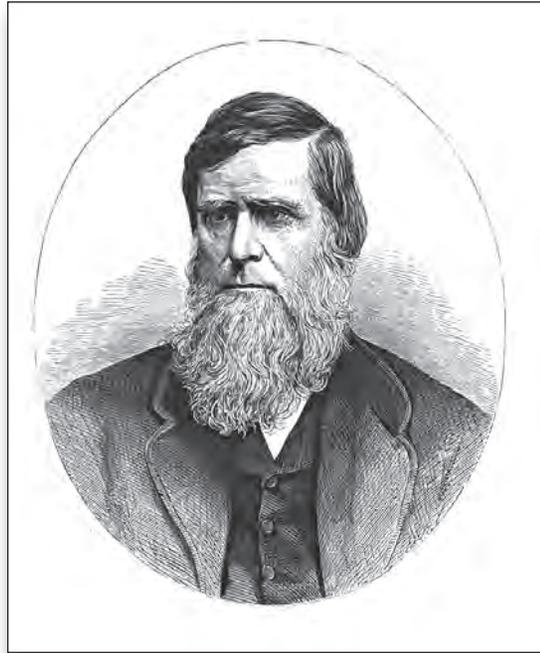


Aid to Ireland During the American Civil War

BY HARVEY STRUM, PH.D.

Illustration:
Judge Charles Patrick Daly was born in New York City in 1816. His parents emigrated from Co. Tyrone two years earlier. Daly was a central leader in the city's Irish community into the 1890s, and served as a judge in the New York Court of Common Pleas for nearly forty years, retiring in 1885 as Chief Justice. Courtesy of New York Public Library.



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From 1860 to 1863 a series of natural disasters limited the production of potatoes, grain, and hay in Ireland. These declines in turn led to crop failures and a significant loss of cattle. By 1863 major food shortages developed in Ireland. To compound this problem, the American Civil War negatively impacted manufacturing in Northern Ireland putting many cotton spinners out of work and producing hardships for the urban working class population similar to the distress of the Lancashire textile workers in England. According to the New York Irish Relief Committee, an organization formed in May, 1862 to report on the crisis and to provide appropriate assistance, “in one manufacturing district alone, over nine thousand persons have been...without employment, and are now suffering a degree of wretchedness, the details of which are harrowing.” Reports from the Mansion House Committee in Dublin, the main public/private Irish relief committee headed by the Lord Mayor of Dublin,

confirmed these concerns. As a result of the American Civil War, pauperism increased forty-five percent from February 1861 to February 1862 in the county of Armagh, Ulster. But all of the province of Ulster felt the impact of the American Civil War, and as the Mansion House Committee concluded “is now suffering severely from the effects of the American civil war.”

Fearing the privations of the unemployed workers in the north combined with three years of poor crops in agricultural districts would produce a disaster on the scale of the Great Famine, the New York Committee called on the people of the United States to contribute money and food to avert mass starvation in Ireland. Warning that action needed to occur because “there is every indication that a famine is impending, which unless averted, will be more extensive than that which occurred in Ireland in the years 1846 and 1847...,”¹ Charles Daly and the New York Irish Relief Committee played a pivotal role in rousing the nation's attention to

the plight of the Irish and encouraging donations for the famishing Irish.

Three times in the nineteenth century New Yorkers and other Americans came to the aid of starving people in Ireland. The massive aid given to Ireland in 1846–48 has been documented. During the Great Famine non-Irish Americans organized a national campaign of voluntary philanthropy. And history shows that New Yorkers and the American people would come to Ireland's aid again in 1879–80 during the years of the “Little Famine” in Ireland. Far less has been written about American assistance during the Civil War in the years 1862–63.

LEADERSHIP IN THIS CRISIS

In the crisis of 1860–63 many Irish-American political figures assumed leadership roles. While the Irish clergy in the American Catholic Church played a significant role in the Great Famine in soliciting donations, they played even more important roles in the later food shortages by soliciting and directing aid to Ireland. But, in the two shortages of the 1860s and 1870s, Judge Charles Patrick Daly of New York City emerged as the leader of more secular committees that organized Irish relief. And during the food shortage in the

Civil War years, most of the leadership came from within the Irish-American community which contributed a large part of the relief aid. Contemporaries considered Judge Daly a competent and responsible individual to chair the New York Irish Relief Committee in 1862 and again in 1863. When famine hit the west of Ireland during the Little Famine of 1879–82, once again, Judge Daly accepted the leadership of the New York Committee in 1880.²

AID FROM OUTSIDE NEW YORK

Ironically, in the food shortages of the 1860s, the Kentucky state legislature first proposed Irish aid. In late 1861 legislators drafted resolutions “that in view of the want and famine impending in Ireland, and of our sense of humanity and gratitude to her brave sons, who by the thousands are periling their lives upon the battle-fields of liberty, in defense of our government and of liberty” the people of Kentucky instructed their senators and congressmen to support federal government aid to Ireland. While the resolutions reached the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, the appeal for the Irish got tabled and the federal government took no action on Kentucky's proposals. The administration of Abraham Lincoln and the

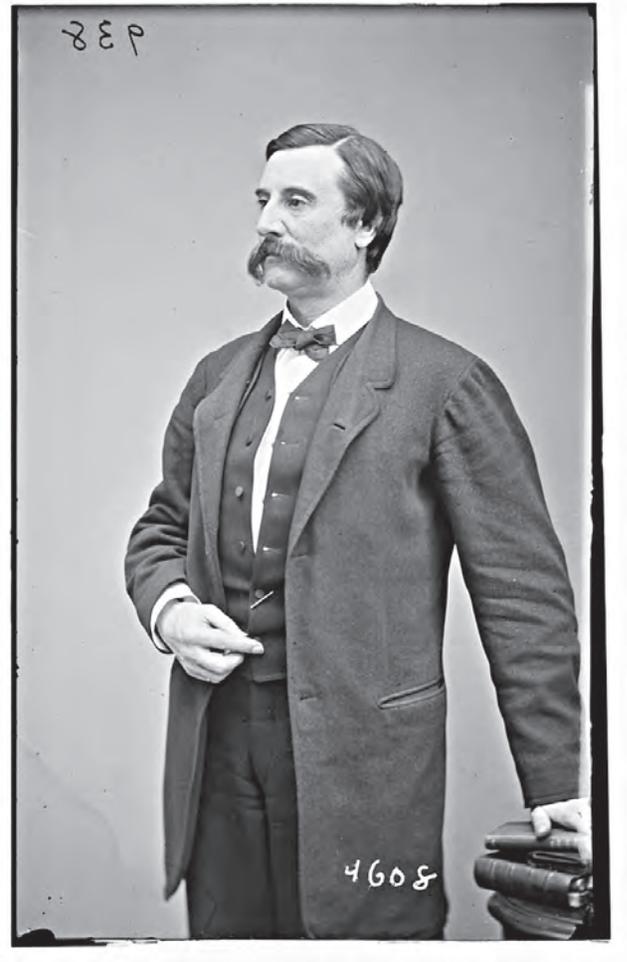


Photo:
During the Famine years, two American warships including the barque, Macedonian, shown above in the early 1860s, carried provisions from the United States to Ireland and Scotland. Courtesy of Library of Congress.

Republican majority in Congress welcomed the contributions of the Irish to the Union cause, but shied away from considering aid for the famishing Irish during the war. American presidents, whether Democrat James Polk during the Great Famine or Republican Abraham Lincoln during the food shortages of the 1860s remained reluctant to ask Congress for foreign aid even in humanitarian crises.³ In the crisis of 1847 Congress did authorize two American warships, *Jamestown* and *Macedonian*, to carry some of the voluntary contributions to Ireland and Scotland. Again, in 1880 Congress sanctioned the use of the warship *Constellation* to transport relief supplies from New York City to Ireland. However, in the 1860s Congress made no offer of American naval vessels to assist the Irish.

In 1862 an effort developed in the northeast and Midwest to send aid to Ireland as a result of appeals from Father Jeremiah Vaughan from County Clare. Irish-Americans organized Father Vaughan committees to solicit donations from their countrymen and the general public for Irish relief. Two Irish-American newspapers, the *Boston Pilot* and the *New York Irish-American*, promoted the cause publishing famine accounts in Ireland, editorial appeals, and reports of fund raising efforts from Boston to Chicago. An appeal from Father Vaughan to Clare men and friends of Ireland in America in January 1862 led to editorials in the Irish-American press calling for contributions.⁴ For example, New York's *Irish-American* urged the men of the Irish Brigade to aid the suffering poor of Ireland and heed Vaughan's request. Irish-Americans in Boston mobilized the quickest and made a determined effort to send funds to Ireland. Other Irish communities across the North contributed. Thomas Healy, treasurer of the Boston committee, called on Irish-Americans: "go to work, and do what you can for Ireland this year." In Lafayette, Indiana, the Fenian Brotherhood raised "a very large and munificent subscription for the relief of the suffering poor of Ireland."⁵ Similarly, in Chicago, the Fenian Brotherhood canceled a public demonstration and dinner on St. Patrick's Day and agreed to have its mem-

Photo:
Richard O'Gorman had an important role in winning aid to Ireland during the crisis years of the early 1860s. O'Gorman had been born in Ireland in 1826. In the 1840s he attended Trinity College and joined the Young Irelander Movement. Following the failed revolution in 1848, he left for New York City, where he helped create an influential law firm. In the early 1850s, he participated in formation of First and Second (New York) Irish Regiments, forerunners of the 69th Regiment. Courtesy of Library of Congress.



bers contribute funds for the poor of Ireland. They acknowledged donations from non-members and from women who gave out of their "small and well earned wages."⁶

THE NEW YORK EFFORT

Organized efforts to raise funds in New York City did not begin until May 21, 1862, when prominent Irish-Americans met at the Astor House to establish the Irish Relief Committee. Richard O'Gorman appealed to the audience noting that the situation in Ireland appeared as bad as in 1846–47. Judge Daly, who presided at the meeting, expressed similar concerns about the crisis in Ireland. Daly expected liberal contributions from the Irish-American community and from non-Irish in New York City.⁷ A few days later a second meeting at the Astor House reinforced the appeal for funds. Judge Daly gave a history of efforts in

1846–48 to help during the Great Famine. He observed that the people of the city and state had donated \$242,000 and sent thirty-four ships with food to Ireland. Judge Daly remembered that Americans regardless of religious denomination gave to Ireland. Episcopalians and Presbyterians gave as liberally for Irish relief as for other charities. “All denominations” he emphasized “were instrumental in the effort.”⁸ Richard O’Gorman confided that he heard from private sources that \$8,000 had gone to the Mansion House Committee during the present crisis primarily from servant girls and working class Irishmen to aid friends in Ireland. A third speaker called on the Catholic clergy to make an appeal in churches for contributions and the meeting approved the proposal. The meeting ended with a committee organized to draft a public appeal and solicit the aid of prominent merchants as in 1846–47. Judge Daly hoped that merchants would heed the call and encouraged the appointment of merchants to the committee omitting local politicians.

While Irish-American leaders like O’Gorman and Daly portrayed the situation in Ireland as bleak as in 1846–47, the response fell far short in New York City this time. Frustrated, the *Irish-American* complained that while working class New Yorkers contributed to Irish relief many wealthy Irish-Americans in the city remained indifferent to the appeals for aid.⁹ The Irish Relief Committee issued a public report on June 18, 1862 admitting defeat. Because of the Civil War “and demands by it on the resources of all classes it is...inexpedient to put into operation any general organization for the collection of contributions.”¹⁰

The Committee made one last appeal to the friends of Ireland to send funds to the Committee’s Treasurer Joseph Stuart who would forward the funds to the Mansion House Committee in Dublin. Judge Daly made a strategic error in not including local politicians on the Committee, angering Tammany Hall leaders who felt slighted. Merchants appeared less willing to donate to Irish relief in 1862, but a few months later the Chamber of Commerce and prominent



merchants eagerly organized to raise funds for textile workers in Lancashire, England thrown out of work due to the Union blockade on southern cotton. The New York committee for the Lancashire textile workers sent \$265,000 to England by 1863.¹¹ During 1862, much to the chagrin of Judge Daly, the mercantile community in New York City extended charity to Lancashire textile workers but refrained from opening their purses for starving Irish. Prominent Anglo-American and Dutch American merchants may have found it easier to identify with the plight of the starving Englishmen than the starving Irish, especially since merchants had played an instrumental role in the drive for Irish relief in 1846–47.

LEADING THE RELIEF DRIVE

In 1862, it was the city of Boston rather than New York City that appeared to lead the drive for Irish relief. Through the summer months of 1862 Irish-Americans in other communities from Rochester to Chicago and St. Louis sent aid to Ireland. As an example, a group of charitable Irishmen in Lowell, Massachusetts

Illustration: Alexander Stewart was exceptionally generous in supporting the Irish relief effort in New York. A native of Lisburn, he immigrated to New York in 1823 and by the 1840s had become extraordinarily successful in selling dry goods in the city. He was particularly concerned with providing aid to the inhabitants in and around Lisburn, donating both funds and supplies, and arranging employment in New York for other Irish immigrants. Courtesy of Library of Congress.

got together in June to solicit donations. Another group of Irish-Americans met in Fall River, Massachusetts, to contribute to the Irish poor. A public meeting held in St. Louis in June established ward committees to collect donations for the starving in Ireland. Aid came from America in 1862 but not on the scale of 1846–47. Most of it came from local efforts of Irish Americans across the northern states. By 1862 the Irish-American community felt comfortable and secure enough even in the middle of the Civil War to organize relief to their brethren in the old country.¹² Donations from the United States amounted to twenty percent of the contributions sent to the Mansion House Committee in 1862.

The crisis in Ireland continued for another year. After closing its books in August 1862 the Mansion House Committee reopened in January 1863 due to severity of the food shortages and starvation in Ireland. Renamed the Central Committee for the Relief of Distress in Ireland, the Dublin-based committee headed by the Lord Mayor of Dublin, John Vereker, appealed for the Americans to resume their aid. This time Americans in the northern states responded with greater vigor than 1862 and provided over two thirds of the funds for Irish relief. As the Central Committee observed: “The United States of America, disorganized and afflicted even as a that great Republic is, with a wasting and deplorable civil war, has exceeded all its former generosity in the noble and touching exercise, this year, of its sympathy for our sufferings.”¹³

GREATER SUCCESS IN 1863

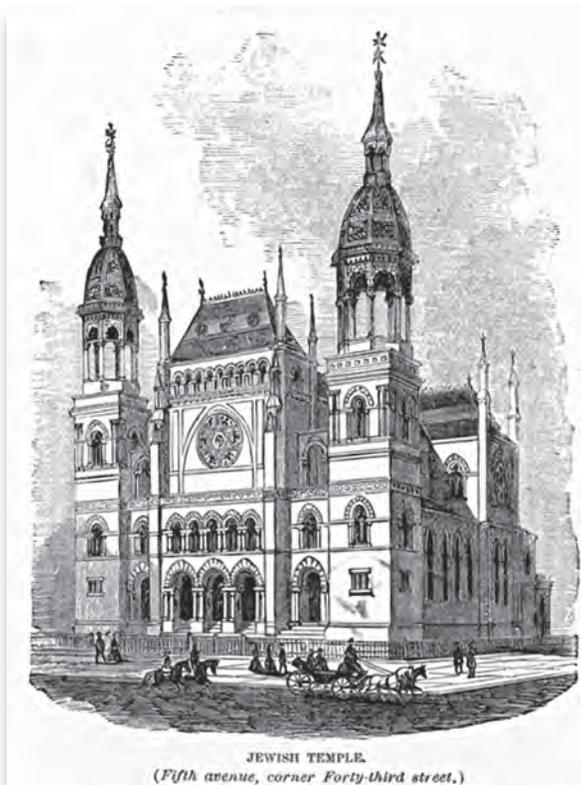
In 1863 the Irish depended heavily on voluntary contributions from the United States that came primarily, but not exclusively, from the Irish-American community. Irish Americans in New York City played a key role in organizing relief for Ireland in 1863. Led by Judge Daly they had far greater success than in 1862 in soliciting donations. Americans continued to call the Dublin-based committee the Mansion House Committee and sent their donations to the Dublin committee. However, some of the

funds raised in Catholic churches by Catholic clergy went directly to the Archbishop of Dublin, Reverend Dr. Paul Cullen, for distribution via Irish bishops and parish priests.¹⁴

Continuing food shortages and distress in Ireland got the public attention in 1863 that it failed to get in 1862. This led to far more coverage in the press and a willingness to give from the Irish-American community. In addition, more funds were contributed from Protestant Irish and from non-Irish Americans, like the Scottish St. Andrew’s Society. Encouraging its subscribers to support the cause of Irish relief, the New York *Herald* told its readers: “A disastrous famine now threatens Ireland, as desolating as that which visited in 1846 and 1847. The horrors that overhang that unhappy island are appalling if speedy relief is not supplied to avert them.”¹⁵ Going further, the newspaper commended three organizations in the city working for Irish relief and anticipated that New Yorkers would respond favorably to the solicitations for donations as they had to the campaign for Lancashire workers. As it had during the Great Famine, the press in 1863 publicized the food shortages in Ireland, highlighted the activities of relief groups, and expected Americans, Irish and non-Irish, to contribute to the cause. While the press in 1862 refrained from an enthusiastic support of famine relief, the continued distress in Ireland led the press to join in a chorus of support. Local politicians endorsed the relief efforts as they had in 1847, but federal and state politicians remained aloof from famine relief in 1863. During the Mexican-American War, state and federal political leaders, Whigs and Democrats, turned famine relief into a national philanthropic effort. Except for the Kentucky state legislators in 1861, Democratic and Republican leaders did not take the same role during the Civil War to aid the poor of Ireland.

NOTABLE ORGANIZATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS

Three Irish-American organizations in New York joined forces and reached out to non-Irish to raise funds for the Irish poor. The effort to collect money began in late March when the Friendly Sons of St. Patrick met at Delmonico’s



restaurant to solicit donations. They appointed an Irish Relief Committee “for the suffering Poor of Ireland” and informed Judge Daly that “you were appointed a member.”¹⁶ Of course, Daly agreed to serve and later became chairman of the fund raising campaign in New York City. Fairly quickly, the Friendly Sons raised several thousand dollars for Ireland. The Knights of St. Patrick held a similar meeting at Astor House and agreed to cooperate with the Friendly Sons and with the Ladies Irish Relief Association to publicize the food shortages in Ireland and the need for American contributions.¹⁷ The three Irish organizations called for a mass meeting early April to publicize the issue and collect donations. Women from Brooklyn and New York City in the Ladies Relief Association proposed a ball for Irish relief in mid-April. Women played a significant role in Irish relief in New York and Brooklyn. Bowing to the cultural norms of the time, men filled the public roles of organizing the events sponsored by the Ladies Irish Relief Association.

In New York City, merchant Alexander T. Stewart provided the largest single donation for relief in 1863. A native of Lisburn, Northern

Ireland he immigrated to the United States, made a fortune in dry goods, and opened an early department store in Manhattan. By the mid-1840s Stewart felt confident enough to build the Marble Palace store that covered two acres in lower Manhattan. Stewart followed this triumph by constructing the largest store in the world. His even grander Iron Palace store extended for eighteen acres between Nine and Tenth Streets and Fourth Avenue. Covering a city block his new store opened during the Civil War. During the Great Famine he had contributed \$10,000 for Irish relief and had sent a cargo of food to Lisburn. Judge Daly informed John Vereker, Chairman of the Mansion House Committee, “that Mr. Alexander Stewart, a public spirited and wealthy citizen of the city, is now fitting a vessel with corn and bacon, at the expense of 15,000 dols (*sic.*) which he intends to distribute among the destitute of Lisburn.”¹⁸

Daly underestimated his generosity because Stewart spent over \$30,000 in 1863 to help the people of Lisburn. Responding to an appeal from the Cotton Famine Association of Lisburn, Stewart chartered the brig, *Old Hickory*, sending it to Belfast with a cargo of

Illustration:

The Reform congregation of Temple Emanu-el on Manhattan's East Side was among the diverse contributors to the Irish Relief Fund that was noted by Judge Daly. At the time of its donation the congregation had existed for less than twenty years. Due to growth in the city's Jewish population, by the end of the 1860s the congregation had moved to a new Moorish Revival style building, the country's largest synagogue structure, on Fifth Avenue and Forty-third Street. Courtesy of New York Public Library.

hams, bacon, and corn to aid the distressed weavers of Lisburn. Fitting out the two vessels for emigrants from Lisburn he offered free passage to the United States. *Old Hickory* left Belfast on May 27, 1863 with 253 people and docked in Philadelphia on July 12. Looking out for his former countrymen Stewart made sure that every male aboard the two ships found employment upon arrival in the United States.¹⁹

The second vessel, the barque *Mary Edson*, left New York on May 18, 1863 loaded with corn and flour. Upon arriving in Belfast on June 9 the cargo was put up for sale on June 20 at the Belfast Corn Exchange with the proceeds distributed to the needy of Lisburn by a special trustee committee created at Stewart's request. Advertisements in the Belfast newspapers welcomed applicants for free passage to America. Trustees in Lisburn selected the winners who had to be between eighteen and thirty years of age and able to read and write. Some would be emigrants feared ending up fighting in Mr. Lincoln's War, but the American Consul in Belfast, John Young, reassured them they would not be drafted on arrival in the United States. Approximately 130 people left on July 13 for New York.²⁰ On arrival in New York in late August the distressed weavers expressed their gratitude to Stewart for his "most unparalleled act of Christian benevolence."²¹ Stewart felt an obligation to Ireland for his success and decided to help the people from the community and region of Ireland he came from.

While Stewart prepared the aid he sent to Lisburn, the New York Irish Relief Committee began a series of fund raising events. Organized by the Knights of St. Patrick, residents of New York City and Brooklyn met on April 7 at the Academy of Music in a grand ball for Irish relief. Mayor George Opdyke of New York presided. Prominent guests on the stage included Judge Daly, Archbishop John Hughes, Mayor Martin Kalbfleisch of Brooklyn, General George McClellan, Brigadier General Thomas Francis Meagher, Richard O'Gorman, Horace Greeley, editor of the *Tribune*, and P.J. Meehan, editor of the *Irish-American*. When McClellan entered with his wife the band played "Hail to the Chief." He gave the first speech, a tribute

to the fighting ability of Irish-Americans from the Revolution to the Civil War. McClellan observed that the forces that led the Irish to flee Ireland while a "loss of Ireland has been the gain of America." General McClellan gave the most popular speech that night for Irish relief. Archbishop Hughes followed and expressed an undercurrent of resentment among New York's Irish that the city had contributed so much for the relief of the Lancashire workers when the plight of the Irish was far worse than the operatives in England. Editors of two Irish-American newspapers in the city expressed the same sentiments. Judge Daly followed with a more diplomatic speech on the contributions of the Irish and the plight of the poor in Ireland. After the speeches members of the audience promised or gave contributions. Ward committees were created to solicit donations. The *New York Times* accurately predicted the day before that the event would attract a full house with "the inducement of charity to the sufferers in Old Erin being itself more than enough to fill high the strong box at the door."²²

Other events were held in New York and Brooklyn in April and May to raise funds for Ireland. The Ladies' Fund for Irish relief held a grand ball on April 14th at the Academy of Music. Many of the prominent individuals who attended the April 7 meeting showed up, including General McClellan. The women of Brooklyn and New York sponsored the event and the list of sponsors included the wives of Judge Daly, General McClellan, and General Meagher. The press reported many lawyers, judges, and members of the city government showed up for the twenty-five dances in support of Irish relief. Local newspapers considered it a "complete success" and "handsome sum of money will be added to the fund to relieve the distress in Ireland."²³

EFFORTS FROM MANY SOURCES

Brooklynites sponsored their own meeting to raise funds on May 13 for Irish relief. According to the *Brooklyn Eagle*, "there was a large attendance...more than two-third" of the audience were women which the paper credited to the "womanly instinct of charity."

**Photo:**

Gerrit Smith provided the largest single donation to the Irish Relief Fund from upstate New York. A prominent social reformer and philanthropist, Smith served in the House of Representatives and ran for President three times. His wealth came from a family fortune that he had managed with significant success. Smith was a temperance campaigner and an active abolitionist who generously supported causes in which he believed. Courtesy of Library of Congress.

Mayor Kalbfleisch presided, gave the first speech and emphasized that Americans are “linked as are the people of Ireland, by so many ties of sympathy, kindness, and patriotism.” and citizens of Brooklyn would add their mite for Irish relief. Judge Daly attended and told the audience that the New York Committee for Irish Relief had gotten contributions from average soldiers, privates, for \$5 and \$10 as well as from wealthier individuals who contributed from \$50 to \$1,000. He praised Irish soldiers in the Army of the Potomac for their contributions as well as the many non-Irish in the city who supported the cause of Irish relief.²⁴ Actually, among the contributions the committee received were \$513 from the Thirty-seventh New York Volunteers, \$2 from an unnamed soldier at Camp Sickles, \$55 from the crew of the *Quaker City*, \$312 from Fourth Regiment of Regulars, \$133 from workers at the Manhattan Gas Company, \$500 from the St. Andrew’s Society (Scottish), \$5,000 from the Knights of St. Patrick, and \$367 from the congregation of the Reform Temple Emanuel. Men in military service from New York units

heavily contributed to the relief cause. As Judge Daly suggested there was a wide diversity in the amounts contributed. While the majority who contributed were Irish many fellow Americans donated as well.²⁵

Judge Daly actively corresponded with John Vereker in Dublin. He made it clear the New York committee would leave it up to the Dublin group to decide on how to distribute the contributions. New Yorkers expected their donations would be used to alleviate the suffering in the agricultural districts in the west of Ireland and in the manufacturing districts in the north, but in any counties where the distress was the most extensive. Daly told Vereker that he expected the people of New York to donate and that “movements have also been made in other cities, which we anticipate will be extensively followed up throughout the Northern States.” He hoped that the American people would “do what may be in their power to alleviate” the suffering in Ireland.²⁶ Follow up correspondence from Richard Bell, treasurer of the Irish Relief Committee, noted that



Illustration:
Stewart's Marble Palace department store was located at 280 Broadway, between Chambers Street and Reade Street. Built in the 1840s it featured a marble façade and rested on cast-iron supports on lower levels. It housed New York's first department store and was declared a national historic landmark in 1965 and a City landmark in 1986. Courtesy of New York Public Library.

“Irish soldiers now fighting the battles...in Virginia and elsewhere, are numerous and liberal contributors.” Richard O’Gorman, another prominent member of the New York committee, acknowledged the contributions of women from the April ball. The Mansion House Committee passed a resolution congratulating the “Lady Patronesses of the New York Ball in aid of Irish distress” and expressing “lasting gratitude, the names of the fair benefactresses.”²⁷ Richard O’Gorman also forwarded the contributions of the Father Matthew United Benevolent Society of New York City, a group of working-class Irish and non-Irish Americans suggesting that working-class Americans, especially the Irish-Americans, heavily contributed by donations and remittances to Ireland. The correspondence between the New York committee and the Mansion House Committee reinforced the connections between Dublin and New York and the lead that the New York City group took in 1863 in soliciting and sending aid to Ireland. Judge Daly played an instrumental role in reassuring the Mansion House Committee of American concern and that funds would come not only from New York but from all parts of the Union.

Donations did come from Bangor, Maine to San Francisco.

As noted earlier, some of the money raised went directly from American churches to Paul Cullen, Archbishop of Dublin. For example, Bishop Timon of Buffalo, sent funds collected for “the relief of the poor of Ireland” in local churches to Cullen.²⁸ One priest from his diocese wrote to Dublin to remind the Archbishop that the funds collected came from poor Catholics in western New York, but they were “nobly assisted by our American fellow citizens.”²⁹ Even when the collections were made by the Catholic Church for Irish relief in 1863 non-Catholics joined in to help the Irish. Catholics in Rochester listened to Bishop Timon’s appeal to contribute for Irish relief, but Reverend Michael O’ Brien, pastor of St. Patrick’s Church, decided to forward funds donated in Rochester for “the relief of the starving Irish” to Archbishop Leahy of Cashel.³⁰ Leahy acknowledged the contributions from Rochester’s Catholics for “suffering people of Ireland” and thanked them for sending \$2,600. At the request of his bishop, the pastor at St. John’s Cathedral, Patrick Donahoe, sent \$2,000 collected in the various

churches in the Milwaukee, Wisconsin diocese to Paul Cullen.³¹ Bishop McFarland of the Hartford area apologized for the limited aid his flock could send due “to the troubles of our country and the fact that most of the Catholics in this section are but recent emigrants and very poor....” Also, he noted that “most of our poor people prefer sending directly to their poor friends.”³² Remittances from family and friends continued to go to Ireland from Irish immigrants and Irish-Americans during the Civil War, another component of the aid coming from America to the Irish during the bad years of the early 1860s. From the correspondence with Paul Cullen it appears that the American bishops ordered the priests in each church in their dioceses to collect donations for the Irish. Aid came in from parishes in the Union and none of the aid came from the Confederacy.

Outside of New York City some funds got channeled to Judge Daly and the New York Committee, but unlike 1847 most aid raised in other parts of the United States did not go via New York City. Instead local committees sent their aid directly to the Mansion House committee in Dublin. However, the largest single donation from upstate New York went to Judge Daly. Gerrit Smith, the prominent abolitionist, sent \$1,000 to the New York Committee, and Judge Daly acknowledged “your most generous donation to the Irish Relief Fund.”³³ Smith contributed generously in 1847 for Irish relief. Some of the other interesting donations from outside the city were the \$193 from the St. Patrick’s Mutual Society of Wheeling, West Virginia, \$116 from the Seventeenth Wisconsin Infantry, and \$341 from the Catholic Benevolent Society, Ogdensburg, New York. In 1847 a large part of the aid went as food and clothing that got shipped out of the port of New York to help the starving in Ireland and Scotland. However, in 1863, relatively little aid went as food or clothing. Most of the aid went as dollars converted into British pounds.

SUPPORT FROM COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL LEADERS

There were efforts to raise funds in communities throughout the Union for Irish relief. At a meeting in Chicago of the United Sons of Erin Benevolent Association members of the Limerick Relief Association appealed for contributions. Because of the “poverty and sufferings endured in the west of Ireland for the last two years” they called upon Americans throughout the Northwest to aid the Irish.³⁴ There were several meetings in Chicago later in April that raised funds for Irish relief. A public meeting held in Detroit on April 24 called for aid for the Irish. One of the elements that Detroit shared with other cities was the presence of the mayor. While national and state politicians were scarce at public fund raising for Irish relief in 1863 local political leaders tended to show up, whether in Detroit or Brooklyn, to endorse and support relief for the Irish. The meeting held in Detroit also emphasized an American theme raised in 1847 by fundraising groups for Ireland that would reappear in 1863 and 1880. The chairman of the Detroit committee thanked the mayor for calling the meeting and then added “the meeting was held, and men of every nation—every variety of opinion in religion and politics, were unanimous in the effort: Ireland’s claim on our sympathy was recognized by all.” Having established the ecumenical, non-partisan, and multi-ethnic nature of the meeting the committee chair went on to add that the people of Detroit asked that the contributions be distributed “without distinction of creed.”³⁵ Again, from California to New England meetings were held for Irish relief. In San Francisco Irishmen and others met in March to raise funds. The good people of St. Paul Minnesota met in April, raised funds and expected additional aid to come “from parts of the state.” Thomas Howard, chairman of the Minnesota committee, asked that the Mansion House Committee distribute the funds “without reference to religion or locality,” a common theme Americans requested when donating to foreign causes.³⁶ Rochester, New York responded with a series of meetings in May



Illustration:
The Tremont Temple in Boston where Judge Daly spoke in 1863 on causes of the famine in Ireland at the invitation of the Emmet Association. New York ultimately led in providing relief for 1863, followed by Boston and Philadelphia. The Temple, originally a theater, was rebuilt as a Baptist Church in the mid-1850s. Courtesy of Wikipedia.

1863 to the plight of the Irish. “Let us then as American citizens, native and foreign born,” argued the Rochester *Democrat* “meet together tonight and extend a generous helping hand to the people of Ireland in misfortune.”³⁷ Protestant and Catholic clergy participated in the fund raising. The local political leadership, including Mayor Michael Bradstreet, endorsed the effort making the campaign in Rochester ecumenical in membership with several veterans of the 1847 campaign for Irish relief aiding again in 1863. Members of the Rochester committee solicited donations from neighboring towns, like Greece, Lima, Palmyra, and Fairport and sent \$5,000 to Ireland.

“What is Boston doing? Is there no one to move on this matter? Are the suffering people to be remembered only in sentiments, parades, and speeches?”³⁸ The Boston *Pilot* asked these questions because Boston led the famine relief campaign in 1862 when New York fell short. In 1863 campaigns began in New York, Philadelphia, and other cities. Soon, however, Boston started to raise funds for Irish relief. By early April meetings were held in Brookline, Brighton, and Boston. The Bostonians drafted a general appeal to the people of New England calling on every church “Catholic and Protestant—[to] act in this matter, for the sufferers are composed alike of both.”³⁹ Friends of Ireland in Boston praised New York and Philadelphia for their relief work and called on every town in Massachusetts to create a local famine relief committee. The committee called on residents of New England to send their contributions

to the Mayor Fredrick Walker Lincoln of Boston. Funds did come in from all parts of the state and from New England. Roman Catholic churches in Boston set aside April 26 for collections for Irish relief. To help the cause, the Emmett Association of Boston requested the aid of Judge Daly. He agreed to travel to Boston to give a speech on the causes of the famine in Ireland at the Tremont Temple on April 29. Once again, Judge Daly provided leadership for famine relief. In 1863 New York led the way followed by the generous contributions raised in Boston, Philadelphia, and Newark as well as from two dozen other American cities. Americans did not raise as much money as they had in 1847. However, in the middle of the Civil War many Americans, Irish and non-Irish, listened to the appeals from Ireland and the pleas of Judge Daly and the New York Irish Relief Committee. In 1862 and 1863, but especially 1863, the Mansion House Committee depended on the generosity of the American people to feed the hungry in the north and west of Ireland.

CONCLUSION

Throughout the nineteenth century Americans participated in campaigns to aid the victims of famine, natural disasters, and pogroms abroad. American aid to Ireland in 1846–47 during the Great Famine, the crisis of 1861–63, and the Little Famine of 1879–80 was part of the Aid during the Great Famine—the first intensive and internationally recognized example of American assistance abroad—became the American debut as a new player in international philanthropy.

The crisis of 1861–63 repeated the pattern of American willingness to assist those suffering abroad. Americans helped the Greeks in the 1820s, the Irish in the 1860s, the Russians suffering from famine in the 1890s, and the Armenian victims of Turkish massacres of 1894–96. Repeatedly, average Americans, like the Jewish congregation of Temple Emanuel, and wealthy Americans, like Alexander Stewart, contributed to those in need. Public officials considered foreign aid unconstitu-

tional, but supported the voluntary contributions of American citizens as appropriate form of foreign aid.

Americans organized voluntary committees, like the New York Irish Relief Committee, to raise funds and send the aid abroad to the foreign country in crisis. Historian Helen Hatton, in discussing Irish relief in 1847, concluded that “help came from every position and rank in North American society, touched by the plight of the helpless.”⁴⁰ Again, in 1862 and 1863 maids, workers, and the wealthy contributed to Irish relief. According to historian Diane Hotten-Somers, American aid to Ireland during the Great Famine began “America’s entrance into the international stage for humanitarian acts.”⁴¹ In 1862–63 Americans continued their benevolence by providing twenty percent of the aid reaching the Mansion House Committee in 1862 and sixty-five percent of the aid in 1863. In discussing the Great Famine historian Rob Goodbody concluded: “The donations from the United States were so great as to virtually overshadow all other sources.”⁴² In 1863 that proved to be the case again as American aid far exceeded aid from any outside source. The Mansion House Committee acknowledged the unique nature of American assistance and American willingness to help in the middle of the Civil War. Americans saw themselves as a people of plenty with an obligation to help and the Irish as worthy of American aid. Voluntary aid by the American people reflected the natural generosity of the free people of America and the values of American republicanism.

As a contemporary chronicler of American philanthropy observed: “The Irish people were bound to us by strong ties; they had offered their services freely for the war, and on every battlefield they had proved their valor and shed their blood.” Americans in the middle of the Civil War contributed to a number of domestic and foreign philanthropic causes. In 1862–63 Americans gave \$120,000 for Irish relief because “we could not turn a deaf ear to their appeals for help....”⁴³ Judge Daly’s committee

raised \$30,000 and another \$30,000 came from Alexander Stewart. Across the East River Brooklyn raised \$15,000 and residents of other parts of the Union sent \$45,000. People in the North also sent aid to the workers in Lancashire and Derbyshire and French operatives who like the workers in Belfast, suffered from the Union blockade of southern cotton. America emerged during the Great Famine as the leading nation for international philanthropy. Despite the trauma of the Civil War Americans remained the leader in voluntary international aid—a people to people movement based on the generosity and republican principles of the American public. Due to the poor harvests of 1861 and 1862 contributions came in to Ireland from all parts of the world, but as historian Christine Kinealy concluded, “in 1863 the United States was the centre of these activities,” as once again the Americans assumed a lead role in international philanthropy.⁴⁴ John Vereker, chairman of the Mansion House Committee, expressed his gratitude to Judge Daly for the American donations, “your liberality will bring timely relief to thousands of families reduced to the last stage of want and misery” and “will render the name of America, ever dear to the Irish people, still dearer.”⁴⁵

Endnotes

- 1 “Suffering in Ireland: Address of the Executive Board of the Irish Relief Committee To the People of the United States,” *New York Times*, April 3, 1863. For the Mansion House Committee on Armagh see: Central Committee for the Relief of Distress in Ireland, *Report of the Central Committee for Relief of Distress in Ireland, 1862–3* (Dublin: Browne and Nolan, 1864), Appendix A, 29. Popularly known in Ireland and the United States as the Mansion House Committee. I used the copy at the American Irish Historical Society, New York City. Copies available online.
- 2 Merle Curti, *American Philanthropy Abroad* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1963), 66–67; Lecture of Harvey Strum, “Judge Daly and American Aid to Ireland,” December 2010, American Irish Historical Society, New York City.

- The papers of the committee, AIHS and Daly's papers, New York Public Library. Records of the New York Irish Relief Committee contain financial records, not correspondence, some clippings, and the Mansion House report. The Daly Papers include a few letters pertaining to the 1863 and 1880 relief efforts. Christine Kinealy, *Charity and the Great Hunger in Ireland* (London and New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2013). The study is on the 1847 famine and briefly mentions 1863 on page 289. For examples of local studies of American aid in 1847 see: Harvey Strum, "Desponding Hearts Will Be Made to Rejoice: Irish and Scottish Famine Relief from Virginia in 1847," *Southern Studies* 11, nos. 1–2 (Spring/Summer 2004) 17–38; Henry Crosby Forbes and Henry Lee, *Massachusetts Help to Ireland During The Great Famine* (Milton, MA.: Captain Forbes House, 1967); John Ridge, "The Great Hunger in New York," *New York Irish History* 9 (1995) 5–12; David Gleeson "Easing Integration: The Impact of the Great Famine in the American South," in David Valone and Christine Kinealy, eds., *Ireland's Great Hunger* (New York: University Press of America, 2001) 198; Neil Hogan *The Cry of the Famishing: Ireland, Connecticut and the Potato Famine* (New Haven: Connecticut Irish-American Historical Society, 1998) 53–64; Harvey Strum, "Pennsylvania and Irish Famine Relief," *Pennsylvania History* 81:3 (2014) 277–299.
- 3 *Journal of the Senate of the Commonwealth of Kentucky*, 1861, 246, 255, 262; *Journal of the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Kentucky*, 1861, 337. The citation is taken from the joint resolution 337 and source of above was the Kentucky Historical Society; *Congressional Globe*, 37th Cong. 2nd Sess. 1861, XXXII, Pt. 1, December 20, 1861, 158.
 - 4 Father Jeremiah Vaughan, "Appeal to Clare Men and Friends of Ireland in America," January 14, 1862 in *New York Irish-American*, February 8, 1862. Mick Mulcrone, "The Famine Irish and the Irish American Press: Strangers in a Hostile Land," *American Journalism* 20:3 (Summer 2003) 49–72. While covering aspects of the Irish-American press in Boston and New York from 1846–79 it fails to mention aid to Ireland during the Civil War.
 - 5 Thomas Healy to the Editor of the *Irish-American*, March 12, 1862, in *New York Irish-American*, March 22, 1862; Rev. Edward O'Flaherty to the Editor of the *Irish-American*, March 28, 1862, in *New York Irish-American*, April 12, 1862. Also, see the account in *Boston Pilot*, May 3, 1862.
 - 6 Michael Scanlan *et. al.* to the Editor of the *Boston Pilot*, March 15, 1862 in the *Boston Pilot*, May 3, 1862.
 - 7 *New York Tribune*, May 23, 1862; *New York Sun*, May 22, 1862.
 - 8 *New York Tribune*, May 26, 1862.
 - 9 *New York Irish-American*, June 28, 1862.
 - 10 *Ibid.*, July 19, 1862.
 - 11 For details of the Lancashire textile workers, see Curti, *American Philanthropy*, 67–72.
 - 12 *New York Irish-American*, July 12, 19, 1862; *Boston Pilot*, June 7, 1862.
 - 13 *Report of the Central Committee*, 5.
 - 14 Archives of the Archdiocese of Dublin contain about ten letters from American Bishops and priests forwarding contributions. Noelle Dowling, Diocesan Archivist, forwarded copies of correspondence from American clergy in 1863.
 - 15 *New York Herald*, March 23, 1863.
 - 16 Henry L. Hoguet, Secretary to Charles P. Daly, March 24, 1863, Box 3, Charles Daly Papers, Manuscripts and Archives Division, New York Public Library (NYPL).
 - 17 *New York Evening Express*, March 24, 1863; *New York Herald*, March 23, 1863.
 - 18 Charles Daly to John Vereker, April 17, 1863, *Report to the Central Committee*, Appendix B, 34.
 - 19 Captain R.H. Davis, *When Cotton Famine Brought Mixed Fortunes to Ulster*, 1–5, Irish Emigration Database. There is some confusion over the name of the ship. The *Boston Pilot*, May 2, 1863 lists the *Jesse Banfield* as the ship carrying corn and other provisions to Belfast at the expense of Alexander Stewart instead of *Old Hickory*.
 - 20 Stephen Elias, *Alexander Stewart: The Forgotten Merchant Prince* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Publishing/Praeger, 1992), 163–165. Also, see: *Belfast News-Letter*, June 13, 20, July 15, 1863; *Belfast Northern Whig*, June 27, July 13, 1863.
 - 21 *New York Herald*, September 3, 1863; *Distressed Cotton Weavers to A. T. Stewart*, August 31, 1863, *Belfast Newsletter*, Central Library, Belfast, Irish

- Emigration Database. *New York Times*, September 1, 1863.
- 22 *New York Times*, April 8, 1863. The citation prior to the event is April 6, 1863. For comments on the Lancashire operatives compared to the starving Irish, *New York Irish-American*, April 18, 1863; *New York Freeman's Journal*, April 18, 1863.
- 23 *New York Express*, April 15, 1863; *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, April 15, 1863.
- 24 *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, May 14, 1863.
- 25 Subscriptions of the New York Irish Relief Committee, 1863, AIHS. The local press including *Times*, *Herald*, *Tribune*, *Express*, and *Irish-American* published most of the donations preserved in the records of the New York committee.
- 26 Charles Daly to John Vereker, April 14, 1863, *Report of the Central Committee*, Appendix B, 33.
- 27 Richard Bell to John Vereker, May 5, 1863 and Mansion House Committee to Richard O'Gorman, undated, *Report of the Committee*, Appendix B, 36 for the Bell letter and B, 39 for the committee resolution thanking the women. See Richard O'Gorman to Paul Cullen, June 5, 1863, *Ibid.*, 46, on the working class men.
- 28 M. Kavanagh to Paul Cullen, July 16, 1863, Correspondence of Secular Priests 340/8/I, Paul Cullen Papers, Dublin Diocesan Archives, Dublin, Ireland.
- 29 James McGlew, Dean of Auburn, New York to Paul Cullen, June 30, 1863, 340/8/I/113, *Ibid.*
- 30 Archbishop Leahy to Father O'Brien, July 12, 1863 cited in Rev. Frederick Zwierlein "One Hundred Years of Catholicism in Rochester," in Edward Foreman, *Centennial History of Rochester* (Rochester: J.P. Smith, 1934), 213–214.
- 31 Patrick Donahoe to Paul Cullen, July 8, 1863, 340/8/I/115, Paul Cullen Papers, Dublin Diocesan Archives.
- 32 Bishop McFarland to Paul Cullen, June 26, 1863, 340/7/III/26, Correspondence of Foreign Bishops, *Ibid.*
- 33 Charles Daly to Gerrit Smith, April 14, 1863, folder Doll-Doria, Box 8, Gerrit Smith Papers, Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University Library. Neither Syracuse University nor the New York Public Library own the original letter from Smith with his contribution. However, his letter got published in the press, for example, Gerrit Smith to Charles Daly, April 6, 1863 in Boston *Pilot*, April 18, 1863. Subscriptions, 1863, New York Irish Relief Committee, AIHS.
- 34 Boston *Pilot*, March 7, 1863.
- 35 Charles Fitzsimons to John Vereker, May 28, 1863, *Report of the Central Committee*, Appendix B, 42.
- 36 Thomas Howard to John Vereker, May 23, 1863, *Ibid.*, 41.
- 37 Rochester *Democrat*, May 18, 1863. Also, May 20–June 9, 1863. The Archbishop of Cashel, Patrick Leahy thanked Rochester on July 13, 1863, published in July 31, 1863. Also, on Rochester, New York *Irish-American*, June 6, 1863 for the meeting.
- 38 Boston *Pilot*, March 21, 1863.
- 39 *Ibid.*, April 11, 1863. For the speech of Charles Daly in Boston, May 9, 1863.
- 40 Helen Hatton, *The Largest Amount of Good: Quaker Relief in Ireland, 1654–1921* (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1993), 125.
- 41 Dianne Hotten-Sommers, "Famine, American Relief Movement, 1846-1850," in Michael Glazer, ed., *Encyclopedia of the Irish in America* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1996), 305.
- 42 Rob Goodbody *A Suitable Channel: Quaker Relief in the Great Famine* (Bray, Ireland: Pale Publishing, 1995), 82.
- 43 Linus Brockett, *Philanthropic Results of the War in America* (New York: Sheldon & Co., 1864), 159, 146.
- 44 Kinealy, *Charity*, 289.
- 45 John Vereker, Lord Mayor to Judge Daly, May 21, 1863, May–June folder, Box 3, Charles Daly Papers, NYPL.