

Going Home—Travel to Ireland from New York

BY JOHN T. RIDGE



Photo:

The Galway Men's Social and Benevolent Association was greeted on arrival in Shannon Airport by the United States ambassador in 1955. Courtesy of John T. Ridge.

The image of coffin ships and harrowing voyages stretching over many weeks was long planted in the minds of Irish immigrants in the nineteenth century. For most of them emigration was a one way trip. Few even considered the possibility of a visit home to the old country. It was not just a question of fear of a six weeks or more voyage taken at the mercy of the wind in sailing ships—and suffering crowded and unhealthy conditions. For many there was no chance to leave their employment for long periods of time, which made the possibility of a return journey to Ireland little more than a dream.

The speed and conditions of travel across the Atlantic improved dramatically late in the century. In 1838 the *Sirius* had made the passage from Cork to New York in seventeen days, but by the 1850s the record time had been reduced to nine days and a few hours. The post

Civil War period brought rapid improvements in the amount of time for a transatlantic crossing. New and larger vessels like the *Baltic*, *City of Richmond*, *Germanic* and *Wyoming* made accelerated voyages of from seven or eight days in the 1870s. In 1881 the *Arizona* made no less than thirteen trips in less than 8 days. The new liner, the *Alaska*, cut the voyage to less than seven days in 1882. All this had been accomplished in a short time, thanks to the introduction of new and more efficient steam ships (*New York Daily Tribune*, June 8, 1882).

The new speedy vessels were divided into several traveling classes down to the lowest category of steerage. The steerage passengers got to their destination just as fast as the upper classes, and in the course of time accommodations were steadily improved for all travelers. While steerage passengers, sometime up to 1,200 of them such as on the Inman Line's *City of Rome*, were

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still crowded below, better standards provided them with more space and wholesome food. Upstairs, the same vessels were often described as “floating palaces” with luxurious features such as paneled oak rooms and floors laid in mosaic (*New York Times*, February 25, 1883).

There was an element of fear about returning to Ireland that lingered not just because of the long ocean voyage, but because of the political condition of Ireland. Bitter memories of the Great Hunger and wholesale eviction were never far from the minds of most Irish-Americans in the period. Irish Nationalism had reached a very militant level during the Fenian organizing of the 1860s and during agitation over the land in the 1880s. A harsh Coercion Act was introduced in 1881 which withdrew the writ of *habeas corpus* and made arrest subject to the will of the highly politicized British authorities in Ireland. The American Consulate in Queenstown received inquiries from Irish-American citizens in the nearby counties of Cork, Limerick, and Kerry who asked for advice on protecting themselves from arbitrary arrest. President Chester Arthur personally became concerned with the treatment of Irish-American citizens by the Royal Irish Constabulary (*New York Times*, April 1, 1882 and May 9, 1883). Irish-born Americans were arrested and imprisoned simply by being at the wrong place at the wrong time, such as when two innocent visitors were arrested on arrival in Tullamore in 1884 (*New York Herald Tribune*, April 30, 1884).

An Irish-born priest, the Reverend Thomas Donohue, pastor of St. Thomas Aquinas Church, Fourth Avenue, Brooklyn, returned from an Irish visit in 1890 and issued a strong protest about such treatment of visitors: “Many Americans whom I know to be innocent, affectionate people, visiting Ireland for the purpose of seeing their parents or relatives were shadowed from the time they entered Ireland until they left it. Irish-Americans visiting their native land are abhorred by the landlord and shoneen class” (*Irish World*, September 27, 1890).

Another issue involved in going to Ireland was returning to the United States. Getting back into New York was a common problem

for many elderly American citizens of Irish-birth who traveled without an American passport. They were often refused entry at Castle Garden or Ellis Island out of fear that they could not support themselves and would become burdens to the civil authorities. James Devaney was literally “a man without a country” when after a brief trip to Ireland, he was denied admission to the United States. With difficulty he finally proved he had resided forty-two years in the city. (*Irish World*, March 5, 1905) Terrance Collins, a Civil War veteran who had served in the 88th New York Volunteers and had been shot in the leg at the Battle of Antietam, was refused entry in 1903 for a time. He eventually proved his American citizenship (*Irish World*, July 11, 1903). Kate McEnery had rushed to Ireland in 1900 when a sister died leaving a legacy that had to be settled in the Irish courts. In her haste she brought nothing to prove her citizenship and on her return to the United States in steerage class and before relatives could arrive to rescue her at Ellis Island, she was shipped off to Queenstown. Kate caused her own difficulties “because she was so eccentric that she would give no account of herself.” A few weeks later she returned in first-cabin class and had no problem about admission, but she had bought so much in Ireland with her legacy that she was hit with heavy fines for not declaring her purchases (*Irish World*, October 18, 1900).

THE COST OF TRAVEL

If any one factor spurred a trip back to Ireland it was low fares. Competition, such as in 1875, caused the fares for steerage to drop to first a third, then half and finally a quarter of their normal prices. According to the *New York Times* “many thousands of recently arrived immigrants went back to the old countries” (*New York Times*, January 8, 1875). In 1880 the Monarch Line made arrangements to call into Galway on their normally direct New York to London passage after, the company stated, “taking into consideration that the flow of emigration is from the western districts is larger than elsewhere in Ireland.” This cut travel time to nine and a half days and made it cheaper for the recent arriv-

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CUNARD AND ANCHOR LINES
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als in the United States to visit their homes in the West. It was, however, only a short time occurrence and Galway remained principally a secondary out port to Queenstown (*New York Times*, April 5, 1880).

Steerage passage in the 1880s from New York to Queenstown was only \$26 on the National Line and State Lines, or a little more, \$28, on the White Star Line and the Inman Line. An intermediate class of travel was available for about \$40, and cabin passage varied between \$60 and \$100 depending on the line and accommodation. Special excursion fares were announced from time to time that made the cost of travel to Ireland even cheaper (*Catholic Review*, June 30, 1883 and the *Irish-American Almanac for 1891*, Lynch, Cole and Meehan, New York, 1891). In 1912 third class (the new name for an upgraded steerage class) on the Anchor Line ships was only \$32.50, but the White Star charged \$55.

IRISH VACATIONS FOR THE PROSPEROUS

The annual jaunt to European resorts had long been a pastime of the American well-to-do. In

1889 Cooks Travel Agency offered a forty-five day tour of Ireland, Scotland and England for \$275 all expenses included (*New York Herald Tribune*, June 7, 1889). Three years later Anchor Line had twenty-eight separate tours of Ireland and other European countries and offered a free little guidebook to advertise what scenic wonders could be seen (*New York Times*, May 6, 1892).

It was prominent Irish-Americans who received the most publicity about their trips back to Ireland, and this long line of merchants, politicians, priests and real estate tycoons helped popularize travel for others who were not so wealthy. Members of the hierarchy and many pastors occasionally made trips to Rome, and took advantage of such trips to come back by way of Ireland, particularly if they were Irish-born. Often pastors visited the parents and relations of their parishioners and were anxiously awaited on their return by their enthusiastic congregations. Politicians like Congressman W. Bourke Cochran, Mayors Grace and Gilroy, and Judge John W. Goff made trips home to their native places that were widely reported.

Illustration: Cunard Lines appealed to immigrants' homesickness in 1926. Courtesy of John T. Ridge.

The old rebel, Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa, who was actually banished from Ireland until 1891, finally made a trip back to his native Skibbereen in 1904 where he received a welcome fit for a returning noble (*Irish World*, December 17, 1904). Michael Davitt, the great Irish leader of the Land League movement, who had spent a great deal of time organizing and fund-raising in America, was a frequent traveler back and forth. In 1890 he wrote specifically an article urging Irish-Americans to visit the old country as a means of renewing their ties with the old land (*Irish World*, August 30, 1890).

The first lay Catholic pilgrimage to Rome in 1889 from New York also included an optional tour designed for Irish-Americans to visit Ireland on the way home (*Irish World*, February 20, 1892). Similarly, the Brooklyn Diocesan pilgrimage to Lourdes in 1895 included a side trip to Ireland (*Irish World*, January 26, 1895). Another Brooklyn pilgrimage from Our Lady of Lourdes Church divided its tour to Europe of more than two-hundred American Catholics according to ethnicity, the Irish section traveling to the usual Emerald Isle tourist spots like the Killarney Lakes, Glengarriff, Limerick, and Dublin.

Americans, including several individuals from the New York City area, traveled as delegates to the Dublin Irish Race Convention in 1896. It was just one of many occasions in which leading Irish-Americans sought to organize to work in uniform towards achieving independence for Ireland (*Irish World*, September 5, 1896). More than one-thousand prominent Irish-Americans enrolled in a planned excursion to Ireland to commemorate the one-hundredth anniversary of the 1798 Rising. Two organizations, representing differing political factions in the Irish struggle, one from the County Wexford '98 Association and the other from the Irish National Alliance, eventually surfaced and engaged in a competition to bring Americans to Ireland for the occasion (*Irish World*, November 7, 1897 and December 5, 1897). On many occasions individual New York Irish societies sent delegates or representatives to important meetings or commemorations in the old country. In 1907,

the Mayo Men's Association, delegated their treasurer, Peter J. Delaney, to represent them at the pilgrimage to the grave of Michael Davitt where he lay a wreath of flowers on behalf of the Mayo community of the city. Delaney was saluted at pier side as he departed on the liner *Etruria* by officers of the society and the Mayo Ladies and some one-hundred others who cheered from the Cunard dock (*Irish World*, June 22, 1907).

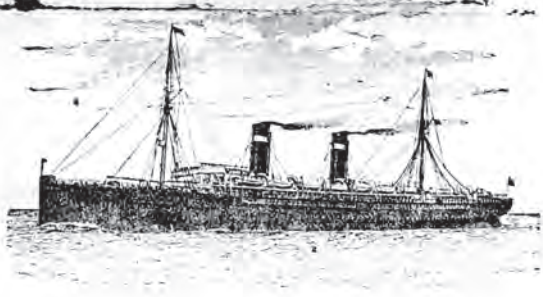
MORE WOMEN VISITING HOME

There were many reasons that brought immigrants back to Ireland, not the least of which was homesickness, and there was always a trickle of predominantly single women who made their way back. It seems to have been easier for single women to find the time for this return to Ireland because many of them were domestics who frequently found themselves seasonally out of work. The *Irish World* noted in 1895 that "Four hundred Irish girls sailed for Ireland last week to visit their parents and friends. They are employed in families in this city who have gone out of town during the summer months" (*Irish World*, May 5, 1895). Men did not experience the same condition as they were more often paid on a daily or weekly basis rather than monthly and experienced no predictable seasonal termination of work. If unemployment came to them it was frequently sudden with no promise of renewed work at a later point in time.

By the turn of the century a pattern of Irish travel was already established. In 1909, Lady Aberdeen, wife of the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, wrote an article in which she commented on those who came back to visit Ireland. "There is," says she, "a marked increase in one type of summer visitor in Ireland—namely, the number of wives and children of Irishmen working in America who are coming home each season to escape the heat of the American Summer, and also of Irish servant girls coming to spend their holidays at their old homes" (*New York Times*, August 28, 1909).

This trend for many more women than

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men journeying to Ireland continued even after World War I when travel began normalize once again in 1920: “Not in many years has there been such a rush of Ireland’s exiles from these shores back to their native Emerald Isle as was seen on last Saturday, when four large steamers left from their docks in the Hudson River, loaded to the water’s edge with their precious freight. These steamers were the *Columbia* and *Coronia* of the Anchor Line, the *Baltic* of the White Star Line and the *Mauretania* of the Cunard Line. So great appears the rush to the other side—more especially among our fair Irish Colleens, who all seem anxious to spend the summer among the fair hills of their native land—that could these ships have carried twice their quota, they could have gotten them. There were some of the sterner sex going too, but not in equal numbers to their sisters, who possibly numbered four or five to one” (*Irish Advocate*, May 20, 1920).

However, most women—and men—did not return to Ireland permanently. Perhaps a good indication of the relative rarity of

returning to live in Ireland can be best seen in the statistics contained in the 1901 Irish Census. Some of these American-born individuals were brought back by a parent after a loss of a spouse in the United States. Of Ireland’s 4,429, 866 residents, only 6,427 were listed as American-born. They were distributed as follows: Ulster—Armagh, 202; Cavan, 140; Antrim, 608; Down, 390; Monaghan, 133; Fermanagh, 103; Tyrone, 331; Derry, 270, and Donegal, 449. Leinster—Dublin, 490; Kings (Offaly), 128; Meath, 109; Kildare, 56; Kilkenny, 83; Queens (Laois), 128; Louth, 117; Wicklow, 49; Westmeath, 94; Wexford, 89; Carlow, 54, and Longford, 87. Connacht—Galway, 391; Mayo, 255; Roscommon, 162; Leitrim, 117 and Sligo, 119. Munster—Cork, 559; Kerry, 254; Limerick, 176; Clare, 120; Waterford, 126, and Tipperary, 168 (*Irish National Archives*, internet site, Irish Census, 1901). However, it should be noted that some emigrants returned often to Ireland. In 1913 Thomas P. McCarthy, of Thirty-fourth Street

Illustration:
Patrick McKenna in 1907 was one of the early Irish travel agents and was located in the Yorkville section of Manhattan. Courtesy of John T. Ridge.

and Tenth Avenue was a frequent cabin passenger to his native Abbeyfeale, Co. Limerick, and in 1913 made his forty-fifth trip back in twenty-two years—never once missing a summer visit (*Irish Advocate*, December 20, 1913).

CHANGES THEY FOUND

For many emigrants from Ireland the old country had changed profoundly. Before leaving for a visit home to his native Co. Waterford after many years in America, Charles B. Brown of Brooklyn visited with his friend Patrick Ford, publisher of the *Irish World* who asked him to write a letter with the impressions of his journey. Brown wrote despondently of what he found: “I landed in Waterford all right, and desiring to see the country, it being a fine day. I walked out the nine miles to Dunmore East, my native place; and what a change for the worse! The same old story—roofless cabins and more prairie, villages wiped out, and the people all gone. I stood on a hilltop and cursed the evictors from my heart. I could not help it. When I was a boy there was quite a fleet of fishing boats in its waters. Now there are two old hulks. All are gone!” (*Irish World*, Letter of Charles B. Brown, October 1, 1904.).

Another Brooklynite, William C. Hogan, was glad to be back in the States after he had viewed an Irish landscape that had changed from what he had remembered. Hogan wrote: “Well, I am glad to be again in that land where strict attention and faithfulness to duty is always amply rewarded. The most puzzling thing I noticed while in Ireland was the scarcity of people. Where does the great influx of Irish people come from to America each week? Why, I drove one day from Toomavara to Clough Jordan and actually met just three persons during that six mile journey” (*Irish Advocate*, July 4, 1906).

IRISH TRAVEL AGENTS

The exile Jeremiah O’Donovan Rossa upon his release from English imprisonment tried to establish himself in business as a travel agent

in Chatham Square, today’s Chinatown. It was not to be a very long or friendly relationship as he encountered from the White Star Line much of the old country bigotry that had made the Belfast shipyard (where all their ships were built) a place where Irish Catholics were not hired. Despite advertising itself as the “Irish Boats” to gain custom, the ship manufacturers in Belfast, the Harland and Wolfe Shipyard, was the preserve of the fiercely bigoted Orange element in the city. Rossa, however, had gained his agency through the intervention of some prominent New York Irish friends who prevailed upon superiors of the line to overrule the local head of the New York office, a Mr. Cortis, and accept O’Donovan Rossa as an agent. Cortis had a strong anti-Irish attitude and had already refused Rossa as an agency representative while at the same time making highly offensive anti-Irish remarks. Cortis did not give up his opposition to Rossa and not long afterward succeeded in withdrawing the right to issue passenger tickets from Rossa. As had previously been the case, Cortis restricted the right to act as agent only to the Irish Emigrant Society, which chiefly dealt with immigrants newly arrived in the city. The White Star Office in New York, which employed thirty or forty hands, and was where most of the lines tickets were issued, did not have a single Irish Catholic employee (*Irish World*, June 19, 1875).

It was only after 1900 that individual Irish travel agents in New York began to win the right to be full representatives of the shipping lines, and in doing so became pillars of New York’s Irish-American community. A few trusted individuals, who had been born in Ireland, established themselves before World War I in the travel business and won most of the city’s then considerable Irish trade. These agents were: Patrick McKenna (agency founded in 1903), 250 East Ninetieth Street, a native of Co. Cavan, who was known popularly as the “uptown agent;” Thomas Dunworth, a native of Cork, who had his office at 133 West Thirty-seventh Street; Hugh Flood, 254 East Sixtieth Street, and James Boylan, 9 Columbus

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Avenue, a native on Co. Monaghan who was sometimes called “the dean of Irish travel agents.” Several others later joined them including John J. Burke, 82 Eighth Avenue; John F. Maher, 261 West 125 Street; P.J. Grimes, 5 Columbus Circle; McGovern Brothers, 1751 Fulton Street, Brooklyn, and the Farrell Travel Bureau, 519 Nostrand Avenue, Brooklyn. Most of these individuals were heavily involved as officers of Irish societies, particularly the Irish county organizations. Other individuals popped up in the business for a time, but never were able to establish themselves for the long term. All agents also issued drafts on all Irish or United Kingdom banks.

Every summer a rush of people flocked to the Irish agents to book or to “settle” their passage for Ireland. In the month of July, 1899, there were eleven sailings alone from New York to Queenstown to bring visitors home, but other vessels called in to other Irish ports as well (*Irish World*, July 1, 1899). The weekly

New York Irish newspapers often published long lists of the names of these individual travelers and their destinations, often adding interesting details. On June 11, 1911, for example, the *Irish Advocate* published an account of dozens of people heading home:

On the Cedric, May 27, were: Mr. Owen Horan, ex-president of the Roscommon Men, and manager of the Irish Counties Athletic Union, to Boyle, Co. Rosc.; Mr. Lawrence P. Maher, ex-president of the Carlow Men's Society, to Carlow town in the interest of the Irish woolen industry; Mrs. Ellen Trainor and W. James Trainor to Galway; Miss Norah Kane, the popular Gaelic teacher of the New York Philo Celtic Society; Master Martin O'Brien to Tuam, Co. Galway... Mrs. Duncan, wife of the popular West Side grocer and John Duncan, son, and Margaret Duncan, daughter, going to County Sligo.... On the Coronias sailing

Illustration:
American ships in 1922 entered into the Irish travel trade. Courtesy of John T. Ridge.

Illustration:
Just weeks before the Lusitania was torpedoed, the Irish World reprinted this cartoon showing the very serious dangers awaiting passengers on British passenger liners.
Courtesy of John T. Ridge.



DISGUISED—By T. E. POWERS.

From New York Evening Journal

today were: Patrick O'Toole, the ever popular president of the Carlow Men's Society... Miss Annie Keane, sister of Martin, the famous football player, to Kilrush, Co. Clare.... Thomas O'Hara, of the famous O'Hara Bros., hotel men of 47th street and Ninth Avenue, president of the Kilkelly Social Club going to Ballyhaunis, Co. Mayo. The Mayo Young Men's Ass'n. presented Mr. O'Hara with a beautiful diamond ring before sailing....

(Not counting young misses traveling with a parent, single women outnumbered those described as "Mrs." in this article by a count of fifty-seven to nine.)

New York's Irish travel agents were usually to be found at pier side looking after their customers, and Patrick McKenna was there for those departures in 1911 in order "to see that all his passengers were made acquainted and baggage put aboard, and look after the welfare of his

many patrons" (*Irish Advocate*, June 11, 1911).

Departing, and sometimes arriving travelers, were often given going away parties either at Irish halls around the city or on board ship. Many who would or could not make the journey home knew that seeing someone off was probably the closest they would ever be again to their birthplaces. Part of the duty for returning immigrants who were visiting Ireland was to call into the families of their New York friends, particularly the aging parents, to tell them of all the happenings in the lives of their children three thousand miles away. Irish travelers, while not all that unusual in the summer months, were still enough of a rarity to earn almost celebrity status when they announced a trip home. Typical was the departure of the newly married couple of Matthew O'Reilly, sexton of St. Andrew's Church on Duane Street, and his bride the former Margaret Murphy, in July 1913. Margaret had only narrowly escaped death on her journey to America on board the

ill-fated *Titanic* a year before, so their courtship begun in Ireland and marriage performed in New York marked an especially happy occasion. The honeymoon followed almost immediately after the ceremony as the wedding party proceeded in taxi cabs to the liner where they found “very many prominent people at the Cunard pier to see them off, including many priests, and prominent business men, also a large delegation of the Cavan men” (*Irish Advocate*, July 19, 1913).

THE EFFECTS OF LARGER EVENTS

World War I disrupted travel to Ireland almost completely for six or seven years. Even if travel to Ireland had been possible, the loss of life on passenger vessels like the *Lusitania* off the coast of Cork in 1915 so frightened potential travelers that any sensible individual, no matter how homesick, postponed the thought of a jaunt to Ireland. Despite the growing guerilla warfare and fierce reprisals in Ireland in 1920, there was such a pent up demand to see family or attend to pressing personal business at home that there was a flood of “our Irish boys and girls” sailing for the old country. On one Saturday in May more than a thousand departed, close to four hundred of them alone through the James Boylan Travel Agency. Less than two years, later an American shipping line entered the Queenstown run with passenger ships that offered an alternative to the old British monopoly.

The new Irish Free State, which came into being in 1922, was composed of only twenty-six of Ireland’s thirty-two counties and was greeted with mixed feelings by the New York Irish community, increasingly the home of exiles from the loosing Republican side in the Irish Civil War. There was a certain curiosity about the new government, and the *New York Times* reported that “Irishmen are going back to see how the Irish Free State is prospering.” For the first time since 1913 the level of transatlantic passengers assumed the pre-war volume (*New York Times*, April 2, 1922).

However, the legacy of the War for Independence and the subsequent bitter Irish

Civil War created a somewhat negative image for Ireland in the United States. The Dublin Rotary Club in 1925, despite summer arrivals in Cobh (the new name for Queenstown) at one thousand a week, complained of the fear many had that Ireland was unsafe for travel. Furthermore, the old images of poverty and “pigs in the parlor” were so deeply ingrained that potential travelers wondered whether food was adequate for tourists (*New York Times*, September 8, 1925).

In 1927 the lack of tourists so concerned proprietors of hotels, resorts, and the railways that a group of them urged the Free State Government to waive passports and custom duties entirely for American visitors (*New York Times*, September 2, 1927). Tourism interests in the country a year later campaigned to make Killarney a rival for Biarritz on the Riviera. It was decided that scenery alone could not bring tourists. They had to be actively persuaded, and Ireland (presented as an active cultural community filled with musical and artistic events) would create the idea of a “Killarney season” just like similar attractions on the continent. Out of this came the creation of Ireland’s first national park in the Killarney region (*New York Times*, September 28, 1928).

New York was a key to any Irish tourism project. American State Department figures for 1929 pointed out that of some 200,000 passport applications, 58,000 were from citizens with New York City as a permanent address. The pull of the old country was particularly strong (86,846 passport applications came from naturalized citizens as compared to 110,084 from native born Americans). The State Department report pointed out that “American citizens born in Greece, Italy, Poland, Ireland and Scandinavia seem to have an especial keen desire to return for a visit” (*New York Times*, March 3, 1930). Spending by American visitors to Ireland in 1927 was eight million dollars a year as opposed to just over forty million dollars by visitors to the more than ten times larger United Kingdom (*New York Times*, June 30, 1929).

New York Irish societies were very active

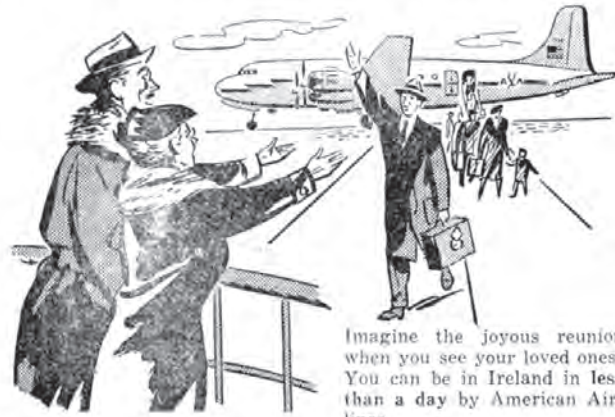
in the 1920s and 1930s in promoting organized excursions to Ireland. Local Gaelic sports teams almost yearly journeyed to the Emerald Isle, but numerous trips were also conducted by leaders of the New York Irish community, either Irish societies or steamship company Irish representatives. The Tailtean Games in August, 1928, was an attempt to revive the ancient "Games of Tara." Cunard's John J. Keating lead an excursion from New York on the Franconia that featured "big, comfortable staterooms, smoking rooms, lounges, verandah café, ample deck

space for games. Special facilities for the daily celebration of the Mass on board..." (*Irish Advocate*, June 23, 1928).

Joseph L. White, another Cunard manager who conducted one of the first excursions in 1921, completed his final one in 1960. He never could forget the fun of the crossing in the midst of people of the same background and tastes. "Irish excursion trips are like one grand New Year's Eve party all the way across," he said. "Still and all, the first voyage was one I'll never forget" (*New York Times*, November 13, 1960).

Illustration:
In 1949, American Airlines could bring an immigrant home faster than a letter could be transported by mail. Courtesy of John T. Ridge.

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are pilgrimages to Holy Wells, regattas and "Patterns" (the ancient glorified Irish market day) and horse races galore. There are Irish hunters, neat black hoofs thudding on the green old sod, from County Limerick to County Kildare" (*New York Times*, June 17, 1934)

Mr. C.E. Reddin, president of the Irish Tourist Association, speaking at the Waldorf Astoria in New York in 1937 stated that "his survey of agencies and steamship lines had shown an increase of nearly forty percent in the number of Americans visiting Ireland in the present season." Twenty thousand Americans,

The growing effects of the 1929 stock market collapse in the United States on the American economy brought emigration from Ireland to almost to a complete halt by 1932, but travel to Ireland was less effected. Irish exiles for family reasons made the journey home if at all possible. However, in 1932 the number of Irish citizens returning to Ireland was greater than those emigrating for the first time (*Irish Advocate*, October 7, 1933). According to another report "Whether the Irish Sweepstakes winners are responsible for it, there is a new rush to Ireland, where there

in what was considered to be a good season, had visited Ireland in 1936 (*New York Times*, August 29, 1937).

AFTER WORLD WAR II

Although steamships continued to serve Ireland with decreasing numbers of passengers for approximately the next fifteen years following the end of the war in 1945, there was no question that air travel would eventually be the victor in the transatlantic trade. Despite good fares offered by Holland American Lines and Greek Lines, the transatlantic carriers began to see their customers take to the air.

From the first flights from Ireland in 1937 to the creation of the major airline hub at Shannon where the late 1940s and early 1950s an estimated eighty percent of transatlantic flights landed, Ireland was well connected to New York by air. A plan to link New York and Shannon with an Irish airline in 1948 came to nothing when a change from a De Valera government to a one headed by John A. Costello cancelled the planned implementation for economic reasons. In the meantime, a succession of American and foreign airlines ran regular flights between the two countries. Finally, in 1958, Irish Airlines began service to New York for \$408.60 round trip with three Super Constellation prop planes. In 1960 Boeing 720s named after the Irish saints Patrick, Bridget and Brendan replaced them.

In 1947 a seasonal flight for members of the New York Gaelic Athletic Association called the “Flight of the Gaels” was begun under the direction of Patrick J. Grimes, the travel agent and publisher of the *Irish Echo*. After attending the Irish hurling and football finals in September in Dublin, the group dispersed to all parts of the country for a month. (*New York Times*, September 4, 1954) Visitors could avail themselves of many tours like those offered by the Irish transportation group, C.I.E., which offered six days with all meals and transport with lodging for \$56 complete (*New York Times*, February 22, 1953).

During the 1950s and 1960s, flights to

Ireland were known to be a bargain. A seventeen-day excursion could be purchased for \$290 round trip in 1960 on a prop plane and for only \$25 more when jets were introduced shortly afterward. Ireland was considered to be the cheapest land to visit in Europe, second only to Spain. Dublin Mayor Robert Briscoe told a New York audience in 1957 that, for \$500, a visitor could live like a king for a month in Ireland—and that was including air fare (*New York Times*, July 14, 1957).

The 1960s and beyond brought many changes to Irish travel from New York City. Gone was the idea of the “vacation within a vacation” aboard ocean liners that really looked like ocean liners and not birthday cakes. Speed and a cheap airline fare were more important than a week spent shipboard with people who within that short time would become your closest companions. The role of the travel agent diminished as the decision to fly to Ireland became something decided on at the spur of the moment rather than something planned for the better part of a year. The notion of an Irish agent as an old and trusted neighborhood friend disappeared as the Irish communities of the city themselves dwindled and scattered.