

County Associations in Irish New York, 1945–1965

BY MIRIAM NYHAN

County associations have been part of the Irish community in New York for over one hundred and fifty years.¹ John Ridge's insights have made significant contributions to our understanding of these entities.² However, there is a gap in our appraisals of this form of associational activity after 1945. The analysis in this article makes

clear that associations reflected three of the most significant traits of the Irish migrants arriving in post-war New York:

Catholicism, dancing, and sports. All three traits dominated associations' activities. This article uses oral histories, historical

ethnography, and written records as a means of reconstructing some of the general traits of this associational behavior. The focus is on some of the functional realities of these organizations, rather than their more symbolic roles.

With regard to source material, it should be noted that written records of these types of associations are not always maintained with consistency. Mostly, the records are held by individual officers and, where they commonly have no fixed premises, this can be especially problematic. Fortunately, the Kerry-men's Patriotic and Benevolent Association holds an almost complete set of minute books, and these were consulted heavily.³ Other records where available were also used—for example, those representing Roscommon and Cork.^{4,5} Oral histories were undertaken with approximately twenty Irish migrants in New York. These life histories paid particular attention to participation in county associations.⁶ Outside of the oral sources, this research was also largely dependent on historical ethnography, through participant observation.⁷ This fieldwork

highlighted a number of issues. The first feature which is striking is the manner by which today's county association-organized events and meetings have, in large part, remain unchanged over the period of a half century or more. Put another way, reconstruction of a historical ethnography was made easy as a result of the largely untouched

nature of the proceedings and the adherence to a traditional way of doing things. Ethnic and immigrant organizations are by design organisms that conform to ritual and tradition, and county associations are no different.

The second prominent feature is that these associations

adhere to a pretty fixed mission. What this means in practical terms is that each year each organization, over a protracted period, has engaged in a number of specific functions. There is evidence of very little deviation from the concept of the events (and the approach to meetings) organized fifty and sixty years ago. County associations function as groups which operate very much on the basis of what the others do. From their very origins, there was an element of rivalry which spurred groups to come together along the lines of their compatriots from other counties. What that means is that most county association emulated the activities and outlook of the majority. The uniformity was in keeping with the fact that there was a commonality in the lifestyles and aspirations of the migrant group. This is not to suggest that the history of these groups is totally homogenous, but there is a significant convergence evident in their operations and goals. The degree of uniformity also assuages anxiety over how representa-



Photo:

Members of the Kerry-men's Patriotic and Benevolent Association marching in the St. Patrick's Day Parade in 1958. Courtesy of John T. Ridge.

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tiveness of the records used in this analysis.

AN IMPORTANT EPOCH

At this point it is helpful to draw attention to the chronological significance of post-war county associational activity. In New York, the decades following World War II saw an injection of new blood into the migrant communities. By looking at these associations, it is clear that this was an important epoch for the ethnic community that was already in existence. The demographic mass of the migrant population is significant in this context. Specifically, this means that it is worthwhile to note the number of migrants in the given area and the flow which replenishes the population it diminished over time.

Organizations like county associations required a somewhat consistent flow in order to sustain themselves over time. As Moya notes, the critical variables seem to be “the size and the demographic and socio-economic complexity of the immigrant community.”⁸ In this context, it should be noted that the post-war period saw the last major influx of members into the associations, and the newly arrived found in New York a well-organized network of various types of societies. In 1954, the umbrella body which coordinated the county associations, the United Irish Counties Association of New York (U.I.C.), consisted of affiliations from thirty-one counties.⁹ There were also another two organizations, not technically county associations, affiliated to the U.I.C.: the Dalcassian S. & A. Club and the Irish-American Society of Nassau, Suffolk & Queens.¹⁰

WHAT THE ASSOCIATIONS PROVIDED

An oral history from 2006 describes the basic significance of the county associations:

The reason that county organizations survived, of course, was the need for camaraderie and... touch with home and they were so necessary and so highly thought of... because... they provided that kind of contact with people from your own parish and from your own county and everything else and people were parochial in those times.... [A] Galway person meeting somebody from Cavan, considered him to be an outsider.... So the county organizations were... the touch with home.... But, they provided an awful lot of services, at that time... opportunities to find jobs, you know, if you were ill.... Aside from the sociability of the occasions, you know, there was the good times, and the helping each other in bad times.¹¹

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This observation draws on much of the common attractions of the associations: camaraderie, home, contact, outsider, jobs, illness, sociability, help.

The groups historically had been founded with a benevolent function in mind, and this mandate was expressed in the name of many of the organizations; for example, the Sligo Social and Benevolent Association, the Kerry-men's Patriotic and Benevolent Association. Benevolence was still important in the mid-twentieth century, as a passage from the minutes of a 1954 meeting demonstrates:

Brother Jack Flynn advised the new members to stick with the Kerry-men's Association and that the association would stick by them. He quoted an instance some years ago when a young Kerryman got sick and was confined to hospital for a number of years before his death. This Association paid him his benefits and the members visited him and when he died the mortuary [benefit paid by the Association] buried him.¹²

This quotation shows that some organizations had a system in place of paying out a benefit when a member died. Usually, on the basis of being a fully paid-up member, mortuary benefits were paid for the deceased member or the spouse, although the amount paid for the spouse was usually less than that paid for a member. The same applied when a member became ill and a



Illustration:
The "Social Guide" printed in the Irish Echo for January 5, 1957. Social events and installations of officers for several county associations, as well as other organizations, are posted. Courtesy of Irish Echo.

sick benefit was paid. Some interviewed spoke of members who were not in need of financial assistance who abused this system and that it was discontinued.¹³ But more often this system operated more smoothly and had a more collegial effect: “Br. Michael Cronin wrote thanking the members for their donation of \$25.00 and that he was returning the check as he did not need the donation. Motion was made and seconded that the Association forward the check to Br. Cronin and inform him that this money go towards his sick benefit.”¹⁴

Here, it should be noted that membership of a county association could operate on a number of levels. There were members who paid annual dues and rarely attended anything outside the annual dance. There were also members who were heavily involved as officers, sometimes over decades. It seems that some organizations formally had two types of membership. One was denoted as ‘beneficial’—presumably meaning that these members were entitled to benefits—and the other was “associate” membership. The details of the following table show the different types of members in one of the associations:

The larger associations boasted memberships of about 350 to 400 at times.¹⁵ But county associations always grappled with the issue of maintaining membership levels, even in the case of bigger counties. It is difficult to gauge exactly how challenging it was to entice new members but the membership levels, as a portion of the entire Irish community, would indicate that it was not for everyone.

Cork (New York) Membership List, 1953

Source: Cork (New York), Minutes, 12 April 1953 Membership.

Beneficial members in good standing	180
Beneficial members in bad standing	93
Associate members in good standing	19
Associate members in bad standing	11
[Members] In armed forces	10
[Beneficial members] initiated during quarter	3
[Members who have] Resigned	1
Honorary members	44
Total membership at end of quarter	357

On the issue of illness, even in the absence of a formal monetary procedure, a county association was expected to reach out to its members. Many of the associations consisted of sick committees where members visited the infirm. This occurred as a goodwill gesture as well as a way of confirming the status of members in the case of their being paid sick benefit. The report from one New York sick committee gives a sense of the activities:

*“Miss A Lyons is still in the Triborough Hospital. Since the last meeting Thomas Leyden passed away R.I.P. Thomas McCormack gave an interesting account of the funeral and said how grateful Mrs. Leyden was to Fr. McMenimum and the Co. Roscommon [Association].”*¹⁶

A Christian—exclusively meaning Catholic—burial is a matter which was considered to be of utmost importance to Irish migrants. While collecting ethnographic material for this study it was very common to be informed that these organizations came together so that no fellow county-person would have to suffer the indignity of being buried in a pauper’s grave, like in Potter’s Field.¹⁷ Instances such as that of 1957 were not unusual in the records:

*Bro. Jim Fogarty reported on the death of Tom Carmody who is not a member of the association mentioning that the deceased had no relatives and unless he was claimed he would be subject to burial in “Potters Field,” Bro John Farrell volunteered his services to try and locate his relatives and to see to it, that he would get a proper burial.*¹⁸

In this example, the deceased was not even a member of the association, but there was a sense of obligation and pride which would not have it said that a Kerryman had been buried in a grave for the destitute. The membership of the Roscommon association in New York had gone so far as to commission a study of those without adequate burial arrangements:

*“Following a report by Collins Healy on the percentage of Irish who die indignant (sic), Mr. Drury recommended any members having deeds to graves not in use, to assign these deeds to the Society for the benefit of Roscommon’s needy cases.”*¹⁹

It is probable that these examples had less to do with a high proportion of migrants making inadequate funerary plans, and more to do with the cradle to grave adherence to Catholic values and practices.

The majority of the county associations had started out as organizations which catered exclusively for men. Over time many founded women's auxiliaries which fulfilled the needs of female migrants. In the past fifty years, most of the New York organizations have assimilated women and have modified the name of the society. The only exception to this is the New York Kerry men who maintain, even today, a strict men-only policy. As a general rule, it was counties that had more migrants in New York that could support two separate associations, divided along gender lines. Smaller counties would be less disposed to splitting the flock, although there were exceptions to this rule too. And it should also be noted that the groups catering to the women were invariably substantially smaller than the male counterparts. As the very names of these groups suggests, the ladies' associations had an auxiliary role in the functioning of the male group; in other words the women were essentially controlled by the men:

"They [the men] organized the women's organization, the ladies auxiliary, and they could have disbanded us, you see? They had the power.... We were of the County Corkmen's Association.... They had the power... over the auxiliary."²⁰

Generally, the auxiliaries undertook some of the same functions as their male equivalents by organizing dances and religious celebrations and marching in the St. Patrick's Day Parade. There is no evidence of any formal schemes of sick or mortuary benefit for the women. And, their activities in large part depended on the support of the men. Often too, the women active in the auxiliary groups were the spouses of men who

themselves played significant roles in the main association.²¹

Most commonly, social functions were organized as a means of raising funds for worthy causes; many of which were linked to Catholic charities and the religious orders. The level of correspondence the associations received soliciting support, in the form of attendance at functions or financial aid, is arresting. And, the following extract of correspondences is typical of the era. We can see the scope of demands placed on these organizations and the prominence of religious orders:

The president introduced Brother Xavier Cosgrove, a member of the Franciscan Order now visiting in the United States... He referred to the cost of educating young men for the Brotherhood and said his mission to America

was to seek funds for their headquarters at Mt. Bellew. The president assured Brother Xavier that our Society would be very glad to cooperate and would do this by cooperating with the Co. Galway Association which had planned to give a benefit in the near future, by way of a dance, to raise funds.

A communication was read from St. Columbans League, New York, asking for financial assistance for their Chinese missions. Attached thereto was a listing of Roscommon-born priests now assigned to the missions in China under the auspices of the St. Columban Fathers.

A communication was read from All Hallows, New York City, enclosing a book of chances to help defray the expenses of their schools. The tickets were disposed of, and a total of \$5 collected, which will be forwarded to All Hallows.²²

President Carlow Society



KATHERINE CANNON

Katherine Cannon, popular colleague in Irish circles was elected president of the Carlow Society at a recent meeting. Other officers are: Sean Bergin, Vice-Pres.; John Boyle, Fin. Secty.; P. Dillon recorder; Margaret McMahon, Corr. Secty.; Tom Nolan, Treas.; Bill Delahunt, Sgt.-at-Arms. The Annual Carlow Dance is set for Sat., Feb. 2, in the Hotel Dauphin, 67th St. & Broadway.

Photo:

In 1957,

Katherine Cannon was chosen as president of the Carlow Society.

Courtesy of Irish Echo.

CELEBRATING ORIGINS AND EVENTS

A primary function of county associations was

formalizing a means of celebrating the county of origin, while allowing people of the same county background to come together. In an age where communications and transport were often costly and slow, this aspect of associational life was not insignificant. The meetings and events were seen as places of 'reunion.'²³ For a migrant population which had predominantly come from a rural background to a very urban setting, the associations served as sites where migrants could emulate activities they were used to. For generations who had grown up in an Ireland where house-visiting and community life were pivotal, county associations provided ways to re-enact familiar practices. It is for largely the same reasons that the role of religion was so pervasive in their activity; again mirroring the practices which had been transported from Ireland. Nor was it uncommon for a meeting to facilitate, for example, the screening of the All Ireland Football Final.²⁴

These groups provided a way for the ethnic communities to divide up the responsibility in marking certain historical events or celebrations which pertained to certain counties. In other words, each association became the custodian of the organization and celebration of certain events. For example, the Wexfordmen's Association took on a role as chief organizer of the annual Commodore John Barry ("Father of the American Navy") pilgrimage to Philadelphia.²⁵ It is appropriate here to note that while these associations presented themselves as entities that unified all those who hailed from a particular county, it is clear that there were sometimes small factors which caused divisions. This feature was probably more apparent in the associations for the larger counties:

*"There was a little division...It's hurling country in south and east Galway. It's football country in the north.... All of these...subtle, little things counted, you know. So, it's not that we weren't friendly with everybody, you know, we were all Galway. But, the subtlety was there."*²⁶

FINDING EMPLOYMENT

Networking has in recent times become part of everyday language. This was a key feature of county associations long before the term was coined in its most contemporary sense and is something



which probably dates back to their very origins. What is clear is that the meetings and events were really important sites for the exchange of vital information, especially in the realms of employment. One migrant explained that he knew about the Mayo men's Association from the very first day he arrived in New York because:

The word of mouth was, if you have any trouble getting a job, see somebody, because the people that were in the Mayo Association had influence. O'Dwyer was Mayor [of New York]. He had appointed a Police Commissioner-who was from a couple of villages away...And then he had another one that was there for the Fire Department...He appointed all these Irish, you know? So there were always people in these jobs. The people that were up in Gaelic Park and played football, they got jobs with the...beer and the whiskey and the soda companies, you know?²⁷

Illustration: Advertisements for social events organized by several county associations in celebration of St. Patrick's Day during 1954. Courtesy of Irish Echo.

Another migrant held a prominent role in one of New York's construction-related unions

The specific in our case here is our own people, particularly the young men and women who are new here and in all cases bursting with ambition. I find it hard to cope with the rush to me. I have 70 in my class at present, which makes a total of over three hundred put forward for their High School Diplomas in one year. I do not know of any high school, whether it is a million dollar investment or more, and most of them are, that has that number in its graduation class. That number does not of course include about 2,000 who had secondary education on the other side, who came in to have their records appraised. Neither does it include about the same number of letters on problems of all shapes and descriptions. All this is done you might say privately, while we have the greatest number of organizations of any race in the world, to me anyway, standing on the sidelines, hauling in five thousand dollars three times a year at their dances, plus another haul at Croke Park, all to be parked in the nearest Savings Bank, which pays them 2% interest. Suggest to them that they loan some of that money to put our Irish boys and girls through college at the same interest rate; why, man, they'd call you a spy if you did.

and was known as a person to contact via the GAA or through county associations. His wife recalled:

There were a lot of people that came with John's name—to this country. And... that's all they had, was John's name and phone

*number—a lot of people. And he was very good to the young Irish coming out and that's why he was honored by so many of the associations.*²⁸

In fact, many county associations had very strong links to unions in the city. Jack McCarthy was a very active member of the Cork Association in New York and he was Business Agent for the Cement & Concrete Workers Union and was known for taking special care of Cork men. Jack's motto was "Cork men first, and all others after or will follow."²⁹ The Kerry association had a very strong connection to the Paperhandlers Union. The recordings of one meeting reiterate relations between county associations and unions:

*"Louth Senior Football Club dinner dance—April 10th at Gaelic Park: The business agent of Carpenter Union Local 608, James Fox, will be guest of honor. 'Patrick Kissane said James Fox has been a good friend of Kerry men coming here, he has helped many get jobs.'*³⁰

Michael Quill, a famous labor movement activist and founder of the Transport Workers Union, was a member of the Kerry men in New York and was also known to provide special assistance to his fellow county men. Looking after those from one's own county or those who had strong sporting connections was a natural part of the tapestry of life in the Irish community.

SPREADING INFORMATION

Meetings were an important means of disseminating information in the Irish communities and there was a broad spectrum of issues touched on

at meetings. We have already noted how meetings were platforms of discussion for issues like deaths and illness in the community, but there were also more pedestrian issues addressed within the confines of these gatherings and such issues are a tangible means of plotting the contemporary issues of concern:

*"As Chairman of the Committee for 'Parcels Post to Ireland' he reported that the Minister of Posts and Telegraphs in Ireland had written to the U.I.C. stating that it was the Irish Government which had set eleven pounds as the maximum weight for packages from the United States to Ireland. The U.I.C. requested that this weight be increased to twenty pounds.*³¹

It is not unusual to find mention of political issues in Ireland in the minutes of many of the associations.³² However, in noting this feature of the associational pattern it is important to highlight certain qualifications. Firstly, there is no doubt that certain county associations in the city were probably more "political" than others, and this probably depended on two things. Firstly, the extent of the "political-ness" of associations mirrored the general traits of that county in Ireland. For example, the associations from the eastern seaboard counties would generally have been less vocal on Irish political developments than those with a strong tradition of politicization or indeed counties directly affected by partition. But, even this assertion could also be undermined for two reasons. In the first case, these associations, by their nature were open to being swayed by the viewpoint of a small cohort of individuals and therefore the political outlook of a small number could dominate the group. At the same time, certain records make it clear that certain members were not shy in questioning the appropriateness of certain discussions:

*"Mr. Carlos said that Mr. Eden is back in London and there is no further meeting with Mr. Eisenhower. Mr. O'Gara said that this matter should be turned over to the United Irish Counties, seconded by Mr. J. Gordon. Mr. Noone believes that we are leaving ourselves open to politics, and our organization is primarily social.*³³

Illustration:
At least one contemporary observer of Irish organizations in New York during 1950 suggested they should provide more educational support for the increasing numbers of Irish high-school graduates.
Courtesy of Irish Echo.

LINKS WITH CATHOLIC CHURCH

Another issue is more complex on many levels. Constitutionally, county associations were non-sectarian and non-political organizations. However, in practice this was not the case and it was not just a matter of the lack of constitutionality of any political bias. The links between county associations and the Catholic Church form as an entangled mesh of collegiality and reciprocity which was pivotal for the existence of the groups. These links added to their legitimacy by mirroring similar trends in Ireland and strengthening their role as providers of charity. This is not to say that some did not question the status quo, as an issue over an exclusively Catholic event, as proposed by the members of the Cork association in New York in 1953, shows:

*John F. Healy spoke on the Communion Breakfast and said he was opposed to it as The Corkmens is an unsectarian (sic) organization and that the holding of a Communion Breakfast was suggested twenty years ago and at that time it was not accepted and in his opinion it was against the Constitution to hold a Communion Breakfast.*³⁴

It is possible that there was a tiny shift in the religious profile with the influx of new migrants after World War II, implying that the associations perhaps became more exclusively Catholic. It is commonly accepted that the vast majority of those who migrated from Ireland to New York in the era in question were Catholic and so in these associations fit neatly into the Catholic experience in the city. Yet, it is possible that the associations were more ecumenical in the earlier period. This is not to suggest that county associations ever attracted any great numbers of non-Catholics, but there is evidence to suggest that perhaps there more of a Protestant presence in the earlier decades. This interpretation would benefit from further investigation but it is interesting that Mr. Healy, in the last quotation, mentioned that the Communion Breakfasts in the 1930s were considered to be incongruous with the publicized ethos of the Corkmen, as a group. And, Paul O'Dwyer's description of the Mayo association in the mid-1920s is revealing (a Protestant president of the Mayomen would have been even more striking and perhaps more unlikely thirty years later:

The Mayomen, whose average age must

*have been fifty (mine was twenty-three when I joined), opened their doors to all who came from County Mayo and their descendants. When I was admitted to membership George Ormsby was president. He was also the only Protestant member. Like most Irish American organizations, the Mayomen were non-sectarian, and George was not the sort of man to tell his fellow members that there was a measure of inconsistency in a non-sectarian society's having as its chaplain a Catholic priest.*³⁵

In general, it is clear that the make-up and design of county associations fostered broad purposes. The nature of their origins left room for more mundane exchanges and benign requests, always with a focus on assisting a person from one's own county:

*"A Barth O'Connor had written a letter from England asking for assistance in getting a job and an apartment when he arrived with his wife and children; Kevin Coffey said he has obtained a job as a plumber and he had a lead on an apartment."*³⁶

ON ST. PATRICK'S DAY

St. Patrick's Day was the most important day of the year for these organizations. The county associations played a significant role in a parade which, even in the postwar era, was one of the biggest in the world and featured the county associations prominently, not least because these organizations played an organizational role in proceedings. St. Patrick's Day was a day of reunions for the Irish community in New York. Ridge describes:

*For many a parade participant the annual march was very much a social occasion, an occasion to meet and renew old acquaintances in the side streets where the units formed up. This was especially true of the Irish county units because the big banners with their religious and patriotic scenes reflecting the history of their respective counties were a natural attraction for those hoping to meet someone from home.*³⁷



Photo:
Cardinal Francis Spellman addresses a large crowd at the United Irish Counties Feis held at Fordham University in 1950. Courtesy of John T. Ridge.

But, the participation of county associations in the parade went beyond their physical presence on Fifth Avenue. The associations, and more specifically the U.I.C., were represented on the committee of the St. Patrick's Day Parade. Historically therefore the links between the parade organizers and the associations was strong. The day also became a platform for the associations to air their views on issues like the political status in Ireland:

*"It was decided that the Association purchase a flag bearing "England get out of Ireland" for our St. Patrick's Day Parade at a cost of twenty-five dollars."*³⁸

Marching in the parade, as one of the most esteemed events of the year, meant that each county took pride in how they marched and thus how they would be seen as ambassadors for their county:

*"He asked the members to see to it that everybody parading in the Kerry group conduct themselves properly. He said the drunkenness or misbehaving of a few will reflect on the whole organization."*³⁹

However, St. Patrick's Day was not just about the day itself. It formed as the culmination of an entire season where social events kept active members busy. Immense preparation and planning went into the timetable of dances and booking venues. Note that in March 1956, before the St. Patrick's Day celebration for that year, the Kerry men were discussing the 1958 venue:

*The Fin-Sec-Treasurer [Financial Secretary/Treasurer] reported that next year St. Patrick's Day will fall on Sunday and that the Galway Ass'n have signed contract for March 16 date and that the Corkmen's Ass'n may leave Manhattan Center and if so the Kerry men's would have next date which would be March 15, 1958 and in 1958 this Association would have Sat night before St. Patrick's Day.*⁴⁰

The general trend seems to have been that each association held a dance (later a dinner dance) to mark Ireland's national holiday. It seems that a dance around the month of March was just one of at least three dances that were organized each year; commonly others were held in January and November. It is difficult to estimate the size of all of the dances that county associations may have

held, but records suggest that these were often big affairs. One Kerry-organized dance in November, 1950 saw 2,701 tickets sold.⁴¹ The January, 1951 dance saw in the region of 2,500 tickets sold.⁴² Given the popularity of dance-halls for this generation of Irish-born New Yorkers, these admission figures are not all that shocking. An annual field day at Croke (later known as Gaelic) Park was also another sizeable affair. The Kerry Field Day of 1952 drew 2,759 supporters.⁴³ It was not unusual for county associations and GAA clubs to collaborate.⁴⁴ The Field Days, which were popular in the 1950s and 1960s, were decent revenue earners for the associations.⁴⁵ An annual feis was also an important annual event for the associations, and it was organized by the U.I.C.

These associations provided an acceptable face for the Irish in post-war New York and these groups took pride in how they represented their county: "John said that Kerry is the first county organization to rent the ballroom at the Astor [Hotel]. The behavior of the people that evening will decide the Astor management policy toward county organizations in the future."⁴⁶ They espoused values that added to the respectability of the group and which detracted from stereotypes associated with the ethnic group. One scholar has noted that organizations like these provided a more "respectable face for wider public consumption,"⁴⁷ Linked to this is the fact that being an officer in one of these societies imbued an element of prestige. Kevin Morrissey, when asked if active participation was consequential, responded: "That mattered...that counted.... People liked the recognition that they got, and people who knew that they were workers for their county organization, appreciated them."⁴⁸

Overall, we need to consider the general importance of county associations for post-war migrants. Numerically, memberships of these societies were sometimes small; for every one migrant who was actively involved in these organisations, literally thousands others took no meaningful part in the activities, at least on an organisational level. But, to base a study on statistical weight alone misses the point. The reason the county associations are a useful tool is because they, as collective bodies, occupied piv-

» TABLES «

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|---|------------------------------------|
| 1. Antrim Society | 20. Donegal Association |
| 2. Ancient Order of Hibernians—
N. Y. County Board | 21. Donegal Association |
| 3. Armagh Society | 22. Driscoll, Jeremiah |
| 4. Ballantine Brewery | 23. Doyle, James H., Jr. |
| 5. Benevolent Society of I.R.A. | 24. Dublin Society |
| 6. Bradshaw, Miss Maire | 25. Dublin Society |
| 7. Carlow Association | 26. Dublin Society |
| 8. Carlow Association | 27. Dublin Society |
| 9. Cashin, John P. | 28. Dublin Society |
| 10. Cavan Men's Association | 29. Fallon, Frank |
| 11. Clare Men's Association | 30. Farrell, John |
| 12. Comerford, Hon. James J. | 31. Ferguson, Dr. & Mrs. Edward J. |
| 13. Cork Men's Association | 32. Fermanagh Association |
| 14. Cork Men's Association | 33. Gaelic Athletic Association |
| 15. Cork Men's Association | 34. Galway Men's Association |
| 16. Cosgrove, Miss Rose
& Miss Beatrice Maullaney | 35. Hoffman Beverage Company |
| 17. Dalcassian Club | 36. Irish Voice |
| 18. Derry Society | 37. Keating, Hon. Sean P. |
| 19. Donegal Association | 38. Kerry Ladies Auxiliary |
| | 39. Kerry Men's Association |
| | 40. Kerry Men's Association |

otal positions in the institutional topography of Irish New York in the twentieth century. Indeed, given their sometimes modest membership levels, their role is even more remarkable. These groups are also an excellent example of a social group which occupied a position between that of the primary level and more formal state institutions. As Jenkins has noted, these types of associations “are broader than the family, but smaller than the bureaucracy, they can serve as linkages between those two systems.”⁴⁹ And, that these organisations emerged at a time which is significant in the history of Irish migration is no mere coincidence.

In conclusion, these groups provide a very interesting case-study as they operated as stand-alone entities, and they had frequent interaction with two of the most significant institutions in the ethnic landscape: the Church and the GAA. From this position they offer a unique perspective on the institutional completeness of the Irish in twentieth-century in a significant migrant hub. The entanglement of exchanges between the religious, sporting and social associations present themselves as intricate networks which touched on welfare, sport, religion, labor, politics and socializing. And in this way, the county associations were themselves multi-functional entities. Through this associational activity we can look at the migrant population in a unique interesting way, which sheds light on its

composition by assuming that groups are made up of individuals who come together with a common purpose. It is the sum of the goals of these individuals which dictate the action undertaken by the group. The source material used in this analysis provides an innovative way of exploring the outlook of the Irish-born New York community in the period in question.

Notes

- 1 This paper is an extract of a much larger body of work dealing with county associations in the context of Irish post-war migration.
- 2 John T. Ridge, “Irish County Societies in New York, 1880–1914,” *The New York Irish*, (eds.) Ronald H. Bayor and Timothy J. Meaghar, The Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore and London, 1996, pp. 275–300; John T. Ridge, *Sligo in New York: The Irish from Co. Sligo: 1849–1991*, (New York, 1991); John T. Ridge, “The Records Speak,” *New York Irish History*, Vol. 4 (1989), pp. 34–35; John T. Ridge, “The County Longford Colony in New York-Part 1,” *New York Irish History*, Vol. 17 (2003), pp. 21–24; John T. Ridge, “Keeping Longford Connections: The County Longford Colony in New York, Part II,” *New York Irish History*, Vol. 18 (2004), pp. 33–48; James McElroy, “The County Tyrone Society of New York,” *New York Irish History*, Vol. 5 (1990–91), pp. 39–42; Liam Dunphy, “County Cork in New York: A History of the County Cork Association,” *New York Irish History*, Vol. 3 (1988), pp. 21–23.
- 3 These records were consulted in the Kerry men’s Hall in Yonkers in spring 2008 and I am most grateful to Muiris Brick and Chris Keane of the Kerry men’s P. & B. Association, New York for facilitating this.
- 4 Records are held at the Archive of Irish America, New York University, and I am indebted to Marion Casey for making these available to me.
- 5 Records are held at Cork Hall, Long Island City. Many thanks to Mae O’Driscoll for assistance in consulting these papers.
- 6 These interviews were held in the Archives of Irish America at New York University and will be made available for consultation in the near future. Most of the interviews were undertaken from October to December 2006.

Illustration:

Partial list of county associations and other groups that purchased tables at the 1954 Golden Jubilee of the United Irish Counties organization. Published in the U.I.C. Commemorative Booklet.

- 7 This involved attending meetings and events organized by county associations from October 2006 to March 2008.
- 8 Jose C. Moya, "Immigrants and Associations: A Global and Historical Perspective," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, Vol. 31, No. 5, September 2005, p.851.
- 9 The exception was Wicklow where it seems that those from the Garden of Ireland took part in events organized by Wexford. Interview with Mary Thomas, Riverdale, New York, 10 November 2006.
- 10 Ibid.
- 11 Interview with Kevin Morrissey, Glucksman Ireland House, New York, 12 October 2006.
- 12 Minutes of Kerry men's P.&B. Association, New York, 6 March 1954.
- 13 Interview with Jimmy Lynch, Elmhurst, New York, 9 November 2006.
- 14 Minutes, Kerry men, 17 June 1955.
- 15 Minutes, Kerry men, 17 June 1955 and January 1955.
- 16 Archives of Irish America, New York University, [AIA-NYU] Roscommon Minutes (New York). 1/1/46–12/31/ 52, Roscommon Society, 15 February 1952.
- 17 Interview with Ellen Smith, Jackson Heights, New York, 6 November 2006.
- 18 Minutes, Kerry men, 18 January 1957.
- 19 AIA-NYU, Roscommon Minutes (New York), 1/1/46–12/31/52, Minutes of meeting of 15 December 1950.
- 20 Interview with Ellen Smith, Jackson Heights, New York, 6 November 2006.
- 21 Ibid.
- 22 AIA-NYU, Roscommon Minutes (New York), 1/1/1946-12/31/1952, Minutes of meeting held 19 March 1948.
- 23 Interview with John Jennings, Long Island, New York, 31 October 2006.
- 24 Minutes, Kerry men, 15 November 1964.
- 25 Minutes, Kerry men, 17 June 1955. Barry hailed from the Model County.
- 26 Interview with Kevin Morrissey, Glucksman Ireland House, New York, 12 October 2006.
- 27 Interview with John Jennings, Long Island, New York, 31 October 2006.
- 28 Interview with Anne Keane, Long Island, New York, 14 November 2006.
- 29 Email communication from Ms. Mae O'Driscoll, Cork Association, New York, 2 May 2008.
- 30 Minutes, Kerry men, 7 March 1965.
- 31 Minutes, Kerry men, 5 March 1948.
- 32 Minutes, Kerry men, 20 January 1956.
- 33 AIA-NYU, Roscommon Minutes, New York, 24 February 1956.
- 34 Corkmen, Recording Secretary's Reports of Meetings, 1 March 1953.
- 35 Paul O'Dwyer, *Consul for the Defense: The Autobiography of Paul O'Dwyer*, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1979, p.92.
- 36 Minutes, Kerry men, 18 October 1963.
- 37 John T. Ridge, *St. Patrick's Day Parade in New York*, St. Patrick's Day Committee, New York, 1988, p. 145.
- 38 Minutes, Kerry men, 10 March 1957.
- 39 Minutes, Kerry men, 7 March 1965.
- 40 Minutes, Kerry men, 9 March 1956.
- 41 Minutes, Kerry men, 1 December 1950.
- 42 Minutes, Kerry men, 4 February 1951.
- 43 Minutes, Kerry men, 5 October 1952.
- 44 AIA-NYU, Roscommon Minutes (New York), 1/1/46-12/31/52, 18 May 1951.
- 45 Minutes, Kerry men, Financial Report for the year 1963 which is incorporated into the minutes, no specific date.
- 46 Minutes, Kerry men, 17 January 1965.
- 47 Enda Delaney, *The Irish in Post-war Britain*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2007, p. 172/3.
- 48 Interview with Kevin Morrissey, Glucksman Ireland House, New York, 12 October 2006.
- 49 Shirley Jenkins (ed.), *Ethnic Associations and the Welfare State: Services to Immigrants in Five Countries*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1988, p.276.