

# Irish County Colonies in New York City, (Part III)

BY JOHN T. RIDGE

In the previous two parts of this article, the development of settlements in New York City from specific counties in Ireland was discussed from the time these settlements first became evident in the 1850s. The development of new county colonies in the expanding parts of the city and vicinity is further explored in this final part in the series. This part concludes with information, based on recently released federal data from the 1940s, about the Irish-born population, by county, in New York City and about the Irish-born population, by county and by province, in each of the city's five boroughs.

The search for county colonies for a few counties has proven elusive. Some of these settlements will remain secrets perhaps because of the same reluctance that caused some of New York's leading Irish politicians to shun county identification:

*Many politicians of Irish birth, when candidates for elective office in New York, are very reluctant to have known the counties from which they come, for much antipathy, based upon county boundaries, still endures and it is feared that such sentiments of antagonism might tend to deprive a candidate of some of his support. County lines are closely adhered to throughout Ireland, more markedly so in the exclusively agricultural portions, far away from the big cities. These lines are kept up here too to some extent by societies, and candidates are reluctant to array against themselves voters hailing from other counties than their own.<sup>1</sup>*

## DUBLIN

The western seaboard of Ireland provided the largest number of immigrants to the United States. This was also, generally speaking, the poorest part of the country and the one where

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educational opportunities were the most limited. In contrast, the eastern seaboard of Ireland sent far fewer numbers across the ocean but, in some cases, numbers large enough to establish their own county colonies.

Beginning with County Dublin, the county with Ireland's largest city and the economic center for much of the country, immigrants from this part of Leinster represented an entirely different pattern of settlement than the more rural areas. In the nineteenth century, the city was an important part of the United Kingdom and was the administrative, military, and social center controlling Ireland. Many city natives were attracted to commercial life in Britain or in the colonial service and were less likely to emigrate to America than inhabitants from elsewhere in Ireland. While the city had its poor, many more opportunities for advancement existed in the big city, and there was even a small middle class that was quick to take advantage of the more extensive educational opportunities in secondary schools and at the university level. This created a small class difference between city residents and their country cousins. When Dubliners did come to

**Illustration:**  
Dublin Clothiers in 1941 set the style in clothing for many Irish immigrants, but immigrants from that county set no pattern of neighborhood settlement unlike people from most other Irish counties.  
Courtesy of John T. Ridge.

New York, they were often able to fit more easily into the city's middle class because of their experience in commercial life and skilled trades. The clustering characteristic of so many Irish counties was not the case with Dublin immigrants. In 1894, the New York *Sun* commented:

*The relations existing between the Dublin men and the natives of other counties in Ireland are not cordial in New York City. The Dublin men have an association of their own and they keep it without apparently any wish to join organizations of other Irishmen. Members of the Irish county societies are apt to regard the Dublin men as aristocrats and this feeling has prevented the gathering such as was proposed a few years ago, of all representative Irish societies in a confederation.*<sup>2</sup>

It was said that the rural counties had "little in common with the Dublin men." The feeling apparently translated into Dublin immigrants in many instances living in neighborhoods outside of the traditional New York Irish enclaves. *The Sun* elaborated that

*Necessarily, such antagonisms are not all one sided, and the Dublin men on their side declare themselves superior to other Irishmen in intellectual achievements and material progress. It is generally found that at public banquets or literary conferences of any kind the Dublin men take precedence over other Irishmen, but in gatherings for patriotic or benevolent objects they have usually a scant representation, if any. The Dublin Men of New York have a picnic every summer and a ball every winter, but at neither do they fraternize much with men from the other counties of Ireland.*<sup>3</sup>

#### WEXFORD

In 1894 it was estimated that there were "3,800 natives of Wexford in New York City."<sup>4</sup> Perhaps it was the path of their settlement in the city rather than their relatively small numbers that

caused them to scatter widely without any particular neighborhood concentration. It was said that immigration from Wexford was often not direct from Ireland, but the result of a kind of double bounce:

*Arriving in the United States, Wexford men generally betake themselves to small towns of the semi-rural variety. They do not go to live in the big cities. Many of the Wexford men now in New York have come from other cities in the United States.*<sup>5</sup>

#### LONGFORD

While a small Longford colony was to be found in the Sixth Ward of Manhattan in the 1840s and '50s, the most sustained settlement of Longford people was to be found in Brooklyn. The earliest arrivals came in the 1830s and early '40s following agricultural distress and subsequent agitation over the land in the county. A large number of the immigrants came from the immediate vicinity of Longford town and the southern part of the county and east to the County Westmeath border. It was not long before other immigrants arrived from the less arable northern part of the county as well. The percentage of Longford immigrants remaining in New York and Brooklyn was the highest of any of the Irish counties. This concentration of immigrants from the county in New York gave them a much more elevated presence than in Ireland. While at home they were the second smallest county in population, the high level of emigration to New York made them the equal of counties normally much more numerous.

Many Longford people were also to be found in the Yorkville section of Manhattan in the East 80s and 90s, but up to the 1930s Brooklyn attracted a major portion of the county's immigrants. What brought them to the borough initially is lost in time, but certainly this county community was solidified by the very large number of priests from Longford serving in the Diocese of Brooklyn. Many of these clergy were newly ordained young men whose first duty as priests took

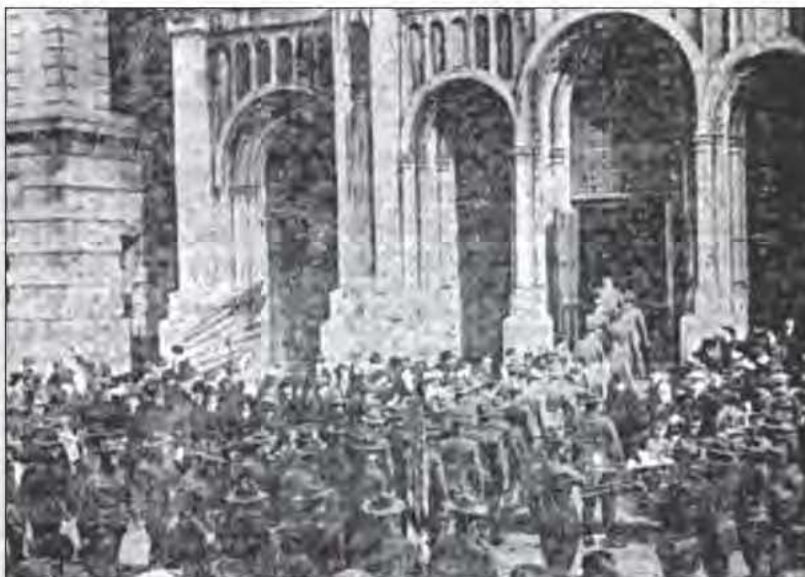
*John Ridge is president of the New York Irish History Roundtable. He is the author of many articles and several books on the Irish in the New York City area. His last article, "Irish County Colonies in New York City, (Part II)" appeared in volume 26 of New York Irish History. His book, Celebrating 250 Years of the New York City St. Patrick's Day Parade, was published in Spring, 2011. ©2014. Published with permission of John T. Ridge.*

place in some parishes with large Longford populations. Notable among them was Monsignor Joseph McNamee, founder of St. Teresa's just northeast of Prospect Park, and Monsignor Thomas Taafe of St. Patrick's on Kent Avenue, south of the Brooklyn Navy Yard. Monsignor Taafe was related to a dozen other priests from his native county who served in New York area churches, but this was not unusual occurrence since not a few Longford families also provided various combinations of siblings and cousins to serve in the city's growing number of Roman Catholic churches. Certainly, in the case of both McNamee and Taafe, the presence of a powerful clerical figure was an attraction for many people from their native counties to settle in the vicinity of their churches.

An early reference to a Longford neighborhood in Brooklyn can be traced back to "Longtail" feuds with the Connaughtmen in the 1850s that took place just north of the Red Hook section. Within and in the vicinity of Red Hook itself, the Longford minority allied itself with "Connaughtmen" and "Far Downs" politically to oppose the numerically superior Cork voters in Red Hook.<sup>6</sup>

The late Joseph Silinonte's research on the Irish graves in Brooklyn's Holy Cross Cemetery and the record of Diocesan Dispensations indicate that Longford provides one of the few indications of the relative strength of the thirty-two Irish counties. Longford, surprisingly, provided 12% of the Holy Cross interments and 11% of the total of dispensations where county of origin is stated. This placed Longford ahead of all the other counties in Brooklyn, more numerous than even Cork, Kerry and Galway. Adjacent counties like Westmeath and Roscommon were also well represented and overall Leinster had a higher number than any other Irish provinces.

The Silinonte research can be compared to Rosemary Ardolina's work on Calvary Cemetery, the place of interment for the New York Archdiocese. The results for Calvary are very different than for the Brooklyn records. In Calvary Cemetery, Cork is first with almost 14% of the burials. The totals from the other Munster counties brought the total to 34% for this Irish province alone in contrast to about 24% for Munster in the Silinonte's Brooklyn records. The comparison of Silinonte's and Ardolina's research illustrates the strikingly different patterns of settlement from the Irish counties to Brooklyn and New York (Manhattan).<sup>7</sup>



*Photo:  
St. Stephen's Church  
(East 28th Street) on  
the southern edge of  
the old Westmeath  
neighborhood on the  
East Side was the site  
of a memorial mass  
for victims of the Irish  
War for Independence  
in 1920. The 69th  
Regiment furnished  
the honor guard.  
Courtesy of  
John T. Ridge.*

#### WESTMEATH

The old 21st Ward of Manhattan was not only the center of this county's settlement in the city, but also a political power base for a succession of political leaders who represented the district. The 21st Ward comprised the area between 30th and 40th Streets and between Fourth Avenue and the East River. It was here in the 1850s that many Westmeath immigrants, together with others from Ireland's Midland counties, found a home and created a political dynasty. Westmeath people came together in one of the earliest regional Irish societies in the 1850s with the formation of the Athlone Circle of Friendship, a vigorous social group

that was active almost to the close of the century. Many of them participated in the now vanished St. Gabriel's parish and the adjacent St. Stephen's parish.

Among the best known in a long line of Westmeath-born politicians were State Senator John J. Cullen, Patrick Corrigan, the 21st Ward Democratic and Tammany Hall leader, Jimmy O'Brien, a native of the town of Moate who was an alderman, sheriff, state senator and congressman and long-time foe of Tammany's boss Croker. There were many others like Patrick Corrigan, contrastingly one of Croker's strongest allies, Sherriff William J. Boyhan, Deputy Sherriff James Fay, Alderman Peter Seery, P.J. Boyhan, a municipal court judge, Judge Martin, Sherriff Michael J. Cruise and "Mickey Fay," one of the characters of the district. Fay was famous for his political chowders, but he first came to fame as the "Prince of Repeaters" for his ability to vote multiple times in every election. There were dozens of others, well known in their time, whose common Westmeath surnames like Fitzsimmons, Murtha, Keenan, Sheeran, and Kane formed a distinctive part of this little corner of Westmeath in the city.<sup>8</sup> Elsewhere in the city, many Westmeath immigrants settled in Brooklyn in close proximity to immigrants from its neighbor in Ireland, County Longford.

#### WICKLOW

One of the numerically smallest groups of immigrants came from County Wicklow. According to historian John T. Fisher, a Chelsea priest included this notation in his files:

*Sixty percent of the Erie Railroad boat (lighter) crews come from the little town of Arklow, County Wicklow. They live between 18th and 21st Streets on Eighth Avenue.<sup>9</sup>*

In the 1942 Draft Registration 24 of the 44 registrants in the United States who indicated an Arklow birthplace were living in Manhattan. Of these at least 11 worked

for the Erie Railroad (Marine Department), 2 for the Lehigh Railroad and 5 others for other marine firms like Tracey tugboats. Seventeen of the Registrants lived near the Hudson River, all but a few of these between West 16th Street and West 21st Street, the most popular streets being West 18th and West 19th Streets. This concentration on the West Side seems to have been uniquely immigrants from Arklow as registrants who indicated their birth elsewhere in Wicklow or just "County Wicklow" were scattered around the city, but not in the same area as the Arklow colony on the West Side. In any case, the Arklow colony on the West Side was not a very big one and probably numbered no more than 200 or 250 immigrants, but they were certainly an unusual colony since there is no record of any other Irish town with a settlement in the city like it. (The 1942 United States Draft Registration was commonly called the old men's draft because it was limited to potential inductees who were 45 years old or older. The previous draft registration for young men, which is available only in a very small segment, does not often show county of origin.)<sup>10</sup>

#### GALWAY

For a county that supplied thousands of immigrants to the city, there is little information to pin down a colony in Manhattan. A Galway society was formed as early as 1856 and this and successor groups almost always met on the east side, initially just east of the Bowery near East Broadway and then from East 8th Street north into the East 20s. Only one reference has been found that hints at a concentration of Galway immigrants:

*In the Eighteenth Ward there are so many men from that fine old Irish "City of the Tribes"...that it is called in some quarters "County Galway."<sup>11</sup>*

The Eighteenth Ward ran from 5th Avenue to the East River and between East 14th and East 26th Street. When steamships had piers in the vicinity of East 14th Street on

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the Hudson River, there was also supposed to be a cluster of Galway dock workers and their families living in the area.

In Brooklyn there was a concentration of Galway and Mayo families in Williamsburg's St. Vincent de Paul Parish near the Navy Yard and bordering Greenpoint. The task of teaching the boys of the Brooklyn Diocese had been given to the Irish Franciscan Brothers whose principal friary was in Kilkerrin in East Galway. Every summer the head of the Brooklyn brothers would journey to Ireland to gather up recruits for the order all over Ireland, but a very large number of the brothers came from the home county. Naturally, this created many family and friendship connections between the brothers and the Brooklyn Catholic population and served to attract many of them to settle in an area where all of the parochial education for boys was given to the care of their fellow county men.<sup>12</sup>

Below Hamilton Avenue and bordering on the Gowanus and New York Bay is the neighborhood known as Red Hook, also known as the 12th Ward, an area that except for a small number of Donegal immigrants was strictly a Cork neighborhood in the 19th Century. Just to the north of Red Hook and infringing a bit along Hamilton Avenue was another neighborhood of Irish immigrants which the newspapers sometimes referred to as the settlement of the "Connaughtmen."

The exact meaning of this appellation was always a bit obscure, but certainly, north of Hamilton Avenue was the domicile of the Galway settlement. The term "Connaughtmen" was really a catch-all term for any Irish who were not from Cork and together with "Corkonian" they almost always represented in politics two competing parties. The intensity of the feeling was evident as late as 1887, when two competing boarding houses for Irish immigrants on the edge of the 12th Ward came to blows. One of them, on Hamilton Avenue, was run by a Mrs. Kearney from Cork. Mrs. Kearney's rival was a Mrs. Curley (mainly a Galway surname) who ran a boarding house around the corner on Luquer (Luquer) Street. When Mrs. Curley managed to attract a number of Cork men to stay in her boarding house, Mrs. Kearney induced some of her Cork boarders to intimidate the lost sheep to leave the Curley's house and return to her fold. A meeting of reconciliation at Curley's between the residents of the two boarding houses resulted in a faction fight when some of the Cork men objected to the Connaught accent by telling the Connaughtmen "not to bark like a dog." A call to the police finally settled the dispute after a number of arrests.<sup>13</sup>

A cluster of Galway immigrants from Clifden and the Letterfrack area in north Connemara was located in the vicinity of Court Street near Butler Street not far from

*Illustration:  
Galway Hall was one  
of more than a half  
dozen Irish dance  
halls on 125th Street  
in 1930. Galway  
immigrants were  
scattered widely over  
the city by this time.  
Courtesy of  
John T. Ridge.*

where the Irish Franciscans from Galway had set up their headquarters and St. Francis College was located. Frequently, fund raisers were organized by the Galway people in the area for the Franciscans and especially for visiting Galway clergy. In 1909, the silver jubilee of Franciscan Brother Pius in the Order was celebrated with a dance in aid of the Clifden churches which "brought out a very fine gathering of the former parishioners of old Clifden and Tuam." Clifden and Letterfrack Clubs were active from about 1900 until the beginning of World War II in this neighborhood, but by the 1950s most of the Irish had left this district.<sup>14</sup>

Stephen Faherty, a leader of Galway social organizations at the turn of the 19th Century, memorialized the Brooklyn Galway contingent in a poem called "With Galway in Brooklyn," which was written for the Brooklyn Galway Ball in 1913:

*Up, true exiles from sweet  
Lough Corrib,  
Come dear colleens from Loughrea,  
Meeting here for home and Galway,  
In a kind, true-hearted way,  
All the road to Leenane down,  
From Killimer's leafy bowers,  
And from Gort's old storied town,  
In true friendship are we meeting,  
From our hills and valleys all,  
While hearts and hands are greeting,  
At the Brooklyn Galway ball.*<sup>15</sup>

#### MAYO

Although Mayo was a county with a large emigration to America, there is only a brief reference in 1896 to "numerous Mayo people" living on the west side above 14th Street. Like Galway, there were Mayo people in some numbers in Williamsburg's St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Brooklyn near the Navy Yard up to the 1930s. The 1942 Draft Registration data indicates a decided preference by Mayo immigrants for Brooklyn over the other boroughs of the city.

A number of immigrants from Achill Island were located in Bay Ridge in Brooklyn near Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church. An

Achill Men's Association was active in this neighborhood, meeting at 54th Street and 3rd Avenue, from the 1930s until the 1950s.<sup>16</sup> Many of the Scottish-born residents in the area were the descendants of Mayo immigrants to Scotland and the Achill Society sometimes responded to Scottish relief such as in 1937 when they held a benefit for victims of a disastrous fire that had claimed many lives among their friends and relations. Frequently, receptions were also tendered visiting fellow islandmen from Cleveland, Ohio, the main center for Achill



immigration in the United States.

William O'Dwyer, a native of the village of Bohola, lived in the Bay Ridge section of Brooklyn and began his rise to fame from laborer to mayor of New York City with the enthusiastic support of a network of Mayo immigrants who were very loyal to their native son in many political campaigns. Several Mayo town societies including the largely Brooklyn-based Bohola Society, made powerful under O'Dwyer's tutelage, were active in the borough. As a testimonial to the strong Brooklyn contingent even the New York Mayo Men's Association switched its annual picnic and games to Ulmer Park in Brooklyn in the 1920s.

#### LEITRIM AND ROSCOMMON

Exactly where the two other Connaught counties of Roscommon and Leitrim immigrants settled has not been revealed in the historical record. In 1896, however, *The Sun* wrote that Leitrim immigrants were numerous on the

*Photo:  
The Young Mayo Gaelic  
Football Team in 1913  
represented its home  
county at sports grounds  
like Celtic Park. Many  
Mayo immigrants  
settled in Brooklyn  
before World War II.  
Courtesy of  
John T. Ridge.*



*Photo:  
Division No. 22 AOH  
Boys Band in 1909  
was composed of the  
sons of the Limerick-  
born members of this  
Hibernian division.  
The area centered on  
St. Michael's Parish in  
today's Sunset Park  
neighborhood was a  
stronghold of Limerick  
immigrants before  
World War I. Courtesy  
of John T. Ridge.*

west side above 14th Streets and south of 23rd Streets. The newspaper reported that "the diversity of business pursuits here has been destructive of the divisional county lines, which are better preserved on the East Side."<sup>17</sup>

#### LIMERICK

The Limerick population in the old downtown 7th Ward had diminished by the end of the 19th Century, but in 1896 it was reported that:

*In the district of town north of Fourteenth street and south of Twenty-third, east of Second Avenue (sometimes called the Gas House District), Limerick men are numerous.<sup>18</sup>*

Just before World War I, a strong Limerick element had moved into the Brooklyn neighborhood along Fourth Avenue in the Thirties and Forties, centered in St. Michael's Parish. In 1898, Hibernian Division No. 22 was organized in the area and was composed entirely of Limerick-born members. It spawned a number of organizations of Limerick composition like

the Sarsfield Hurling Club (named after the hero of the Siege of Limerick) and the Division No. 22 Boys Band, made up of the sons of the Hibernian division members. The hurling club once fought a memorable battle, widely reported in the Brooklyn newspapers, over the use of a disputed local playing field with a local baseball club in 1909 when it was proved that "hurleys are far more dangerous than baseball bats." The Limerick neighborhood in this section of Brooklyn was swamped by an influx of new residents after World War I, but the influence of Limerick immigrants in Division No. 22 Ancient Order of Hibernians remained for many years afterward.<sup>19</sup>

#### TIPPERARY

The single reference to a Tipperary neighborhood is from 1896 when *The Sun* stated that the Tipperary people were located on the East Side of Manhattan above 23rd Street and the Gas House District north to 59th Street. Apparently, just which Irish counties established a foothold in the city first made a difference as to whether a county colony was easily

recognizable in its own enclave:

*In the Upper part of town, east and west, north of Fifty-ninth street, the county lines are not preserved, for, in the great majority of cases, the residents of these districts of Irish descent have not come to them direct, but rather have moved from other localities, whereas in the lower part of the city the newly arrived emigrants made their homes with friends and neighbors of towns or counties across the sea.*<sup>20</sup>

#### NEW JERSEY

Directly across the river, Hudson County was in some respects a suburb of New York, but in the 1850s it was a major factional battleground between “Corkonians” and “Far Downers.” The cause of the trouble was competition for work in the numerous railroad and public works projects underway in the county. Make-shift settlements called “patches” or shanty towns hosted rival groups of laborers from different parts of Ireland. In 1857, the *Evening Post* wrote:

*The ancient factions of “Corkonians” (Munster or South of Ireland men) and the “Far Downers,” who come from Connaught, or Ulster, in the North, whose origins is lost in the night of antiquity, found a place among those people; and so strictly was the line drawn between them, that the “Corkonians” all dwelt upon one “patch” and the “Far Downers” upon another, while each party jealously guarded against territorial encroachment on the part of its rival.”*<sup>21</sup>

The legacy of strife carried on for years afterward into county factions in politics. Disputes arose over why Jersey City street work was given to immigrants from one part of Ireland over another. A letter, for example, to the *Jersey Journal* in 1870 asked “why Alderman Sheeran (a Far Down) don’t (sic) give Corkonians jobs upon the streets once in a while as well as far-downers from the Sixth Ward?” (*Jersey Journal*, November

26, 1870). Two years later, on 1st Street near a landmark called Point of Rocks, it was stated that Connaughts, Fardowns, Tipperarys, Corkonians, Galwayians (sic) and Dublinites “live not in peace and harmony, but in internal warfare, each section ready to meet the other in a friendly set-to, or ready at the slightest hint, to tear the coat off the spalpeen that comes from any other county than that which the challenger first drew breath.”<sup>22</sup>

One of the most famous areas of Jersey City was the horseshoe district and within this was the stronghold of “Cork Row,” where the father of John V. Kenny, the longtime boss of Jersey City, held sway as the “Mayor of Cork Row.” The Kenny machine was initially built on the inhabitants of this district. As time went on, factional troubles disappeared, but county loyalties sometimes were inherited. Frank Hague, mayor from 1917 to the 1940s, had Kenny as his second in command and eventual successor. Hague of Cavan ancestry and Kenny of Cork ancestry neatly represented the coming together of the two Irish sectional factions to rule cooperatively.<sup>23</sup>

Jersey City had its own distinctive Irish county organizations, the largest of them from Cork, Galway and Mayo. Each of them regularly sent large delegations across the river to attend the county functions of their brethren in Manhattan. South of Jersey City, the city of Bayonne had a large settlement of Donegal immigrants, who, for a time, had their own county organization. The City of Newark was noted for the predominance of immigrants from Roscommon and Cavan.

#### DRAFT REGISTRATION & COUNTY INFORMATION

United States governmental data has included many statistics over more than two hundred years, but such information as to the exact origin of Irish immigrant births by counties was never included until the release of the 1942 Draft Registration data recently. For the first time, the exact place of birth by county of origin and even village or town is included for many of these immigrants who

became potential inductees in the armed forces. (For a look at registration for the 1941 Draft in each New York City borough by men from each Irish province, see the graph below developed by Professor Marion R. Casey.)<sup>24</sup>

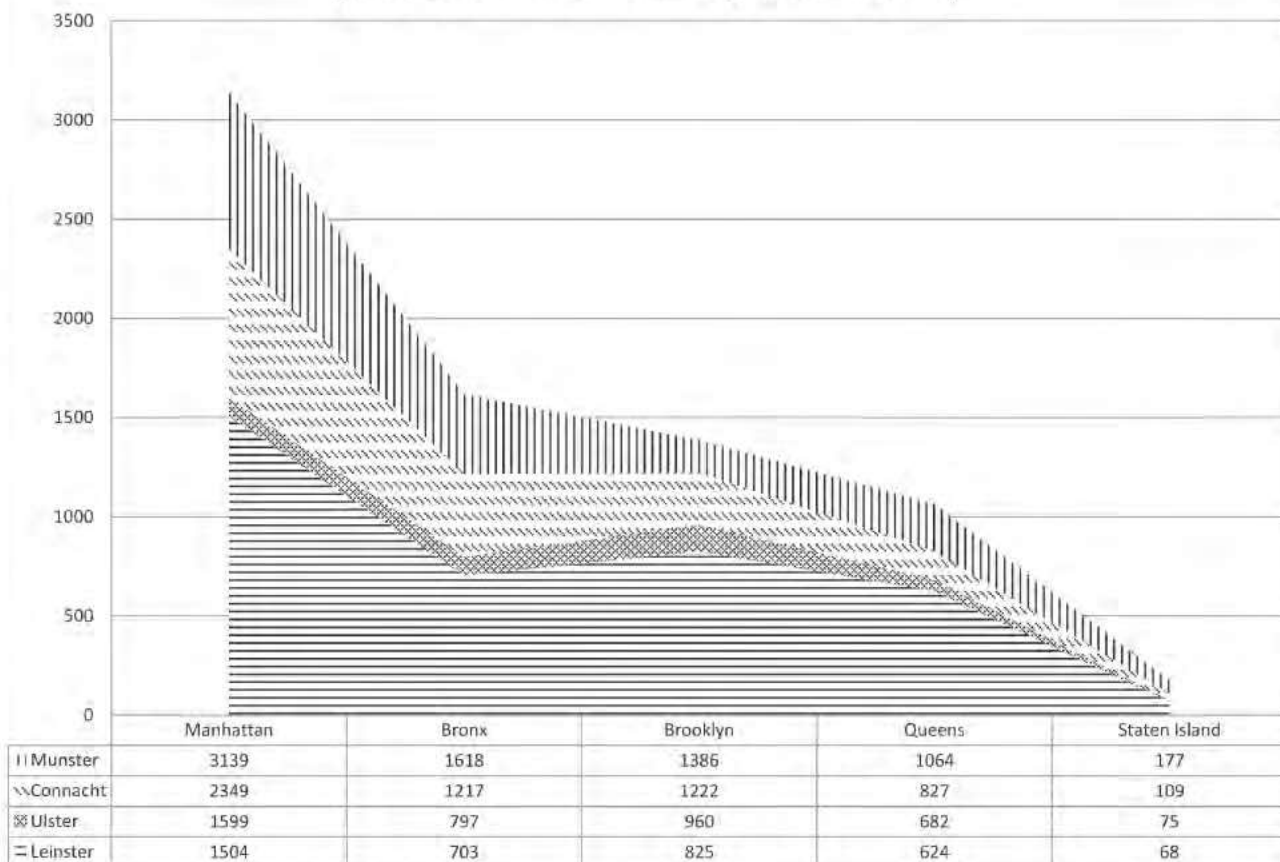
Although the Draft Registration of 1942 covers only men over age 45 (it is sometimes called the old men's draft), it is composed of a large cross section of the Irish immigrants in America and by projection a good estimate of the Irish born population of the city by county of origin can be obtained for the first time.

As can be seen from Table 1, the estimated number of immigrants varied greatly from county to county. In general, the larger the county population in Ireland was, the larger the population will be in New York, but this changes when we see that emigration from Ireland was not uniform over the entire country. As indicated earlier, most of

the immigrants came from the rural counties, particularly along the Western seaboard, where emigration to America had long been a practice. Some of the inland counties, too, had large numbers of immigrants in the city. From the Eastern seaboard of Ireland, Irish emigration was much less because many who left Ireland from this area chose parts of nearby Britain over the long journey to America.

Each population center in the United States like New York had its own particular blend of Irish counties reflecting sometimes vastly different Irish county immigrant streams. Along the Connecticut River Valley in towns from Hartford to the Springfield area, there was a dominant population of Kerry immigrants while Cleveland was strongly settled by Irish-born from County Mayo. South Boston had a

**Number of Irish-born Men Registering for the Draft in New York City, circa 1942, by Province in Ireland and Borough in New York City**



Source: Ancestry.com. Calculations made by John T. Ridge.

<b>Table 1. Estimated Irish-born Population of New York City, 1940, by Irish County ranked in order from the largest to the smallest.<sup>25</sup></b>		
County	Rank	Estimated Irish-Born 1940 (NYC)
Cork	1	17508
Mayo	2	13332
Galway	3	13055
Kerry	4	12525
Limerick	5	11076
Clare	6	10844
Cavan	7	8732
Dublin	8	8394
Roscommon	9	8298
Sligo	10	7717
Tipperary	11	7586
Leitrim	12	7283
Donegal	13	5920
Longford	14	5286
Waterford	15	4557
Monaghan	16	4435
Tyrone	17	4201
Armagh	18	3602
Kilkenny	19	3350
Down	20	2864
Offaly	21	2595
Westmeath	22	2448
Antrim	23	2205
Louth	24	2083
Wexford	25	1994
Derry	26	1970
Fermanagh	27	1771
Meath	28	1771
Laois	29	1562
Kildare	30	1120
Carlow	31	1094
Wicklow	32	677
<b>Total Irish-born</b>	<b>181,803</b>	

large portion of its Irish-born population from Connemara in Galway while Philadelphia had a heavy influx of Irish from Ulster, especially Donegal, Derry, Tyrone and adjoining counties. Of the 110,034 Irish-born registered in the 1942

draft in all the United States, 20,945 of them were residents of New York City who gave a specific county of origin. With less than one in five of the nation's Irish-born, the geographical composition of these immigrants was not the same as in other

<b>Table 2. Irish-born Population, New York City, circa 1942, for each Irish County according to its percentage of the New York City total in each borough.<sup>26</sup></b>						
County:	Manhattan	Kings (Brooklyn)	Bronx	Queens	Staten Isl.	NYC
Cork	44.8	19.5	19.2	13.1	3.4	100.
Kerry	48.8	13.7	23.3	11.6	2.6	100.
Tipperary	38.8	19.8	21.9	18.1	1.4	100.
Limerick	42.0	22.3	17.8	16.1	1.8	100.
Waterford	37.3	13.9	31.8	14.7	2.3	100.
Clare	36.8	21.3	24.7	15.3	1.9	100.
Galway	43.0	21.3	20.1	13.8	1.8	100.
Mayo	36.3	26.4	21.5	13.5	2.3	100.
Roscomm'n	41.9	19.9	20.6	16.1	1.5	100.
Sligo	42.4	17.1	24.5	14.5	1.5	100.
Leitrim	43.6	18.4	20.2	15.4	2.4	100.
Cavan	43.5	17.4	22.3	15.5	1.3	100.
Monaghan	40.7	14.3	26.4	18.0	.6	100.
Tyrone	46.7	17.2	17.1	16.7	2.3	100.
Derry	29.1	33.9	16.3	16.7	4.0	100.
Down	35.2	21.5	20.0	21.5	1.8	100.
Antrim	26.8	39.3	11.4	21.3	1.2	100.
Armagh	41.6	14.7	23.9	17.6	2.2	100.
Fermanagh	37.3	17.6	26.0	15.2	3.9	100.
Donegal	33.4	41.6	10.4	12.6	1.9	100.
Dublin	39.8	23.0	16.2	19.7	1.3	100.
Wicklow	47.4	12.8	14.1	24.4	1.3	100.
Meath	43.1	24.5	17.2	14.7	.5	100.
Westmeath	38.6	22.7	18.8	16.0	3.9	100.
Louth	46.6	17.1	20.4	13.8	2.1	100.
Carlow	43.6	12.7	30.2	11.9	1.6	100.
Kildare	36.4	17.1	25.6	18.6	2.3	100.
Laois	40.0	26.7	22.2	10.6	.5	100.
Offaly	41.2	18.4	19.7	19.7	1.0	100.
Longford	37.4	27.8	18.2	15.3	1.3	100.
Kilkenny	41.2	16.1	21.2	17.9	3.6	100.
Wexford	39.7	29.5	15.6	12.5	2.7	100.
County Avg.	41.0	20.9	20.7	15.3	2.1	100.

parts of the nation. For example, a majority of Cork and Galway immigrants and just under half of Kerry immigrants were to be found in Massachusetts, but only about

31% of Sligo immigrants and 24% of Mayo immigrants favored that state.

What can be said about New York City—that can be said about few other cities in the

United States—is that there were colonies of immigrants from all 32 counties in the city. The smaller the size of the Irish-born population in an American city, the less likely the city was to have a representation of all Ireland's counties.

Some of the Ulster counties, such as Down and Armagh, rank extraordinarily high in population size when one considers the relatively inactive history of their county organizations in New York City. This probably reflects the fact that Irish county organizations were largely Roman Catholic in membership with few Protestant Irish taking an active part in their activities. A large number of the Irish-born from some of the northern counties would not have participated in the social and politically activities of the nationalist minded Irish.

It is remarkable that many traditional county settlement patterns still held true in 1940, a time when emigration from Ireland had virtually ended for almost ten years because of the economic depression. Before Irish immigration would resume in the late 1940s, the city changed rapidly and many Irish neighborhoods disappeared. In any event, the new immigration up to the 1960s was so small that the possibility of establishing new county colonies was impossible.

The percentage of the total city Irish-born by each Irish county in each of the boroughs across the city varied, sometimes dramatically, from county to county and from borough to borough. In almost every case, the pattern backs up what has been written about the history of county settlement around the city. In 1942, Manhattan was still the home of 41% of the city's total Irish-born. Most of the Manhattan Irish were at this time living well north of 14th Street and a large portion north of 86th Street. Many of the Bronx Irish (20.7% of the NYC total) lived just across the Harlem River from Manhattan. In practical terms, the Bronx Irish community was just an extension of Manhattan, so for this period of time it can be regarded as almost one settlement, one



that counted almost 62% of New York's Irish-born. While Brooklyn had a long established community of Irish-born residents, it is believed that it was composed of many older immigrants while attracting fewer newcomers who favored Manhattan and the Bronx. The draft registration shows a slightly higher number of Irish-born for Brooklyn over the Bronx because older immigrants were probably more numerous in Brooklyn than in the Bronx. The difference between the draft figures and the actual census of 1940 are very slight, so it appears that the draft information on county origin is an accurate projection of the actual census.

While the average percentage in Manhattan of the city's Irish-born is 41%, several Irish counties are not well represented in this borough. The most unrepresented are three Ulster Counties, Antrim with 26.8%, Derry with 29.1% and Donegal with 33.4%. These three counties are among the few who had more of their Irish-born living in Brooklyn than Manhattan. Except for Tyrone and Cavan, Ulster counties are generally below average in Manhattan. All the Connaught counties are well represented in Manhattan except Mayo which has a relatively high percentage in Brooklyn (26.4%).

Some of the highest percentages for Irish-born in Manhattan come from the Munster counties of Cork (44.8%) and Kerry (48.8%). Combining Manhattan and the Bronx, Cork is at 64% and Kerry at 72.1% of the city's Irish-born.

**Photo:**

*Although among the top ten in population size among all the Irish counties in New York, the record of a distinctive Roscommon colony is yet to be discovered. In 1957, thanks to a wave of new immigrants, the county produced large numbers of marchers for the ladies contingent in the St. Patrick's Day Parade. Courtesy of John T. Ridge.*

The Leinster counties vary somewhat in the percentage figure for Manhattan. Longford (37.4%) and Kildare (36.4) are at the low end, but Wicklow (47.4%) is near the very highest. It generally depends on whether or not Brooklyn has a high Irish-born percentage such as is the case with Longford (27.8%) and Laois (26.7%).

Two Ulster counties Antrim (21.3%) and Down (21.5%) are well represented in Queens and also one Leinster county, Wicklow (24.4%). The two Ulster counties share the city of Belfast between them while Wicklow at least in part is in the suburbs of Dublin. In 1940, Queens was very suburban. Perhaps this high percentage for these counties indicates that a number of better educated and skilled Irish-born immigrants chose Queens as a home for its more comfortable surroundings. Staten Island, except for the north shore, was even more suburban, but relatively few Irish-born were to be found here and the draft registrations too few to detect a pattern. A county with a long connection to the borough, Cork (3.4%), is among the few counties to exceed the average rate of Irish-born settlement.

The era of the county colony is now just a footnote in the history of the New York Irish. Although there will always be a bit of natural clustering of immigrants because of friendship and family ties, the day when a neighborhood, a street or even an apartment house had a distinctive county origin is over. New York is today too large and too spread out for such enclaves ever to flourish again.

## Endnotes

- 1 *New York Herald*, July 2, 1893
- 2 *The Sun*, New York, November 4, 1894
- 3 *The Sun*, New York, November 4, 1894
- 4 *The Sun*, New York, January 29, 1894
- 5 Ibid.
- 6 *Brooklyn Eagle*, October 23, 1892
- 7 Silinonte, Joseph M., *Tombstones of the Irish Born Cemetery of the Holy Cross*, Brooklyn, Brooklyn, 1992, p. 107 and Ardolina, Rosemary Muscarella, *Old Calvary Cemetery*, New York, Heritage Books, Bowie, Md., 1996, p. xv.)
- 8 *Irish Advocate*, March 31, 1923, *The Sun*, April 11, 1895 and *The Sun*, September 20, 1909
- 9 Fisher, John T., *On the Irish Waterfront: the Crusader, the Movie and the Soul of the Port of New York*, Cornell University Press, 2009. See Local 996 file, box 11, folder 21, Xavier Institute of Industrial Relations Papers, O'Hare Special Collections, Walsh Family Library, Fordham University. Wicklow immigrants like those from Co. Galway were supposed to have clustered around the passenger piers in the vicinity of West 14th Street.
- 10 Ancestry.com, U.S., World War II Registration Cards, 1942 (database on-line), Provo, UT.
- 11 *The Evening World*, New York, February 17, 1888.
- 12 Interview with Hugh Reid, Funeral Director in Greenpoint and Williamsburg, March 14, 1985 and *Irish Advocate* November 11, 1914 and November 15, 1924
- 13 *Brooklyn Eagle*, December 13, 1887
- 14 *Irish Advocate*, May 1, 1909.
- 15 *Irish Advocate*, March 22, 1913
- 16 *Irish Advocate*, October 16, 1937
- 17 *The Sun*, February 29, 1896
- 18 *Hibernian Monthly Magazine*, Seneca Falls, N.Y., April, 1836.
- 19 *Irish Advocate*, April 10, 1909 and July 5, 1909.
- 20 *The Sun*, February 29, 1896
- 21 *Evening Post*, February 16, 1857
- 22 *Jersey Journal*, August 18, 1873
- 23 *Jersey Journal*, January 7, 1913
- 24 I am grateful to Professor Marion R. Casey for permission to publish this graph.
- 25 Ancestry.com, U.S., World War II Registration Cards, 1942 (database on-line) Provo, UT.
- 26 Ibid.