

The Best Air in the City: Socioeconomics of the Irish in Highbridge, 1920–1960

BY KATHLEEN FEIGHERY

The neighborhood of Highbridge lies in the Bronx, bounded by West 172nd Street to the north, Jerome Avenue to the east, the Harlem River to the west, and West 161st Street to the south or “...the distance from which one can hear the [Yankee] stadium crowd roar.”¹

It was first settled in the 1840s as the village of Highbridgeville, and among its earliest residents were many Irish immigrants working on the Croton Aqueduct, which crosses the Hudson River at this juncture. The Irish presence in the neighborhood remained strong for over a century, particularly from about 1920 through the late 1960s. Yet, the neighborhood was never solely Irish. Other white ethnic

groups were always present as well as native-born Americans and, from the 1950s, African-Americans and Puerto Ricans. However, for many Irish, “Highbridge” was synonymous with “Irish.” Throughout the mid-twentieth century, the economic story of the first- and second-generation Irish in this neighborhood is a microcosm of the larger economic story of the Irish in the Bronx and in the rest of New York City.

LOOKING FOR A BETTER PLACE

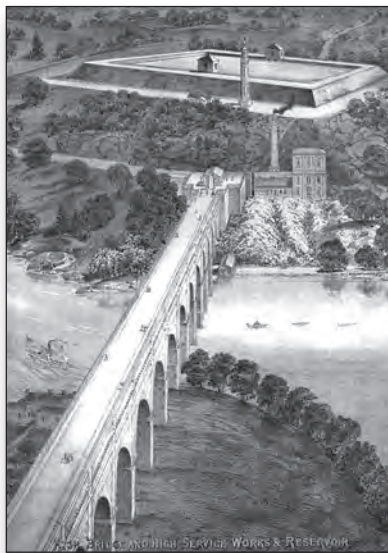
As the ethnic make-up of once-Irish neighborhoods in Manhattan began to change in the early decades of the twentieth century, many Irish began to look to the Bronx. Between 1910 and 1950, the number of Irish-born New Yorkers living in the Bronx rose from seven percent to twenty-six percent.²

Highbridge, with its pre-existing Irish population, quickly obtained a reputation as a good neighborhood for Irish looking to move from Manhattan. Like others migrating to the Bronx in the post-World War I years, people who moved to Highbridge were looking for a better place to raise a family. Advertised as

having “the best air in the city,” Highbridge was close enough to Manhattan for those who worked there, but also allowed families to attain a standard of living that may not have been possible in Manhattan.³ More important to many Irish, the neighborhood already had an established Catholic church—Sacred Heart. Founded in 1875, by 1910 the parish had raised enough money to replace its old wooden chapel with a marble church.⁴ Margaret Ginty, raised in the neighborhood, recalled in

2009 that “Everyone wanted to live in Sacred Heart. You couldn’t get in to the neighborhood because no one was moving out.... You were proud to say you lived in Sacred Heart.”⁵ Her family left Harlem for Highbridge around 1930 because her parents had heard that the neighborhood was a good area for a family, with the added bonus of a large Irish population.⁶

The neighborhood quickly grew to accommodate this influx of new residents. By 1925 the construction boom in the South Bronx hit Highbridge⁷ in the form of five- and six-story apartment buildings, built right alongside the wooden frame single-family houses, relics of the Bronx’s rural past.⁸ Shirley Paris recalls that when her family first moved to the neighborhood in the early 1930s, “Highbridge...was characterized by a low, bro-



Kathleen Feighery holds a master's degree in Irish and Irish American studies from New York University, where she attended the Irish Studies Program at Gluckman Ireland House. She is a project editor in the college department at W. W. Norton & Company. ©2011. Published with permission of Kathleen Feighery.

ken skyline—six-story apartment houses next to two-story private homes and one- or two-story ‘taxpayers.’”⁹ Margaret Ginty recalls that her family’s building at 96 West 163rd Street was five stories tall, with four two- or three-bedroom apartments on each floor, each with a kitchen and a living room.¹⁰

While some apartments in the neighborhood appealed to working-class residents and others to the middle class, the difference between the two could often be determined by as little as one room. For people who were accustomed to making do with little space, the addition of one room could make a significant difference. For Shirley Paris, her family’s move from a four-room to a five-room apartment was “a significant move up the social ladder.”¹¹ She described her family as “middle class folks,” who usually had apartments with a dining room in addition to the bedrooms, kitchen, and bathroom.¹² Most working-class apartments, like those most likely occupied by Irish residents, did not have a dining room. Margaret Ginty remembers that her family would eat in the kitchen, which was so small that the family ate in shifts. The living room was converted into a dining room for Sunday dinner or parties.¹³ Although some families did move to larger apartments as their family expanded, the majority of Irish families in Highbridge lived in spaces that had, at most, three bedrooms. Large families didn’t mean bigger apartments, but rather more people to fit—they “made room where [they] had to.”¹⁴ Jim Mullan’s family lived in a two-room apartment—one room had the refrigerator, sink, stove, washer, pullout couch for him and his younger brother, television, and bureau; the other room was his parents’ bedroom.¹⁵ Pat Lorello, who grew up in Highbridge in the 1950s, recalls that:

I don’t believe I knew anyone, anywhere who had more than one bedroom for their kids. As a matter of fact, I knew a lot of people who had all their kids in one bedroom and the parents had a Castro convertible [couch] in the living room, where they slept. That was

*just the way it was so no one thought anything about it. One bedroom for all the kids, and if lucky, another for the parents.*¹⁶

Edmund Dwyer, a Christian Brother who taught at Sacred Heart School in the 1940s, recalls the Irish residents as solidly working-class:

*Although their apartments were small, and one might have to climb a lot of stairs to get to them, they were always kept very neatly, and the children were always neatly dressed, if not in the newest of clothes.*¹⁷

GENERATIONAL DIFFERENCES

The residential patterns in Highbridge reflected the varying socioeconomic positions of its residents. However, while there were significant differences between ethnic groups, more important to the story of the Irish are the differences that existed between first-, second-, and third-generation Irish.¹⁸ For first-generation Irish throughout New York City, as well as in Highbridge, one of the major employers was the city itself. The city’s transit system was dominated by Irish men; the 1930 census classified 14,052 residents of Brooklyn, Manhattan, and the Bronx as working in transit, sixty-two percent of whom were foreign-born white men.¹⁹ The Third Avenue Railway was ninety percent Irish at its height,²⁰ and by the 1930s, the Interborough Rapid Transit (IRT) System was such a large employer of Irish immigrants that it was sometimes referred to as the Irish Rapid Transit System.²¹ In 1886 the Suburban Rapid Transit Company crossed the Harlem River, connecting the Third Avenue Elevated with the New York and Northern rail line, which ran directly through Highbridge.²² By the time the Bronx became a borough in 1898, more than half of the workers supporting the city’s infrastructure, such as the transit system, streets, and waterworks, were Irish.²³ Western Bronx neighborhoods like Highbridge were among the first



Photo: Sacred Heart Church on Shakespeare Avenue in Highbridge as it appeared recently. The parish was established in 1875. By 1910 the growing Irish Catholic population was able to replace its original wooden building with a larger marble edifice. Courtesy of Bronx Catholic.

to connect to the city's expanding rapid transit system,²⁴ and this became a factor in the decision of Irish men to move to Highbridge. Transit workers were required to put in long hours on the job, with many working twelve-hour days, seven days a week. Before unionization, a seventy- or eighty-hour work week was not uncommon.²⁵ Because of this, many transit workers lived near the start or end of their work. The majority of the train yards, trolley depots, and bus garages were located in the



Photo:
A construction site on Manhattan's Fourth Avenue for the Interborough Rapid Transit subway line in 1902. During the line's construction and early decades of operation, Irish workers found employment on the IRT. Courtesy of NYCSubway.org.

Bronx, with a major train facility in Highbridge. In 1918, an elevated railway connected the Bronx's Jerome Avenue line with the Ninth Avenue line in Manhattan. It had two underground stops in Highbridge—Sedgewick Avenue between 161st and 162nd Streets and the intersection of Jerome and Anderson Avenues,²⁶ and brought passengers across the Harlem River to the Polo Grounds in Manhattan.²⁷ The Woodlawn-Jerome (6) subway line, which runs along Jerome Avenue and has two stops in the neighborhood, was part of the IRT until the IRT merged with the city lines in 1940.²⁸ On University Avenue in Highbridge, there was a complex of connected houses whose residents were known to be “all Irish” and was nicknamed “Interborough Row.”²⁹ Like the earlier aqueduct and railroad work, also city-paid, these railroad jobs were extremely secure, providing stability for workers and their families.³⁰ While some jobs, like motorman, which required more training and skill, were fairly high paying,³¹ most jobs were not, and most employees remained in the working class.³² Very few Irish ever made it into top managerial positions.³³

Specific employment data can be found in the federal census, undertaken every ten

years. Data from one Highbridge block, West 163rd Street between Ogden and Woodycrest Avenues, can serve as an example block for the neighborhood. There were 215 total residents on this block in 1930.

Out of these, 45 were first-generation Irish (25 male, 20 female), and 50 were second-generation Irish (24 male, 26 female).

Germans were the second largest ethnic presence on the block, with 23 first- and second-generation residents.³⁴ (As the table on page 25 shows, there was

distinct ethnic grouping within the different occupational categories on the block. For a more detailed description of the occupation categorization for the West 163rd Street, see endnotes.)³⁵ As discussed above, the railroad was a major employer—on this block both first- and second-generation Irish were represented in the “Railroad Worker” category. Jim Mullan, whose father was a motorman for the railroad in the 1950s, recalls that the fathers of most of his friends worked for the railroad, and all belonged to the transportation union.³⁶ In fact, the railroad is the second largest employer of first-generation Irish, preceded only by the “Laborer” category. Blue-collar workers were just as common in the rest of the neighborhood. Margaret Ginty's father held down two jobs—a truck driver for Muller Dairies, a German-owned company, located a subway ride away in Manhattan, and a mechanic at a garage at Ogden Avenue.³⁷

The railroad, however, was not the only “city job” the New York Irish aspired to. To the Irish-born, a job working for the government (city, state, or federal) was truly the pinnacle of success. These jobs were respectable, not as subject to the vagaries of the economy as manual labor, and, most impor-

	Alsace-Lorraine	America	Austria	Czechoslovakia	England	Germany	Ireland	Italy	Russia	Scotland	Sweden	Switzerland	Wales	Grand Total
Artisan		7					2		1					10
Building Trades		1												1
Business Owner							1							1
Civil Service							1							1
Clerk		28			1		4							33
Clothing Worker		2				1	1	1			1	1		7
Domestic Worker		4				1	2							7
Engineer							2							2
Guard						1								1
Hotel & Boardinghouse Workers	1	1	1			1	1							5
Laborer		7					8							15
Maritime Worker		1					1							2
Police & Fire		1					1							2
Professional Worker		10		1		2				1				14
Railroad Worker		5					4							9
Salesman		9					1							10
Skilled Worker		2												2
Telephone Worker		1											1	2
Grand Total	1	79	1	1	1	6	29	1	1	1	1	1	1	124

Table: Employment Breakdown by Nativity, West 163rd Street Sample, Highbridge, New York City, 1930

tantly, provided a pension and other benefits.³⁸ According to Kevin Meehan, an Irish-American raised in Inwood, a Manhattan neighborhood just across the High Bridge, "...a city job was the benchmark of opportunity." His brother's ideal job was not to be a millionaire, but to be a police captain.³⁹ In 1957, the *Irish Echo* echoed these sentiments, writing "...the secure job became the catchword: 'He has a City job,' became the slogan of success."⁴⁰ By 1930, according to McKivigan and Robertson, "...the public sector employed a full one-third of first-, second-, and third-generation Irish Americans."⁴¹ According to the *WPA Historical Records Survey*, in New York City "...by the late 1930s, the Irish made up...seventy percent of the Transport Workers Union; fifty percent of the police department, seventy-five percent of the fire department, and twenty-five percent of the sanitation department."⁴²

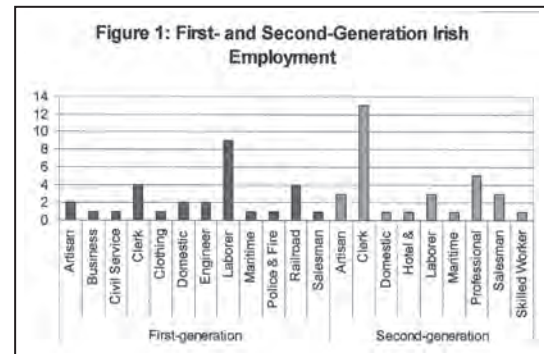
Within Highbridge, the "city job" held similar significance. Bill McNamara, third-generation Irish raised in Highbridge, recalls that his father always encouraged him to go after a city job "because you will always have a paycheck." McNamara went into the police department.⁴³ Paul Heneghan's father was a postman, and the Heneghans counted policemen and firemen among their neighbors.⁴⁴ Jim Mullan's father, second-generation himself, worked for the subway, and encouraged his son to join the fire or police department; however, at only five-foot-seven, Mullan was too short. Mullan believed that his father regretted his son's lost opportunity until his dying day.⁴⁵ Mullan's father's job was itself a step up the socioeconomic ladder from his grandfather, who worked as the custodian in the Highbridge branch of the New York Public Library.⁴⁶ In lieu of joining up with the boys in blue, Mullan went to Manhattan College and then to City College for a master's degree in

English. His father was baffled when he did not join the priesthood after graduation, because to his father the only people who went on to higher education were religious.⁴⁷ In contrast, his mother, who forfeited college for a job during the Depression, encouraged her son's educational pursuits. Her lack of higher education was always something she regretted, but wanted for her children.⁴⁸ The contrasting opinions of Mullan's father, who pushed a "city job" on his son, and his mother, who pushed higher education and had family established in the United States for a number of generations, are similar to those of the larger Irish population in the city.

While these city jobs commanded a degree of respectability and stability, they did not offer much opportunity for socioeconomic advancement. The highest socioeconomic position attainable with these jobs was lower-middle-class. In order to move further up, one had to look to the private sector, a move many first-generation Irish were wary of making in fear of losing the dependability of a city paycheck. However, for all that these first- and second-generation men remained on the city payroll many, particularly second-generation Irish, pushed their children to higher levels of socioeconomic success through education. By the 1930s, the police, fire, and postal departments all offered scholarships for the children of their members to attend Catholic high schools and colleges.⁴⁹ By 1933, according to the *Catholic Directory*, high schools in the archdiocese of New York enrolled 158,352 pupils and Catholic colleges had 195 students.⁵⁰ This education was one of the most important factors in opening up greater opportunities for second and successive generations. Second-generation Irish living on West 163rd Street had more varied occupations than their parents. One notable difference is the presence of second-generation Irish in the "Professional" and "Skilled Worker" categories, which required significant education and/or training, and which do not appear for the first-generation (see Figure 1).⁵¹

WOMEN'S ROLES IN HIGHBRIDGE

Irish women in the neighborhood also did their part to help the family's finances. Bill McNamara recalls that mothers who could afford to stay home did so, but many of the Irish mothers in Highbridge couldn't afford this luxury.⁵² His mother worked at Fordell Films, a local company that made commercials as well as military, medical, and training films.⁵³ He also recalls that the H.W. Wilson Publishing Company, in Highbridge since 1917, was another big employer of neighborhood women.⁵⁴ Other first-generation Irish women in New York worked for Daniel Reeves' grocery store. Reeves and his brother were first-generation Irish grocers who had 750 stores throughout the city by 1941.⁵⁵ Margaret Ginty's parents worked for the Reeves family when they first arrived from County Cork in 1930. Her father worked as a chauffeur for Reeves; her mother worked in the household as a domestic until she married.⁵⁶ Of the first-generation women living on West 163rd Street in 1930, only three of twenty (a clerk at an insurance company, a seamstress, and a stock girl in a dry-goods store) worked outside of the home (two were



unmarried and one was widowed).⁵⁷ To some extent, married women going out to work still carried a stigma through these years. Maureen Waters, who grew up in Highbridge in the early 1940s, recalls that neither she nor her sister understood "... the humiliation [their mother] felt, an Irishwoman forced to sell bedspreads in Macy's because her husband couldn't support the family."⁵⁸ At Sacred Heart School, the nuns' expectations for the

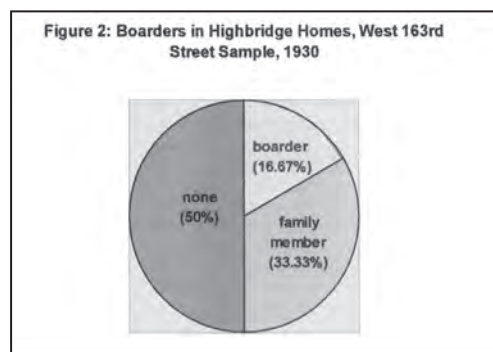
employment futures of their students in the 1940s and 1950s were modest. Waters recalls “There was no talk of professional careers beyond teaching or nursing. . . . Most of [the girls] were expected to become good wives and the mothers of large families.”⁵⁹ Despite this, some second-generation women were able to move into skilled jobs such as nurses, stenographers, secretaries, or teachers.⁶⁰ Second-generation women in the census sample entered the workforce in greater numbers and, similar to men, showed a wider range of employment categories than their first-generation counterparts.

For women who didn’t work outside of the home, taking in boarders was a way to bring in extra income. This practice was common throughout Irish communities in Manhattan and the Bronx, and continued well into the twentieth century.⁶¹ Maureen Mooney, whose parents lived in the Bronx, remembered that before the Transit Authority unionized “. . . there was hardly a transit worker whose family could afford an apartment all for itself. Almost every one of them had one room in which he kept other transit workers as roomers.”⁶² For many Irish, the boarder was often someone connected with the family through blood or other ties. On West 163rd Street, there were thirty households headed by first- or second-generation Irish. Out of these, half had non-nuclear family living in the home (Figure 2).⁶³

DOWNTURNS AND DEPARTURES

Even with the stability of city jobs and women’s incomes, Irish families were still vulnerable to downturns in the economy. In general, they did not have a lot of savings put away because most of their day-to-day earnings went toward providing for immediate needs.⁶⁴ As such, as Jay Dolan has observed “. . . they lived close to the edge economically; the slightest turn for the worse would have serious consequences.”⁶⁵ Although the education rate improved markedly in the years after World War I, many second-generation immigrants, with their struggles during the Depression looming, chose to forfeit higher

education for the more immediate economic security of a job.⁶⁶ The Great Depression was a big blow to many Irish and Irish-American families, even the most thrifty.⁶⁷ According to Chris McNickle, it is possible that the New York Irish felt the “greatest relative decline” when compared to other New York immigrant groups because they were part of “a rising middle class on the verge of making it, who felt cut off at the knees by the economic decline.”⁶⁸ Blue-collar workers in New York City were hardest hit in the earlier years of the Depression.⁶⁹ Ten percent of eligible



laborers were unemployed and seeking work in 1930. In a striking comparison, only 1.1 percent of public service workers were unemployed.⁷⁰ Paul Heneghan’s father, who graduated from Regis High School in the early 1930s, was forced to leave college in order to help his family make ends meet during the Depression; he went on to a thirty-three year career with the Post Office, and like many other men who chose jobs over school during this time, never returned to college.⁷¹ While the boom of the war years eventually brought the country out of the Depression, a fear still lingered among the Irish, both in Highbridge as well as in the larger New York City community, that there would be a return to the hard times. Jobs, not college, were seen as a way to secure one’s future against another economic downturn. The lean years led them to an understanding of the importance of money, and a steady, if not large, income.⁷²

However, the post-World War II years did bring about some economic changes. According to William Shannon, in the years

following the end of the Great Depression, the "... Irish had one foot in the lower middle class, but their hands reached many rungs of the middle and upper middle class."⁷³ Across America, almost ten percent of the second generation had managed to move into professional jobs, compared with less than five percent of first-generation Irish males.⁷⁴ In New York, there was a comparable decline in the number of Irish in blue-collar professions. By 1960, over fifteen percent of first-generation Irish were professional workers and ten to fifteen percent more were employed in clerical fields.⁷⁵ Before the Second World War, Catholics



Photo:
A 1940s view from Jerome Avenue north up Ogden Avenue into Highbridge. The trolley line along Jerome Avenue began operation in the 1890s and, despite competition from the subway beginning in the 1920s, the line would continue operation until the mid-twentieth century. Courtesy of Bronx County Historical Society.

lagged behind other religious groups in terms of income averages;⁷⁶ by the mid-1960s, Catholics had reversed their previous pattern and were now matching and, in many cases, surpassing national income averages.⁷⁷ Two decades later, the *New York Times* observed that "...if there are fewer policemen in New York who have Irish names, there are more stockbrokers that do."⁷⁸ By the 1970s, the Irish were reportedly the best educated and most affluent white ethnic group after the Jews, and in 1988, according to the *New York Times* "So many Irish-Americans [had] succeeded in various fields that their prominence no longer is noteworthy."⁷⁹

Irish residents of Highbridge benefited from this increased prosperity, most notably in the fact that they began to move out of the neighborhood.⁸⁰ No matter how involved they were with Highbridge and Sacred Heart, the neighborhood was never the final destination for the Irish—the ideal of a house in the suburbs still loomed large.⁸¹ Jim Mullan, born and raised in Highbridge, recalls that one of

the proudest moments of his life was when his parents and godparents first came to his house in Fairfield, Connecticut. To them, driving up from their cramped Bronx apartments, he had truly achieved the American dream.⁸² Contributing to this movement was the fact that, by the mid-1960s, the ethnic transition of Highbridge was well underway. The ethnic changes in Manhattan neighborhoods, which had first pushed the Irish into Highbridge, were now occurring in the Bronx.⁸³ These incoming ethnic groups were attracted to the same things in Highbridge that had initially appealed to the Irish—it was "one of the few nice places where relatively poor people [could] live."⁸⁴ Some Irish in Highbridge resisted the infusion of the new ethnic groups because "exactly at the point of triumph, having weathered the Depression, built the school, and finished the church, [the Irish] now confronted the possibility that, given patterns of racial transition in American cities, the painstaking work of generations might be rendered obsolete in a handful of years."⁸⁵ In the 1940s, whites made up ninety-five percent of the total population of the Bronx, but by 1970 had fallen by forty-four percent,⁸⁶ and fear of the African-American and Puerto Rican populations moving into the area was one of the biggest motivators behind the flight of Irish and other white ethnic groups.⁸⁷ The increasing crime rate and neighborhood deterioration also played into the fear.⁸⁸ By the late 1960s, entire apartment buildings, some of which were less than forty years old, were abandoned, while others were burned down. In one summer, according to one estimate, four-hundred Sacred Heart families moved out of Highbridge.⁸⁹ However, the economic stability that the Irish had worked so hard to obtain was finally rewarded. They were able to make the move out of the neighborhood, either further north in the Bronx or to the suburbs of Westchester and Rockland counties. The Irish had finally made it to "...the coveted position at the center of mainstream American society...."⁹⁰

Notes

- 1 C.J. Hughes, "Living In High Bridge, The Bronx: Home of the Bronx Roar," *New York Times*, May 20, 2007.
- 2 Only Queens had similar growth for the Irish. Marion R. Casey, "'From the East Side to the Seaside': Irish Americans on the Move in New York City," in *The New York Irish*, ed. Ronald H. Bayor and Timothy J. Meagher (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 396.
- 3 Shirley Paris, "Highbridge in the '30s and '40s," *Bronx County Historical Society Journal* 14, no. 1 (Spring 1977): 42.
- 4 Rafael Olmeda, "Highbridge Church Recalls Its Old Boys," *New York Daily News*, September 21, 1997.
- 5 Margaret Cronin Ginty, phone interview by author, July 29, 2009.
- 6 Ibid.
- 7 Allyn, *A Short Historical Sketch of the High Bridge Neighborhood*, 13.
- 8 Gonzalez, *The Bronx*, 86.
- 9 Paris, "Highbridge in the '30s and '40s": 17.
- 10 Ginty, phone interview by author, July 29, 2009.
- 11 It must be noted that Paris's family was Jewish. Based on her descriptions, her family, like many Jewish residents of Highbridge, occupied a higher place on the socioeconomic scale than most of the Irish and Irish-Americans at the time. She recalls that her apartment building had an elevator operator as well as a ballroom in the basement that could be used for tenant parties.
- 12 Paris, "Highbridge in the '30s and '40s": 15–16.
- 13 Ginty, phone interview by author, July 29, 2009.
- 14 McNamara, interview by author, August 11, 2009.
- 15 James Mullan, phone interview by author, July 20, 2009.
- 16 Pat Stewart Lorello, "My Highbridge Years—1951–1964," *The Bronx Board Diaries*, <http://www.bronxboard.com/diary/diary.php?f=My%20Highbridge%20Years%20-%201951-1964>
- 17 Brother Edmund Dwyer, phone interview by author, November 12, 2009.
- 18 First-generation immigrants are the people who migrated to America, while the second-generation Irish are born in America.
- 19 Freeman, *In Transit*, 26.
- 20 David M. Reimers, "Overview: An End and a Beginning," in *The New York Irish*, ed. Ronald H. Bayor and Timothy J. Meagher (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 423.
- 21 Frederick Binder and David M. Reimers, *All the Nations Under Heaven: An Ethnic and Racial History of New York City* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 160.
- 22 Edwin G. Burrows and Mike Wallace, *Gotham: A History of New York City to 1898* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 1054–1055.
- 23 Jay P. Dolan, *The Irish Americans: A History* (New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2008), 222.
- 24 Evelyn Gonzalez, *The Bronx* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 51.
- 25 Freeman, *In Transit*, 11.
- 26 Ocynthia Williams, "The Founding of Highbridge and The Early Years 1842–1923," *Collective Inspiration* (New York: Highbridge Communications Group, 1999), 17.
- 27 Brian J. Cudahy, *A Century of Subways: Celebrating 100 Years of New York's Underground Railways* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2003), 38.
- 28 Brian J. Cudahy, *Under the Sidewalks of New York: The Story of the Greatest Subway System in the World* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1995), 150.
- 29 Casey, "'From the East Side to the Seaside,'" 403.
- 30 Jay P. Dolan, *The Irish Americans: A History* (New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2008), 221.
- 31 McNickle, "Overview," 354.
- 32 Jay P. Dolan, *The Irish Americans: A History* (New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2008), 221.
- 33 Reimers, "Overview," 423.
- 34 Ancestry.com. *1930 United States Federal Census* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2002. Original data: United States

Figure 3

Artisan:	Copyist	Hotel & Boardinghouse	Mill worker	Statistician
Carpenter	File Clerk	Workers:	Porter	Railroad Worker:
Draftsman	Secretary	Bell captain	Stock girl	Cable operator
Electrician	Stenographer	Chef	Truck helper	Inspector
Jeweler	Telegraph operator	Cook	Wire factory employee	Motor man
Painter	Typist	Server	Maritime Worker:	Railroad carpenter
Printer	Clothing Worker:	Waiter	Deck steward	Station master
Sculptor	Dressmaker	Laborer:	Shipping clerk	Ticket agent
Building Trades:	Fitter	Dairy driver	Police & Fire	Traffic Man
Labor foreman	Milliner	Doorkeeper	Professional Worker:	Wire layer
Business Owner:	Seamstress	Elevator starter	Accountant	Salesman
Electric store owner	Domestic Worker:	Guard	Artist	Skilled Worker:
Civil Service:	Chauffeur	Handyman	Bookkeeper	Butcher
Postman	Housemaid	Laborer	Editor	Telephone Workers:
Clerk:	Janitor	Machine operator	Musician	Installer
Accountant	Nursemaid	Milkman	Nurse	Wire layer

of America, Bureau of the Census. *Fifteenth Census of the United States, 1930*. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1930.

- 35 As occupations on the 1930 Federal Census are self-reporting, that is, the census record taker wrote down the occupation as it was told to them by the subject, within the area of study there is a large diversity in the occupations listed. In order to be able to draw conclusions from the data, some way of classifying the different self-reported occupations had to be created. To that end, Robert Ernst's work on occupation classification in *Immigrant Life in New York City, 1825–1863* was utilized. Ernst attempted to account for the degree of skill required in the various occupations, as well as clarifying ambiguous occupations, and came up with a list of occupational groups and the specific employments that fit in to them. Ernst's list was expanded, edited, and updated to reflect the changes in New York City employment between 1863 and 1930. For the block of West 163rd Street in Highbridge that was the focus of study for this paper, see Figure 3, page 30, for the categories used.
- 36 Mullan, phone interview by author, July 20, 2009.
- 37 Ginty, phone interview by author, July 29, 2009.
- 38 Jane Colleen Hannon, "Saints and Patriots: Catholicism in the Bronx, 1920–1940" (PhD diss., University of Notre Dame, 2000), 226.
- 39 Dwyer, "Sonuvagun, if It Isn't Dominion."
- 40 Quoted in Miriam Nyhan, "Comparing Irish Migrants and County Associations in New York and

London: A Cross-Cultural Analysis of Migrant Experiences and Associational Behavior circa 1946–1961," (PhD diss., European University Institute, 2008), 175.

- 41 John R. McKivigan & Thomas J. Robertson, "The Irish American Worker in Transitions, 1877–1914: New York City as a Test Case," in *The New York Irish*, ed. Ronald H. Bayor and Timothy J. Meagher (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 313.
- 42 Quoted in Marion R. Casey, "Ireland, New York, and the Irish Image in American Popular Culture, 1890–1960" (PhD diss., New York University, 1998), 29.
- 43 McNamara, interview by author, August 11, 2009.
- 44 Heneghan, phone interview by author, September 11, 2009.
- 45 Mullan, phone interview by author, July 20, 2009.
- 46 Ibid.
- 47 Ibid.
- 48 Ibid.
- 49 Hannon, "Saints and Patriots," 227.
- 50 "Catholic Census Lists 20,268,403," *New York Times*, April 21, 1933, 15
- 51 Figures 1 is based on data from: Bureau of the Census. *Fifteenth Census of the United States, 1930*. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1930.

- 52 McNamara, interview by author, August 11, 2009.
- 53 Ibid.
- 54 Ibid.
- 55 Casey, "From the East Side to the Seaside," 404.
- 56 Ginty, phone interview by author, July 29, 2009.
- 57 Ancestry.com. *1930 United States Federal Census* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2002. Original data: United States of America, Bureau of the Census. *Fifteenth Census of the United States, 1930*. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1930.
- 58 Maureen Waters, *Crossing Highbridge: A Memoir of Irish America*, (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2001), 32.
- 59 Ibid., 44.
- 60 Kenny, *The American Irish*, 186.
- 61 Timothy J. Meagher, *Inventing Irish America: Generation, Class, and Ethnic Identity in a New England City, 1880–1928* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2001), 56; Casey, "From the East Side to the Seaside," 406.
- 62 Quoted in Casey, "From the East Side to the Seaside," 406.
- 63 A "family member" is a sibling, niece, cousin, or in-law of the head of household while a "boarder" is someone unrelated to the family. Figure 2 is based on data from: Bureau of the Census. *Fifteenth Census of the United States, 1930*. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1930.
- 64 Shelley, "Twentieth-Century American Catholicism and Irish Americans," 590.
- 65 Jay P. Dolan, *The American Catholic Experience: A History from Colonial Times to the Present* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1992), 322–23.
- 66 Matthew J. O'Brien, "Irishness in Great Britain and the United States: Transatlantic and cross-channel migration networks and Irish ethnicity, 1920-1990" (PhD diss., University of Wisconsin, Madison, 2001), 385–86.
- 67 Ronald H. Bayor, *Neighbors in Conflict: The Irish, Germans, Jews, and Italians of New York City, 1929–1941*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 21.
- 68 McNickle, "Overview," 353.
- 69 Bayor, *Neighbors in Conflict*, 10.
- 70 Ibid., 10.
- 71 Paul Heneghan, phone interview by author, September 11, 2009.
- 72 McNamara, interview by author, August 11, 2009.
- 73 Shannon, *The American Irish*, 295.
- 74 Kenny, *The American Irish*, 227.
- 75 Meagher, *The Columbia Guide to Irish American History*, 127.
- 76 John T. McGreevy, *Parish Boundaries: The Catholic Encounter with Race in the Twentieth-Century Urban North* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 80.
- 77 McGreevy, *Parish Boundaries*, 80.
- 78 Reimers, "Overview," 423.
- 79 Linda Dowling Almedia, "Irish America, 1940–2000," in *Making the Irish American: History and Heritage of the Irish in the United States*, ed. J. J. Lee and Marion Casey (New York: New York University Press, 2006), 550; *New York Times*, quoted in Binder and Reimers, *All the Nations Under Heaven*, 260.
- 80 Snyder, "The Neighborhood Changed," 455.
- 81 Ibid.
- 82 Mullan, phone interview by author, July 20, 2009.
- 83 Snyder, "The Neighborhood Changed," 445–6.
- 84 Ibid., 445–6.
- 85 McGreevy, *Parish Boundaries*, 84–85.
- 86 Tobier, "The Bronx in the Twentieth Century," 81.
- 87 Steven V. Roberts, "Impact on Old Neighborhoods Worries the City," *New York Times*, November 25, 1968, 43.
- 88 Ibid.
- 89 O'Reilly, "The Story of Sacred Heart and Highbridge," no pagination, photocopy in possession of the author.

- 90 Matthew O'Brien, "Hibernians on the March: Irish America and Ethnic Patriotism in the Mid-Twentieth Century," *Éire-Ireland* 40, no. 1&2: 175.

References

- "Catholic Census Lists 20,268,403." *New York Times*. April 21, 1933.
- Allyn, Donald W. *A Short Historical Sketch of the High Bridge Neighborhood*. New York: New York Public Library, Milstein Division of U.S. History, Local History & Genealogy, 1958.
- Almedia, Linda Dowling. "Irish America, 1940–2000." In *Making the Irish American: History and Heritage of the Irish in the United States*, edited by J. J. Lee and Marion Casey, 548–573. New York: New York University Press, 2006.
- Ancestry.com. 1930 United States Federal Census [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2002. Original data: United States of America, Bureau of the Census. Fifteenth Census of the United States, 1930. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1930.
- Bayor, Ronald H. *Neighbors in Conflict: The Irish, Germans, Jews, and Italians of New York City, 1929–1941*, 2nd ed. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1988.
- Binder, Frederick and David M. Reimers. *All the Nations Under Heaven: An Ethnic and Racial History of New York City*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1995.
- Burrows, Edwin G. and Mike Wallace. *Gotham: A History of New York City to 1898*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999.
- Casey, Marion R. "Ireland, New York, and the Irish Image in American Popular Culture, 1890–1960." PhD diss., New York University, 1998.
- Casey, Marion R. "'From the East Side to the Seaside': Irish Americans on the Move in New York City." In *The New York Irish*, edited by Ronald H. Bayor and Timothy J. Meagher, 395–415. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996.
- Cheilik, Michael and David Gillison. *The Bronx Apartment House*. New York: Lehman College, 1977. Unnumbered.
- Cudahy, Brian J. *A Century of Subways: Celebrating 100 Years of New York's Underground Railways*. New York: Fordham University Press, 2003.
- Cudahy, Brian J. *Under the Sidewalks of New York: The Story of the Greatest Subway System in the World*. New York: Fordham University Press, 1995.
- Dolan, Jay P. *The American Catholic Experience: A History from Colonial Times to the Present*. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1992.
- Dolan, Jay P. *The Irish Americans: A History*. New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2008.
- Dwyer, Jim. "Sonuvagun, if It Isn't Dominion." *New York Times*. November 11, 2001.
- Dwyer, Brother Edmund. Phone interview by author. November 12, 2009.
- Ernst, Robert. *Immigrant Life in New York City, 1825–1863*. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1994.
- Freeman, Joshua. *In Transit: The Transport Worker's Union in New York City, 1933–1966*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2001.
- Ginty, Margaret Cronin. Phone interview by author. July 29, 2009.
- Gonzalez, Evelyn. *The Bronx*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2004.
- Hannon, Jane Colleen. "Saints and Patriots: Catholicism in the Bronx, 1920–1940." PhD diss., University of Notre Dame, 2000.
- Heneghan, Paul. Phone interview by author. September 11, 2009.
- Hughes, C.J. "Living In High Bridge, The Bronx: Home of the Bronx Roar." *New York Times*, May 20, 2007.
- Kenny, Kevin. *The American Irish*. New York: Longman, 2000.
- Lorello, Pat Stewart. "My Highbridge Years—1951–1964." *The Bronx Board Diaries*. bronxboard.com/diary/diary.php?f=My%20Highbridge%20Years%20-%201951-1964.
- McGreevy, John T. *Parish Boundaries: The Catholic Encounter with Race in the Twentieth-Century Urban North*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996.
- McKivigan, John R. and Thomas J. Robertson. "The Irish American Worker in Transitions, 1877–1914: New York City as a Test Case." In *Making the Irish*

- American: History and Heritage of the Irish in the United States*, edited by J. J. Lee and Marion Casey, 301–320. New York: New York University Press, 2006.
- McNamara, William. Interview by author. Yonkers, NY. August 11, 2009.
- McNickle, Chris. "Overview: When New York Was Irish, and After." In *The New York Irish*, edited by Ronald H. Bayor and Timothy J. Meagher, 337–356. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996.
- Meagher, Timothy J. *The Columbia Guide to Irish American History*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2005.
- Meagher, Timothy J. *Inventing Irish America: Generation, Class, and Ethnic Identity in a New England City, 1880–1928*. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2001.
- Mullan, James. Phone interview by author. July 20, 2009.
- Nyhan, Miriam A. "Comparing Irish Migrants and County Associations in New York and London: A Cross-Cultural Analysis of Migrant Experiences and Associational Behavior circa 1946–1961." PhD diss., European University Institute, 2008.
- O'Brien, Matthew. "'Hibernians on the March:' Irish America and Ethnic Patriotism in the Mid-Twentieth Century." *Éire-Ireland* 40, no. 1&2.
- O'Brien, Matthew J. "Irishness in Great Britain and the United States: Transatlantic and cross-channel migration networks and Irish ethnicity, 1920–1990." PhD diss., University of Wisconsin, Madison, 2001.
- O'Reilly, Kevin. "The Story of Sacred Heart and Highbridge." *Sacred Heart: 125th Anniversary Journal*. Privately published, unnumbered, photocopy in possession of the author.
- Olmeda, Rafael. Highbridge Church Recalls Its Old Boys." *New York Daily News*. September 21, 1997.
- Paris, Shirley. "Highbridge in the '30s and '40s." *Bronx County Historical Society Journal* 14, no. 1 (Spring 1977).
- Reimers, David M. "Overview: An End and a Beginning." In *The New York Irish*, edited by Ronald H. Bayor and Timothy J. Meagher, 420–438. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996.
- Roberts, Steven V. "Impact on Old Neighborhoods Worries the City." *New York Times*. November 25, 1968, 43.
- Shannon, William V. *The American Irish: A Political and Social Portrait*, 2nd ed. Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1989.
- Shelley, Thomas J. "Twentieth-Century American Catholicism and Irish Americans." In *Making the Irish American: History and Heritage of the Irish in the United States*, edited by J. J. Lee and Marion Casey, 574–608. New York: New York University Press, 2006.
- Snyder, Robert W. "The Neighborhood Changed: The Irish of Washington Heights and Inwood since 1945." In *The New York Irish*, edited by Ronald H. Bayor and Timothy J. Meagher, 439–460. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996.
- Tobier, Emanuel. "The Bronx in the Twentieth Century: Dynamics of Population and Economic Change." *The Bronx County Historical Society Journal* 25, no. 2 (Fall 1998): 69–102.
- Waters, Maureen. *Crossing Highbridge: A Memoir of Irish America*. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2001.
- Williams, Ocyntia. "The Founding of Highbridge and The Early Years 1842–1923." *Collective Inspiration*. New York: Highbridge Communications Group, 1999.