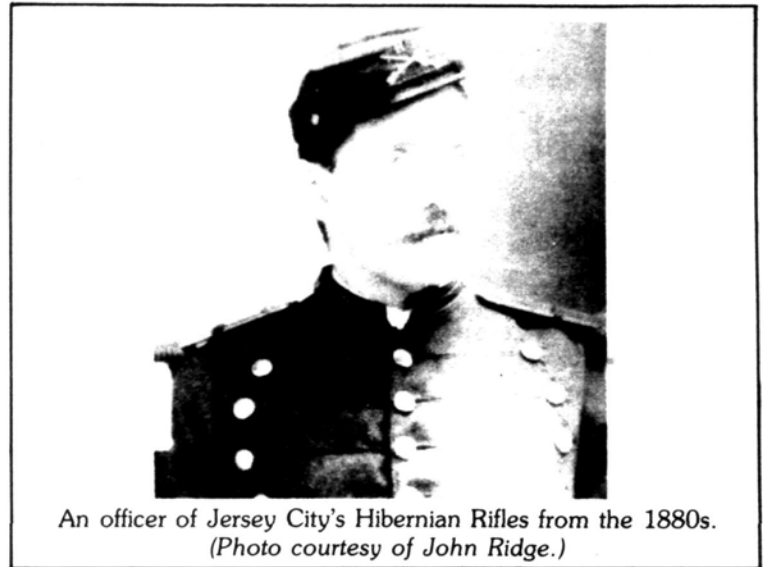
On the other hand things at city hall didn't always go as the Irish wanted them. Although on St. Patrick's Day most politicians catered to their Irish constituents, a wave of opposition surfaced in the actions of several mayors in various cities (including New York and Brooklyn) to the raising of the Irish flag over their city halls. The refusal to raise the flag was inspired by the anti-Catholic APA (American Protective Association) and surfaced for the first time in the 1890s. While the Irish flag remained over city hall on St. Patrick's Day in Jersey City, the Irish there could be just as insulted by flags which were lowered over that building as well. In 1901 the usual passing of the parade before city hall and the traditional salute to the mayor was omitted by the Irish societies because of the lowering of the American flag to half mast following the death of Queen Victoria of England. The Irish societies, who had marched over to Bayonne, issued a statement explaining their actions:

We decided to omit passing city hall for the reason we did not care to be reviewed by a mayor who pretending to be our friend lowered the flag to half mast for Great Britain's Queen. (*New York Times*, 3/18/1901)

Mayor Edward Hoos, who had three years before been wildly cheered by the Irish at a meeting demanding amnesty for Irishmen languishing in British jails, could be equally terse. He replied:

The flag was half masted only on the day of the Queen's funeral. That was owing to my absence from the city. Had I been at home it would have been half masted on the day of her death (too). The American people have nothing to do with the quarrels between the Hibernians and Great Britain. (*New York Times*, 3/18/1901)

The school of Irish nationalism which advocated physical force was also active in Jersey City and seems to have triumphed over the more moderate factions shortly after 1900. Its origins were well established by the time branches of the Fenian Brotherhood were formed in Jersey City in 1865 and was kept alive by the strong branches of the Clan na Gael which operated behind the scenes from the 1870s. The Clan was behind much of the late nineteenth



An officer of Jersey City's Hibernian Rifles from the 1880s.
(Photo courtesy of John Ridge.)

and early twentieth century craze for the formation of independent Irish military companies. A number of these units existed during this time like the Emerald Zouves in the 1870s, the Michael Davitt Guards which was formed after a visit of Michael Davitt, the Land League leader, in 1886, the Irish Volunteers and especially the Hibernian Rifles which endured more than several decades down to World War I.

Fever Pitch

From time to time the squabbles of moderate Irish nationalists and the physical force men erupted in public. On the surface the goal of each school was the same: self-rule for Ireland. The means to the end was different, but with no revolution or likely prospect of revolution very evident in Ireland, the question was often purely academic.

Someone in March of 1906, for example, sent a telegram purportedly issued by the Friendly Sons of Ireland thanking King Edward VII for his kind expressions toward Ireland. It was almost as if all the pent-up frustrations of the advanced nationalists were unleashed. There had been a small branch in the city of the United Irish League, a group which supported Irish leader John Redmond, a leader considered by many to be pliant to British interests. The news of the telegram to the English king was followed by the thunderous denunciation of the Friendly Sons by Patrick O'Mara, a prominent Clan na Gael man and president of the United Irish Societies of Hudson County. O'Mara targeted the U.I.L. and one individual in particular, a local furniture dealer, whom O'Mara described in a letter to the *Gaelic American* as "strongly tainted with West Britonism, and who is prone, consequently, to bow the pregnant hinges of the knee, that thrift may follow fawning."

The controversy sparked a round of denials from several organizations and individuals in the press including the Friendly Sons of St. Patrick, the city's most prestigious Irish society. Each denial was accompanied by a hearty denunciation of the British crown. It was never established exactly who sent the telegram, but the outcry in the Irish weeklies and the Jersey City press certainly put fear into the ranks of the few supporters of John Redmond in Jersey City.

Despite the fact that moderate Irish nationalists were on the verge of getting a home rule bill passed in the British Parliament just before the outbreak of war in 1914, the uncompromising nationalists, who advocated a complete break from Britain by force of arms, were winning more converts in Ireland and in America. The Clan na Gael, whose most active Jersey City branch was the Wolfe Tone

Club, had long been the mainstay in nationalism and set the tone for the Irish community there firmly in the direction of an armed uprising in Ireland. Other organizations were similar in nature but short on longevity. As early as 1899 a group called the Sinn Fein Association, Irish for "Ourselves Alone," occupied itself by passing resolutions "condemning imperialism and the Anglo American Alliance."

The Jersey City Irish community realized that it was not just Irish nationalism which was going to keep their community together. The American-born offspring of the immigrants were being educated in schools, even Roman Catholic schools, that totally ignored the teaching of Irish history. Indeed, the United Irish Societies of Hudson County was formed in 1897 specifically to agitate for the introduction of the teaching of Irish history in the parochial schools of the diocese of Newark. It was not until the Fall of 1905 that the diocese finally consented to its inclusion.

The Irish community more commonly resorted to self-education to enhance the understanding of Irish culture and history. Frequently speakers on Irish subjects appeared in the public and church halls of the city and they were popular enough to be usually a paying attraction. Occasionally big names direct from Ireland such as Seamus MacManus, the folklorist and author, and Douglas Hyde, the Gaelic League founder and later president of the Irish Free State, delivered well publicized lectures. Hyde gave a typical address at St. Peter's Hall:

We are engaged in the last grand struggle to save the Irish language and to preserve Ireland as a nation. We have torn the bandages from the eyes of the Irish people and have turned them from the English ideas in an effort to save them from national extinction. When the Irish people in America begin to realize what this means, you will plant your feet firmly, as we have done at home, against the English spirit that has swallowed everything, our language, our songs, our music, our dance and even our pleasures. (*Gaelic American*, 1/6/1906)

The aftermath of the 1916 Rising carried Irish activities to a fever pitch into the early 1920s. One of the leading figures in the revival of Irish nationalist activity was Major Eugene F. Kinkead who "drew inspiration from a mother whose flesh and blood went to the scaffold in Ireland rather than deviate from the path of patriotism, and as an American son of a Fenian father." Kinkead chaired most of the larger meetings in Jersey City and Hudson County in the period when Ireland was again resorting to arms at the close of World War I. He took a prominent part at the national level in the Irish Race Convention of 1918, the formation of the Friends of Irish Freedom and in offering testimony before the United States Senate's hearings on the Irish question. He was a confidant of Eamon DeValera during the Irish leader's exile in America.

DeValera himself visited Jersey City in September of 1919 and was introduced to a roaring crowd who cheered him wildly, tossing their hats into the air over and over again, for eleven minutes by actual count. It was the city's long time mayor and political boss, Frank Hague, who had the honor of presenting him to the enthusiasts.

The high point of nationalist feeling culminated in the massive rally for the Irish Bond Drive at which it was announced that Jersey City had raised \$65,150 in cash and pledges including the largest single donation in the state of New Jersey—\$10,000 from the president of the Lorillard Tobacco Company of the city. Major Kinkead in the chair was resolved to collect the remainder of the city's \$75,000 quota that very night and announced suddenly:

The ushers will please close the doors and allow nobody to leave the hall. We are going to get the other \$8,950 right here and whatever comes afterward will be an oversubscription. (*Irish World*, 6/10/1920)
The target was easily met.

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

Irish Exhibit and Feis

World's Championship in Irish Step Dancing

FEIS—Competition in Irish Step and Figure Dancing (Open to young and old.) School Competition in Irish Dancing as taught by Liam Fitzgibbon. Competition in Instrumental Music: Harp, Irish War Bagpipes, Violin, Accordion, Etc. Competition in Vocal Music. Competition in Folk-lore, Oratory and the Translation of English Names into the Original Irish.

There will be different prominent speakers each night to discuss the Irish situation in some of its phases.

Competition Invited From Everywhere.

IRISH EXHIBIT—Shall consist, in so far as possible, of a display of articles or productions that are common to each of the 32 Counties of Ireland.

ST. LUCY'S HALL, Grove and 16th Sts.
JERSEY CITY, N. J.

Wed., Thurs., Fri. & Sat., Oct. 27, 28, 29, 30, 1920, 8 p.m.

The troubles in Ireland in 1920 inspired Irish cultural activities as well as political agitation in Jersey City.

Aftermath

Following the Irish War of Independence and the subsequent civil war, the activities of Irish societies diminished in Jersey City and in many cases ceased completely. There were many reasons to account for this including: the bitterness left by the Irish Civil War; the feeling that the Irish cause was won with the creation of the Irish Free State; the social changes in the Irish community as a result of World War I and later the economic depression; and lastly the replacement of the formerly invaluable sick and death benefit funds of the Irish fraternal orders by private insurance and government programs like social security. The social and political life of Irish societies took a sharp downward turn.

The Irish population was changing too. Between 1900 and 1930 the Irish-born population of the State of New Jersey declined by exactly one third and by 1950 it had declined by two thirds from the 94,844 Irish-born residents of 1900. Jersey City itself by 1970 had only 1,352 Irish-born and even if one counts all their offspring (termed Irish Stock in the 1970 census), the Irish numbered only 8,335.

While the Irish have become less obvious in Jersey City they have not disappeared from the city. The last available census data from 1980 reported a total of 33,775 people who had some Irish blood, no matter how remote, in their veins. This constituted 15% of the city's total population. Of the 33,775, just under half (15,948) claimed no ancestry other than Irish while the remainder (17,827) claimed ancestry from other ethnic groups in addition to Irish.

The upcoming census of 1990 will offer interesting data on the current position of Jersey City's Irish population.

A Partial Bibliography of Published Works on the New York Irish, Part II

- BAYLEY, J.R. *A Brief Sketch of the History of the Catholic Church on the Island of New York* (1853)
- ERNST, ROBERT. *Immigrant Life in New York City, 1825-1863* (Octagon Books, 1979; originally published 1949)
- FUNCHION, MICHAEL F., ed. *Irish American Voluntary Organizations* (Greenwood Press, 1983). Contains brief descriptions of many New York Irish organizations.
- GLAZER, NATHAN and DANIEL P. MOYNIHAN. *Beyond the Melting Pot: The Negroes, Puerto Ricans, Jews, Italians, and Irish of New York City* (2nd ed., M.I.T. Press, 1970)
- GORDON, MICHAEL. "Irish Immigrant Culture and the Labor Boycott in New York City, 1880-1886" in *Immigrants in Industrial America, 1850-1920*. Richard L. Ehrlich, ed. (University Press of Virginia, 1977)
- GUNN, THOMAS BUTLER. "The Irish Immigrant Boarding-House (As It Was)," Chapter 29 of *The Physiology of New York Boarding Houses* (Mason Brothers, 1857)
- McLAUGHLIN, J. FAIRFAX. *The Life and Times of John Kelly: Tribune of the People* (The American News Company, 1885).
- Articles*
- LEACH, RICHARD H. "The Impact of Immigration Upon New York, 1840-1860" in *New York History* Vol. XXXI (1950)
- MILLER, REBECCA S. "'Our Own Little Isle': Irish Traditional Music in New York" in *New York Folk Lore* Vol. XIV Nos. 3-4 (1988)
- Fiction*
- McDERMOTT, WILLIAM A. *Pere Monnier's Ward: A Novel* (Benziger Brothers, 1898) The rise in NYC politics of James Fortune.
- McELGUN, JOHN. *Annie Reilly: or, The Fortunes of an Irish Girl in New York. A Tale Founded on Fact.* (J. A. McGee, 1873)
- MOORE, JOHN M. "The Adventures of Tom Stapleton" serialized in *Brother Jonathon* (New York) 1 January 1842-14 May 1842. Irish American life in NYC in the 1830s.
- O'HIGGINS, HARVEY J. "The Exiles" in *McClure's Magazine* 26 (March 1906) Lower middle class urban Irish in NYC.
- SADLIER, MARY. *The Blakes and the Flanagans* (P.J. Kenedy, 1855)
- SULLIVAN, JAMES W. *Tenement Tales of New York* (Henry Holt, 1895) For example, see the story "Slob Murphy."

Extracts from these fiction works are reprinted in FANNING, CHARLES, ed. *The Exiles of Erin: Nineteenth Century Irish-American Fiction* (University of Notre Dame Press, 1987).

The Roundtable is in the process of collecting citations such as the above, which reflect only a small portion of the available sources, for a comprehensive bibliography to be published. Please send suggestions to P.O. Box 2087, Church Street Station, New York, New York 10003.

ROUNDTABLE PROJECTS

BIBLIOGRAPHY PROJECT. The goal of this project is to publish, in pamphlet or other form, an annotated bibliography of Master's essays and doctoral dissertations which relate to various aspects of the experience of the Irish in New York. Volunteers are needed to search New York public and university libraries for references, locate the work, and then to describe it according to a standardized format. The range of the bibliography will be as wide as is necessary, incorporating as many subject headings as possible. Nothing like this exists at the moment for the New York Irish! Nancy Shea is coordinating this project with the assistance of John O'Connor. You can call Nancy at (212) 517-2535.

IRISH ECHO INDEX PROJECT. This project aims to provide researchers with access to the wealth of information contained about Irish New York in this sixty-year-old newspaper through a comprehensive index. At the moment the indexers are concentrating on obituaries as an aid to genealogical and social research. Volunteers are needed to read back issues of the *Echo* at the New York Public Library, index articles according to a prescribed format, enter the data on a computer, proofread entries, or coordinate publication. If you are interested, other related tasks can be discussed. This is hands-on historical research! Bill McGimpsey and Eileen Sullivan are coordinating the indexing project, and hold meetings approximately one Saturday morning per month to index and review progress. You can call Bill at (914) 628-9103 and Eileen at (212) 673-6941.

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT. To record the voice of the past through the lives and work experiences of Irish New Yorkers is the goal of this unique project. Using tape or video recorders, volunteers can become the means by which an otherwise elusive history is preserved for future generations. The Roundtable will train interested members in the necessary techniques and will monitor the project closely. This can be a fun and easy way to come in contact with living history! Anyone interested should leave their name and telephone number with Angela Carter at Irish Books and Graphics (212) 962-4237.

NEW YORK IRISH HISTORY. The Roundtable's Annual Journal is calling for papers for its 1990 issue. The deadline for submission of articles for Volume 5 will be 31 August 1989. If you or someone you know is currently at work on New York Irish research, if you come across articles or announcements that might be of interest to our members, or if you have other ideas, drop us a note to tell us about it. Write to our Editor, Trish Little Taylor at 16 Arlene Drive, West Long Branch, New Jersey 07764.