

# America's Errand Of Mercy To Ireland 1880

BY HARVEY STRUM, Ph.D.

*Photo:*  
William Russell Grace became the first Irish-American Catholic mayor of New York City in 1880. In the same year, he provided support for one quarter of the relief cargo sent to Ireland by the New York City Irish Relief Committee. Born in Co. Cork, Grace had developed a successful international shipping line. Courtesy of Library of Congress.



At least three times in the nineteenth century the American people provided aid to the starving people of Ireland. Each time New York City and New York State played key roles in raising money, provisions, and clothing to send to the Irish. In 1847, for instance, Democratic President James K. Polk killed a proposal in Congress to vote \$500,000 for Irish relief because he viewed foreign aid as unconstitutional. However, New York City followed its own foreign poli-

cy and emerged as the center of the relief effort. Thirty-six ships left New York City to transport relief supplies to Ireland, more than any other port in the United States. The Irish relief committee in New York collected \$242,042.79 in money, food, and clothing from people of every ethnic group and religion, the largest amount of any relief committee in the United States. Even school children donated for the Irish. Beckie Harvey, the daughter of Jacob Harvey, a Quaker and prominent relief-committee member, sold her

**Photo:**

*Frances Anne Spencer-Churchill, the Duchess of Marlborough, was the wife of the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. In December, 1880, she published a letter in the Times of London calling for assistance to the Irish people. An Irish relief fund named for her was later established in Dublin Castle. Courtesy of F.R. Window.*

toys and raised \$30 for the Irish. The boys at Ward School #3 in the 10<sup>th</sup> Ward managed to send in \$1.54 in pennies. Across the East River, the neighboring city of Brooklyn sent two “Brooklyn ships,” *Patrick Henry* and *Ann Maria*, with biscuits, cornmeal, corn, wheat, and rye to Ireland. The generosity of New Yorkers in 1847 set the stage for New York’s role in Irish relief in 1863 and 1879–80.

Not only did New York help the Irish, but the Irish changed New York. By 1860, the Irish comprised 200,000 of the city’s 800,000 people, making it the most Irish city in the nation. Irish immigrants settling in Brooklyn numbered 57,000 of the city’s 205,000 people making it the third largest Irish city in the United States. The Irish did not ignore upstate and made up 40% of the population of Troy and 55% of the residents of Albany in 1860. Consequently, the Irish would also assume a leading role in the city’s fund-raising efforts in 1863 and 1879–80.

#### THE LITTLE FAMINE 1879–1882

In what became known as the Little Famine of 1879–1882, food shortages and desperation reappeared in Ireland. Rain and other bad weather conditions in the summer of 1879 produced the potato blight and disastrous crops in the west of Ireland. Crop yields in 1879 fell to half of those in the early 1870s.

Potato crops fell from 3.3 tons per acre in the early 1870s to 1.4 tons per acre in 1879.

Declining crop prices due to international competition and declining prices for kelp as a fertilizer severely reduced the incomes of tenants and small independent farmers.

Remittances from Irish men working in Scotland and England as seasonal laborers fell at the same time further reducing the ability of people in the west of Ireland to purchase alternative sources of food. Concerned about their parishioners, two hundred Catholic priests warned as early as June about food problems on the western and southern coasts of Ireland and “Miss Eyre of Clifton Castle stated that all over Connemara there was already scenes of harrowing distress.”<sup>1</sup>

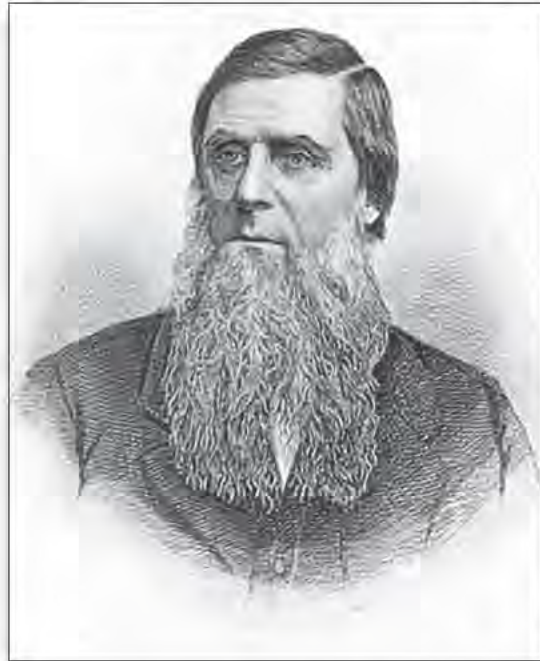
The situation turned even worse in the fall and grim reports appeared in the Irish press. Local priests reported mass starvation in communities in the western counties of Ireland, like Father Griffen in Parke who reported on the desperate conditions of 500 starving families in his parish. In Ballina, laborers staged a protest and held up banners reading “Our wives and children are starving.”<sup>2</sup> By January 1880 the situation became so dire that Rev. Grealy reported from Carna that if relief supplies failed to arrive “...I fear we will have many inquests.”<sup>3</sup> Because of two-thirds of the potato crop rotted, 250,000 people were “...

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*Photo:*  
Charles Patrick  
Daly was Chief  
Justice for the  
New York Court  
of Common Pleas.

*In 1879 he  
was asked by the  
Fenian  
Brotherhood and  
other groups to  
organize a relief  
organization for  
providing  
assistance to  
Ireland. Daly's  
parents had  
emigrated from  
Ireland in 1814.  
He was born in  
New York City  
two years later.*

*Courtesy of  
ResearchGate.*



without food or the means of buying it.” Another 500,000 “...stood on the verge of ruin.”<sup>4</sup>

Responding to the crisis, the Duchess of Marlborough, wife of the Irish Lord Lieutenant, wrote a letter to the London *Times* on December 16 calling for a fund to help the Irish and leading to the creation of the Duchess of Marlborough Relief Fund at Dublin Castle. The administrative committee for the Fund won the support of the English aristocracy and Irish landlords, and it succeeded in attracting contributions throughout the British Isles. In early January, the Mansion House Committee, chaired by Edmund Gray, the Lord Mayor of Dublin, was established in Dublin to raise and distribute funds. Notable members of the clergy of all denominations, politicians, public figures, and businessmen joined the committee providing the prestige to make it the major Irish relief organization with the goal of attracting “Australasian and American assistance.”<sup>5</sup> Americans donated to these two committees.

#### **NEW YORK CITY IRISH RELIEF COMMITTEE**

In December 1879, the Fenian Brotherhood and several other Irish benevolent and nationalist societies in New York City approached

Judge Charles Patrick Daly. They asked him to lead the campaign to “assist our starving countrymen in Ireland” and expected “the citizens of New York of every creed and nationality” to join in this worthy cause.<sup>6</sup> When food shortages had hit Ireland in the early 1860s, Daly led the 1862–63 effort to raise funds by establishing the New York City Irish Relief Committee.

In December, 1879, Daly recruited some of the men who had participated in the earlier effort in 1862–63. The New York Committee included many prominent New Yorkers including the shipping magnate William Grace, who would soon be elected the first Irish Catholic mayor of New York City. To reach a national audience the New York City Committee sent out forty-thousand copies of its appeal to the American public. Once again, Americans, as they had in 1847 and 1862–63 started a campaign of voluntary foreign aid to assist the starving people of Ireland.

#### **RESPONSE FROM THE U.S. GOVERNMENT**

For a brief period, it looked like the United States government might provide direct foreign aid. Democratic Congressman Richard Graham Frost, a lawyer in St. Louis, proposed on 9 December 1879 H.R. 140 expressing sympathy for the plight of the Irish and for

their fight for self-rule. His resolution noted “that the people of Ireland are seriously threatened with the horrors of famine” and blamed the land tenure system in Ireland urging reform and greater “self-government.”<sup>7</sup> On the same day a Greenbacker, Edward Hooker Gillette from Iowa, introduced a similar joint resolution, H.R. 141, which identified with the plight of the Irish and encouraged the British government to help the Irish. Gillette’s resolution emphasized, “that we cordially sympathize with the people of Ireland in their pres-

resolutions implied American aid for the Irish.<sup>8</sup> More explicit Congressional resolutions advocating American relief aid were introduced in January and February 1880 by two Congressmen. Democrat John Ellis of Louisiana, a former Confederate officer, asked in H.R. 177 for an appropriation of \$100,000 “for the relief of the starving people of Ireland,” because there are 300,000 “Irish men, women, and children suffering for food.”<sup>9</sup> James Phelps, a Democrat from Connecticut, proposed H.R. 193 on February



**Photo:**  
Elected president of the Irish Land League in 1879, Charles Parnell came to New York in 1880 seeking support land reform and famine relief. Parnell and John Devoy subsequently established the Land League Relief Fund. During his 1880 trip Parnell raised funds in many American cities and spoke before the United States Congress. Courtesy of Library of Congress.

ent alarming condition from threatened famine and in their effort to obtain relief from the land system.” Without explicitly mentioning it, Gillette’s resolution supported the ideas of the Land League and asked the British government to take actions to create a more equitable distribution of land in Ireland. Both

2, 1880 “providing national aid to the suffering poor of Ireland.” The resolution stated that the Senate and House “recognized their obligations to render National assistance and relief to the unfortunate sufferers and for that purpose the sum of one hundred thousand dollars” should be appropriated.<sup>10</sup> Members of

*Illustration:*  
James Gordon Bennett, Jr., was editor of the New York Herald, one of the city's large circulation newspapers in the late 1800s. His father had emigrated from Scotland and started the paper in 1835. Bennett began his "Herald Irish Relief Fund" in 1880 with a substantial personal donation, and he ultimately paid for a quarter of the New York committee's relief cargo sent to Ireland. Courtesy of Library of Congress.



Congress sent these two resolutions to the Committee on Appropriations and Committee on Foreign Affairs, respectively.

To encourage Congress to do the right thing the Chamber of Commerce of St. Paul, Minnesota sent a petition to the House and Senate on February 9 calling for "a liberal appropriation be made from the national treasury to be applied for the relief of the sufferers" in Ireland "to save thousands from this starvation" and demanded "that such aid be afforded without delay." The petitioners wanted Congress to understand that they represented "not only the business community of St. Paul, but the wishes of all the people of Minnesota without exception."<sup>11</sup> In late January the citizens of Washington, D.C. held a mass meeting for Irish relief. Judges, senators, congressmen, and other important people attended the meeting chaired by Chief Justice David Carter of the District Court. In addition to raising over \$3,000 at the meeting and establishing an ongoing committee to collect donations, the meeting expressed its desire for a federal appropriation for Irish relief. Adopted resolutions

thanked "the Hon. J.E. Kenna and other members of Congress for their speedy and cordial action in rendering early relief to the suffering people of Ireland."<sup>12</sup> Like the businessmen in St. Paul the citizens of Washington anticipated Congressional action to aid the Irish.

While waiting to see what Congress would do, the American public donated their pennies, dimes, and dollars for Irish relief. Catholic Bishops in Springfield, Massachusetts, Newark, New Jersey, and many other cities asked their parishioners to donate. For example, the Bishop of Cleveland directed "that on the first Sunday in Advent a collection be taken up throughout the Diocese" for the suffering Irish.<sup>13</sup> William McCloskey, the Bishop of Louisville, Kentucky, sent 300 pounds donated in his diocese to the Archbishop of Dublin, Edward McCabe, in January 1880.<sup>14</sup> Cities across the country from Maine to California established Irish relief committees suggesting the widespread interest of the American people in 1879–1880 to assist the Irish. Mayor Courtenay, Chairman of the

Charleston Irish Relief Committee, reported that residents donated \$2,000 for Irish relief by early February 1880.<sup>15</sup> In Albany, New York, Mayor Michael Nolan, Chair the Albany Irish Relief Committee, informed Bishop William Crowell Doane of the activities of the local committee in late January.<sup>16</sup> William Rice, Mayor of Trenton, New Jersey organized a meeting for Irish relief and issued a public appeal to “the charitable of our city to respond to this call for aid.” and the citizens of Trenton responded.<sup>17</sup> The Irish Relief Committee of Milwaukee, Wisconsin split its contributions between the Land League and Mansion House Committee, but wanted to make sure “that the fund be used exclusively in procuring the necessaries of life for the suffering people.”<sup>18</sup> Professors and students at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville donated over \$300 in early March.<sup>19</sup> Residents of St. Louis, Missouri held a mass meeting in December 1879 for Irish relief. It was “an immense affair attended by citizens of all nationalities,” evidence of the widespread support Irish relief had among Americans.<sup>20</sup>

#### AN OUTPOURING OF SUPPORT

The Land League activist Charles Stewart Parnell arrived in the United States in early January, 1880. His arrival produced an outpouring of support from Irish-Americans and American political leaders as they contributed tens of thousands of dollars to the separate Land League Relief Fund he established, with John Devoy, opening the New York City office of the relief fund on Park Place. While in New York, Parnell spoke before the New York Stock Exchange and before 4,000 to 5,000 Irish Americans in Madison Square Garden. Parnell spoke in sixty-two cities including addressing the New York state legislature in Albany, Kentucky state legislature in Frankfort, the Virginia state legislature in Richmond, and the joint houses of Congress on February 2, 1880, in Washington.<sup>21</sup> Parnell spoke about the famine conditions in Ireland urged land reform and solicited donations for both the Land League and a separate Land League Relief Fund. Americans generously

contributed because Parnell raised doubts about the wisdom of donations sent to the other Irish relief groups in Ireland. Americans subscribed \$200,000 to the Land League Famine Relief Fund.

Soon after Parnell’s arrival, James Gordon Bennett, Jr., editor of the *New York Herald*, decided to steal the limelight of Irish relief. On 4 February 1880, he created his own *Herald* Irish Relief Fund and immediately started off the campaign with a personal donation of \$100,000. Bennett’s magnificent gesture impressed other editors who publicized the *Herald’s* Fund throughout the country. Through its own circulation, the *Herald* predicted it would reach “every city and village in the United States and Canada.” The newspaper accurately boasted “we expect contributions from every American city from Bangor to Galveston, from New York City to San Francisco.”<sup>22</sup> By March the *Herald’s* fund emerged as the leading private Irish relief organization in the United States. Bennett established a committee in Ireland to coordinate the distribution of funds raised by the *Herald*.

Meanwhile, the House Foreign Affairs Committee delivered its report to Congress in early March in support of a \$300,000 appropriation for Ireland. The report, largely written by Democratic Congressman Samuel Cox of New York City and strongly supported by his Republican colleague from New York City, Levi Morton, another member of the committee, proposed replacing the previous resolutions in favor of a joint resolution, HR 238, endorsing Irish relief. Members of the committee believed Congress had the constitutional authority to provide aid to the suffering Irish and cited the example of 1812 when Congress voted \$50,000 to help the victims of an earthquake in Caracas as precedent. The House Foreign Affairs Committee reminded their fellow representatives that the Senate passed a bill in 1847 to appropriate \$500,000 for Irish relief as another precedent for action in 1880. As the House committee observed: “There can be no doubt that the charity and sympathy of the whole American people are deeply moved

*Photo:*  
 New York  
 Congressman Levi  
 Morton in 1880  
 provided generous  
 financial support  
 for shipping food  
 supplies to Ireland.  
 Morton was a  
 successful merchant  
 and investment  
 banker representing  
 the city's  
 Murray Hill district.  
 He later became vice  
 president of the  
 United States and  
 governor of  
 New York State.  
 Courtesy of Library  
 of Congress.



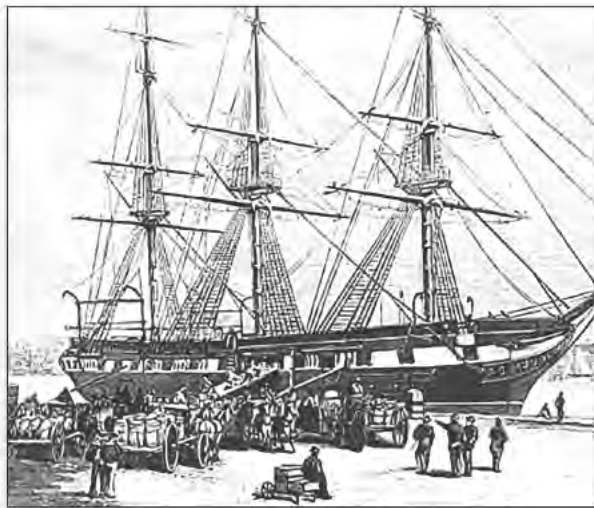
toward the unhappy people of Ireland.” Therefore, the committee recommended appropriating \$300,000 because it represented “the best wishes of the people of the Republic.”<sup>23</sup> As a people of plenty with “bountiful harvests,” the committee said, Americans had an obligation to help “the starving people of heroic and suffering Ireland.”<sup>24</sup> In the joint resolution, the House Foreign Affairs Committee argued that the American “government recognizes the claim upon its humanity to render national assistance and relief to the unfortunate sufferers” in Ireland.<sup>25</sup> Unfortunately, an odd coalition of southern Democrats and Republicans with constitutional scruples about foreign aid blocked the appropriation. In addition, some Republicans felt that Congress should not appropriate foreign aid when the United States had domestic problems to resolve, like the status of oppressed African-Americans in the South. Republican President Rutherford B. Hayes shared the constitutional reservations about foreign aid and made no effort to endorse the House proposal.<sup>26</sup>

#### RELIEF VIA WARSHIP

However, as in 1847, pressure to do something for the Irish led to another proposal to send a warship to Ireland carrying privately donated relief supplies. Several members of the Senate and House introduced bills and resolutions to allow the Navy Department to loan a vessel for relief. Prior to the failure of the House Foreign Relations Committee’s joint resolution Congressman William Ward, Republican from Chester, Pennsylvania, proposed H.R. 4298 on 9 February 1880 “authorizing the Secretary of the Navy to designate a vessel of the United States to carry free of charge contributions for the relief of the suffering people of Ireland.”<sup>27</sup> The bill went to the House Committee on Naval Affairs. From the Senate, two Republicans, Samuel McMillan of Minnesota and John Logan of Illinois, put forward a joint resolution (S.R. 80) containing the same language as Ward’s proposal. The Senate Committee on Naval Affairs quickly considered the resolution. “Ardently supported by the Irish-born Charles William Jones of Florida” a Democrat, who chaired the Committee on

Naval Affairs, the joint resolution won the support of the Committee on Naval Affairs. Members of the Senate passed the joint resolution on 18 February 1880.<sup>28</sup> Congressman Washington Whitthorne, a Democrat from Tennessee and former adjutant general in the Confederate Army, acting for the House Committee on Naval Affairs, suggested approving the joint resolution in place of Ward's proposal, and the House agreed. Congress approved the resolution, and President Hayes signed the joint resolution on February 25, 1880. Like Polk in 1847, Hayes did not have any constitutional objections to loaning a warship to carry privately donated foodstuffs to Ireland.<sup>29</sup> In contrast to 1847, the Congressional joint resolution of 1880 appropriated the funds necessary to pay the expenses for a naval vessel to transport the relief aid and gave the Secretary of the Navy the option to charter a privately-owned vessel if using a naval vessel did not appear appropriate. Using a warship to carry foodstuffs to Ireland won support across the

of regular Navy officers and sailors to undertake the mission of charity. In 1847 civilians commanded the warships *Jamestown* and *Macedonian* and volunteers often with little sailing experience made up the crews. Commander Edward Potter, a career naval officer, commanded *Constellation* docked at the Brooklyn Navy Yard. Preparations were made at the naval yard to fit the warship for the mission of transporting food across the Atlantic. Secretary of the Navy Thompson ordered the removal of all the guns on the sloop of war because of "this mission of peace and benevolence." As Thompson told Commander Potter "...your visit will enable the people of Ireland to realize that peace hath her victories no less renowned than war." He suggested that creating amicable relations between peoples of different nationalities was a far better use of warship than service in war.<sup>30</sup> Unfortunately, no one in the government reached out to private citizens or to local Irish relief committees to find the cargo of food-



political spectrum as Democrats, Republicans, and Greenbackers endorsed the idea of temporarily turning a ship of war into a messenger of peace, charity, and humanitarianism.

#### FROM THE BROOKLYN NAVY YARD

Secretary of the Navy Richard Thompson decided to use a Navy vessel, sloop of war U.S.S. *Constellation*, with a full complement

of regular Navy officers and sailors to undertake the mission of charity. A Washington newspaper criticized the Navy Department for not preparing for the cargo of foodstuffs because "in the absence of a cargo" the proposed sending of a relief ship to Ireland appeared "only ornamental as it were."<sup>31</sup> In 1847 at least 118 merchant ships and two warships carried food to Ireland and Scotland. However, in 1879–80 Americans sent cash

**Illustration:**  
A depiction of loading the U.S.S. *Constellation*, bound for Ireland, in the Brooklyn Navy Yard in March, 1880. *Constellation* was a sloop-of-war launched in 1854 that served in the Navy's African and Mediterranean fleets. A Congressional resolution authorized funds for using the ship in the relief effort, and the Secretary of the Navy authorized modifications to it for transporting food supplies. Courtesy U.S. Naval History Institute.



**Photo:**  
A partial view of the gun deck of *Constellation* circa 1914. For shipping food supplies to Ireland in 1880, guns from this deck were removed to accommodate more cargo, and additional space was created elsewhere onboard. Potatoes, cornmeal, flour, and oatmeal were among foodstuffs loaded. Courtesy of Library of Congress.



and bank drafts to help the Irish. Relatively little food was shipped to Ireland in 1880.

#### PROVIDING THE CARGO

Quickly realizing the problem of cargo, Republican Congressman Levi Morton, representing the Murray Hill district in New York City, acted. Morton offered to pay for twenty-five percent of the food shipped aboard *Constellation* if others would match his offer. In fact, Morton informed Whitelaw Reid, editor of the *New York Tribune*, "I have been quite willing to charter and furnish the cargo of a ship, and thought seriously of filling the *Constellation* myself...." But after consulting some of his friends, Morton "feared that would have an ostentatious look" resented by some of his Congressional colleagues who lacked the financial resources to match Morton's generosity.<sup>32</sup> Instead, he worked through intermediaries, like Reid, to find other contributors. When no one came forward he anonymously solicited contributors through the New York newspapers. For example, Morton wrote to James Gordon Bennett, Jr.

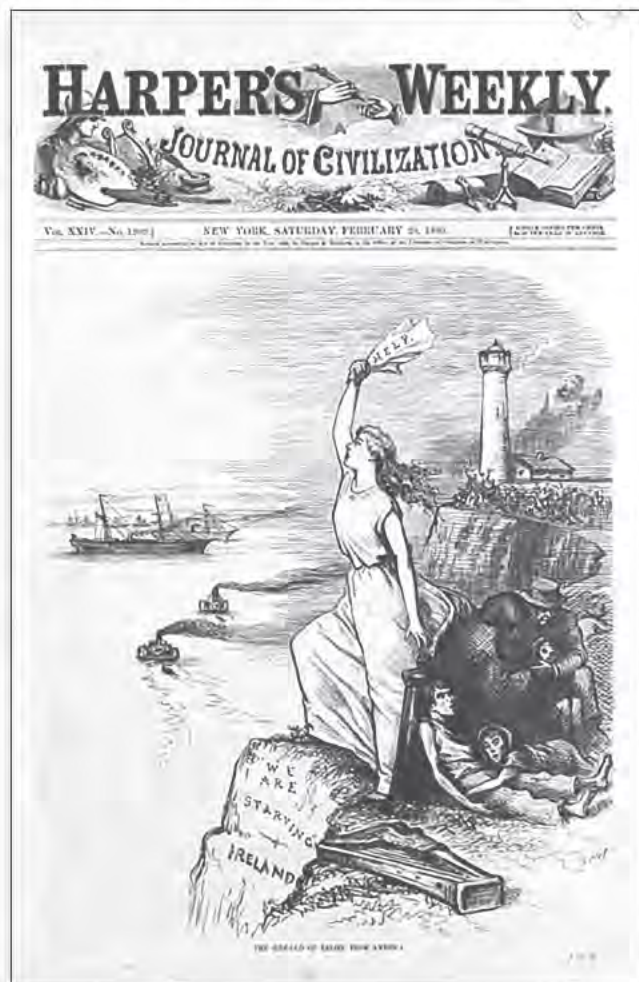
the mercurial editor of the *Herald*, that Secretary of the Navy Thompson informed him that no one had offered to supply the cargo for *Constellation*. "You are authorized to announce that a gentleman personally, known to you, who declines to have his name made public, offers to pay for one-quarter of the cargo of the *Constellation* if others will make up the balance."<sup>33</sup> Responding to Morton's offer, James Gordon Bennett announced: "The *Herald* offers to bear the expense of another one-fourth of a full cargo for the *Constellation* on the same condition made by this gentleman—namely, 'if other parties will make up the balance.'" Bennett went further and expressed the hope for the creation of a movement "like that of 1847 when so many shiploads of provisions were sent from this country" to Ireland during the Great Hunger.<sup>34</sup>

Meanwhile, a third benefactor came forward, William Grace, the future mayor of New York City and a successful ship owner from Cork, Ireland. While Bennett and Morton were Republicans, Grace was an independent Democrat who would soon form a

marriage of convenience with Tammany Hall Democrats. In 1879–80 as in 1847 support for the Irish came from across the political spectrum. Grace had already contributed to the New York Irish Relief Committee of Judge Daly. Grace planned to offer his ship, the *W.R. Grace*, to the New York Committee “to carry a cargo of provisions” to Ireland. Congress sending the *Constellation* made it unnecessary although “it would have been a matter of very great pride and pleasure to me to have had an opportunity of sending to Ireland a cargo of provisions in a vessel bearing my own name.”<sup>35</sup> Instead, Grace pledged one-quarter of the cargo and offered to take charge of the loading of the provisions aboard the warship. He loaned his staff to supervise and stevedores to load *Constellation*.

During March 1880 the finishing touches were put on the refinishing of the warship for

its mission of peace. All the guns, except for two signal guns, were removed to make more room to store the cargo of foodstuffs. The crew built additional storage space, extra sheds on deck, to carry even more supplies. Meanwhile, Grace made clear that his support for the enterprise was partially motivated by the example set by James Gordon Bennett and the *Herald* Irish Relief Fund, “Animated by a desire to emulate in a small degree the . . . generosity of your paper in having worked up so great a result for Irish Relief,” Grace informed the *Herald*, he offered the one-quarter of the cargo to send aboard *Constellation* and the services of his shipping clerks to expedite the classifying of “the shipment of such donations as may be received by you.”<sup>36</sup> Grace, Morton, and Bennett agreed that the major part of the cargo of foodstuffs would consist of potatoes, cornmeal, flour, and oatmeal. Each of the



**Illustration:**  
This drawing by Thomas Nast illustrated the cover of Harper's Weekly magazine for February 28, 1880. The banner at bottom says "We are starving— Ireland," and the drawing's title shown below is "The herald of relief from America." Courtesy of Library of Congress.

three donated 825 barrels of potatoes, 256 barrels of corn meal, 200 barrels of flour, and 50 barrels of oatmeal purchased from New York City firms.<sup>37</sup> Another local shipping company, Greenpoint Lighterage Company of Brooklyn volunteered the lighters and barges to carry the cargo to the Brooklyn Navy Yard. The Longshoreman's Union, heavily Irish, volunteered its services to load and unload the lighters while the Lighterage Company contributed the services of some of its stevedores.<sup>38</sup> Individuals volunteered their services to expedite this mission of mercy. John J. Roberts, for example, became the head stevedore, and he volunteered his labor because his father worked as a stevedore loading a ship sent to Ireland by department store king A.J. Stewart who sent a shipload of food to his hometown Lisburn in 1847. Under Roberts' leadership the stevedores did so well in stowing the barrels that the vessel had room to store an additional 300 barrels of foodstuffs for the Irish.<sup>39</sup>

Individuals, businesses, communities, and churches made up the remaining quarter of cargo aboard *Constellation*. An unnamed Irish American delivered the first of the cargo to reach the warship. The man delivered three barrels with this legend "Potatoes for the Irish Sufferers," and at the bottom of each barrel marked "for the County Cavan." The officer on duty marked down the donation "and it was considered a singular fact that the first 'mite' of the cargo to be put on the great ship should be from an unknown source."<sup>40</sup> Women contributed, like Mrs. Kate Sheehan who donated one barrel of flour and one barrel of potatoes. Mrs. Hannah McDonough sent one barrel of seed potatoes. Sending seed potatoes helped the Irish plant for the next season since they were short of food but also of seed potatoes to bring in a better harvest for the upcoming season. Mrs. George W. De Cunha went to every storekeeper on New York City's Sixth Avenue soliciting donations and encouraged the *Herald* to promote the idea "that other ladies will do likewise with other avenues. I think we can fill the ship."<sup>41</sup> Edwin Murphy, President of the Irish Famine Club in Bellow's Falls, Vermont sent eighteen dozen

cans of soup. Members of the Universalist Church in Canton, St. Lawrence County, New York near the Canadian border, forwarded seven dozen cans of soup. Residents of Winchester, Virginia donated 61 barrels of flour and 14 barrels of potatoes. In 1847 the people of Winchester collected \$3,300 to purchase corn and flour for the starving Irish. Workers in the woolen mills of Bennington, Vermont purchased ten barrels of flour for the Irish. One man sent ten barrels of potatoes to his brother in Ireland. In addition to needing food, thousands of destitute Irish boys and girls needed clothing. When Reverend George Hepworth, a New York City minister, and member of the *Herald's* Distribution Committee in Ireland sent word of the shortage of children's clothing New Yorkers rushed to donate clothes for girls and boys. Mrs. Edward Connolly, for example, gathered eighteen sets of girls' clothing. Clearly, all these contributions suggest that the American public supported aid for the Irish in 1880.<sup>42</sup>

"All hands began their preparations for their voyage of mercy" on March 19 when the officers and crew were piped aboard *Constellation*. During the refitting, the crew remained on the nearby *Colorado*. The crew spent the next several days removing the guns, shells, and ammunition. "Visitors from the City and groups of girls walked among the pyramids of cannon balls" on the dock as they made their way to "to the big ship" for tours of the famine-relief ship.<sup>43</sup> After the removal of the implements of war, barrels of potatoes, flour, and cornmeal filled their places. Stevedores and members of the crew filled every available space with foodstuffs or clothes for children to maximize the cargo of peace.

#### DELIVERY OF THE CARGO

A sunny and pleasant day dawned on March 27, 1880 as *Constellation* prepared to depart. The crew consisted of seventy-nine sailors and apprentices and seventeen officers. Rain began to fall as a group of fifty naval officers, ladies, and others gathered at the Brooklyn Navy Yard to bid goodbye to the crew of *Constellation*. Senior officers from

*Constellation*, *Colorado*, and *Tallapoosa* exchanged handshakes just prior to *Constellation* leaving the wharf on Maine Street at 9 A.M. As the ship cast off hundreds of sailors aboard *Colorado* and *Tallapoosa* rushed up the rigging of their vessels to cheer and shout for the crew of *Constellation*. The Marine band on *Colorado* played “Hail, Columbia,” “Wearing of the Green,” “St. Patrick’s Day in the Morning,” and several other tunes for the departing crew. Steamboats on the East River “began to whistle and ring their bells, Ladies on the ferry-boats waved their little handkerchiefs, men slashed at the air with their hats” as citizens of Brooklyn and New York City waved on *Constellation*.<sup>44</sup> While the sailors and residents cheered one impediment stood in the ship’s way—the newly constructed Brooklyn Bridge. The bridge was not high enough for the ship to pass under so the crew of *Constellation* “had to lower her topgallant mast, which was a troublesome and annoying task.”<sup>45</sup> Once beyond Brooklyn Bridge, more ships whistled in honor of *Constellation* or lowered and raised their colors. Similarly, the flag at Governor’s Island was run up and down with the warship returning the salute. As a reporter for the *Herald* noted: “It is safe to say that such an exhibition of enthusiasm has not been witnessed around New York since the end of the war.”<sup>46</sup>

Secretary of the Navy Thompson instructed Commander Edward Potter to deliver the cargo of provisions to the New York *Herald* Irish Relief Fund in Queenstown, Ireland for “for disposition at their discretion.”<sup>47</sup> When she left the Brooklyn Navy Yard *Constellation*’s cargo included 1,346 barrels of potatoes, 675 barrels of flour, 1,144 barrels of cornmeal, 150 barrels of oatmeal, 59 cases of canned soup, some miscellaneous provisions, and about 300 suits of children’s clothes. In 1847 cargo sent on *Jamestown* and *Macedonian* ended up with the Dublin Quakers for distribution, but in 1880 the committee created by James Gordon Bennett, Jr. gladly accepted responsibility. Congress, the Navy Department, and President Hayes allowed Bennett’s committee

a free hand in distributing the privately raised provisions. Poor wind conditions forced *Constellation* to anchor off Sandy Hook for two days before heading out across the Atlantic on March 30, 1880. Midshipman Alfred L. Hall kept a journal of the trip and recorded frequent rain, clouds, squalls, and strong gales en route to Ireland.<sup>49</sup> Bad weather failed to deter the ship, and *Constellation* reached Queenstown on April 20.

As soon as *Constellation* arrived in Ireland Potter contacted the *Herald* Irish Relief Fund representatives in Dublin. Reverend Hepworth came down to Queenstown to meet with Potter on arranging distribution of the relief supplies. Apparently, Hepworth met with other members of the *Herald* committee and Catholic Archbishop McCabe to discuss the issue of distribution. The Duchess of Marlborough suggested having Alfred, Duke of Edinburgh, facilitate distribution of the cargo. The Duke agreed to send his fleet of gunboats to Queenstown to expedite unloading and distribution of the cargo after Potter informed the Duke and Hepworth that, due to the bad weather conditions encountered sailing to Ireland, he would need several days to make repairs to *Constellation* prior to meeting the relief fleet at Galway.

Ships in the relief fleet reached Queenstown on April 23, and unloading of the cargo began the next day. Sailors transferred the provisions to the gunboats, including *Lively*, *Valorous*, *Amelia*, *Goshawk*, *Hawk*, *Orwell*, and *Imogene*. Provisions from America were transported to the Galway Islands, to the west and south Galway coasts, and to Sligo, north and west Donegal, and northwest Mayo. Villagers on the west coast of Ireland, especially those living on islands off the coast, appeared most in need of America’s bounty because they had the most limited supplies of food in April 1880. Also, 150 barrels of food went to the 1847 symbol for the Great Hunger—Skibbereen, County Cork. By April 30, the British gunboats completed their task of transferring the American provisions from *Constellation* to the needy Irish communities.<sup>50</sup>

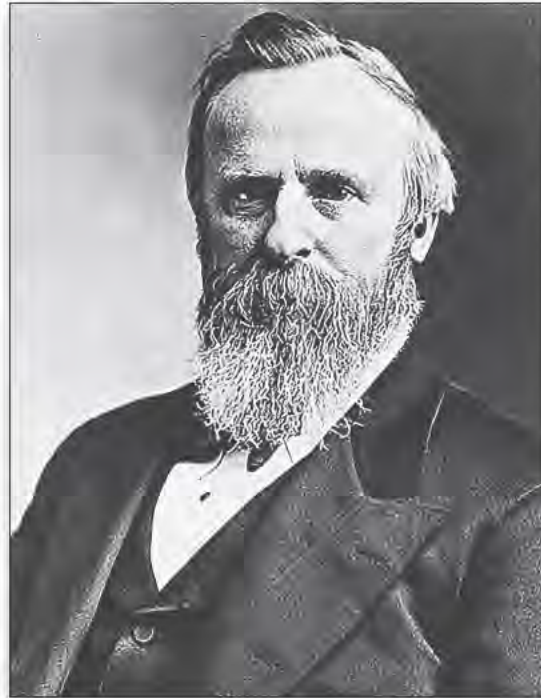
#### RECEPTIONS IN IRELAND

Representatives of the British government, Irish political leaders, and the Irish public repeatedly thanked the officers of *Constellation*, the American people, and the United States for their generosity. Even before the ship docked, the people of Queenstown and Cork gathered on the heights overlooking the harbor to cheer after cheer for the arrival of the American warship. Then the mayors of Cork and Dublin expressed their gratitude for the arrival of the provisions brought by the Americans. Mayor Gray of Dublin thanked the United States for “coming to the assistance of the starving peasantry of Ireland” during a visit he and several other dignitaries, associated with the Mansion House Relief Committee, made shortly after the arrival of *Constellation*.<sup>51</sup> A representation of the people of Queenstown thanked the Americans for their repeated benevolence: “Thirty-three years ago... we had a similar proof of the generosity of your nation. We have not forgotten it.”<sup>52</sup> For the people of Queenstown, he continued, this new example “of sympathy for us shall bind a thousand-fold more firmly the bonds that link” the Irish and American people.<sup>53</sup> More expressions of thanks came from the Board of Guardians of the Cork Union of “their gratitude for the generous supply sent by the American nation for the relief of the distress in Ireland.”<sup>54</sup> Similarly, the people of the city and county of Cork expressed their gratefulness for “this mission of noble charity, we greet you warmly, and welcome you, and proffer you the gratitude... of a poor, downtrodden, and liberty-loving people.”<sup>55</sup>

The Irish felt a need to repeatedly thank Potter and the American people for the gift of food for their starving countrymen. Edward Brooks, the American Consul in Cork, wrote to John Hay, the Assistant Secretary of State, that the arrival of “a Relief Ship has been the occasion of many demonstrations by the Irish people and the official and unofficial classes hereabouts, not only of honor to its officers but of respect to the Government and people of the United States.” The Americans received invitations to balls, banquets, tennis parties,

and social entertainments “quite too numerous to mention.”<sup>56</sup> As an example, Commander Potter and his officers attended a banquet at Cork on April 29 with the letters “U.S.” on display in the center of the hall. Guests repeatedly cheered the officers and toasted President Hayes, the donors, and the crew of *Constellation*.<sup>57</sup> A few days later the Americans traveled to Dublin to attend a ball in honor of American benevolence. Fifteen hundred people attended the ball to express their gratitude to the Americans. Representing the people of Dublin, Mayor Edward Gray offered Commander Potter the freedom of the city in a ceremony on the next day. Mayor Gray informed Potter that “through you” the people of Dublin wanted to acknowledge “the nation that you represent for its munificent generosity to this country in its hour of need.” The Irish remembered, he stated, “with feelings of deepest gratitude the way in which the people of the United States helped the starving people of this country in 1847.”<sup>58</sup> During the many tributes to the Americans Commander Potter steered clear of the Anglo-Irish conflict. Many Irish interpreted the Irish relief movement in the United States as an American acknowledgment of English exploitation of the Irish and American recognition of English misrule. While thanking Americans, Irish spokesmen in speeches and toasts criticized English rule in Ireland. Captain Potter diplomatically refrained from expressing an opinion that would anger either the Irish people or the British government.<sup>59</sup>

After several days of tributes to the Americans, Commander Potter set sail to the United States and *Constellation* had an uneventful voyage home. Commander Potter reported to Secretary of the Navy Thompson on the mission to Ireland. Potter thanked the Secretary of the Navy for giving him the opportunity to lead a mission of mercy and “to witness the... heartfelt gratitude of the Irish people to the United States Government for assistance; certainly, the attentions to us... almost overpowering in their demonstration.”<sup>60</sup> In turn, Secretary of the Navy Thompson



*Photo:*  
Rutherford B. Hayes was president of the United States 1877–1881. Early in 1880, he did not endorse efforts to appropriate funds for purchasing supplies for Ireland. However, he did agree with a Congressional resolution providing expenses for an American warship to transport privately furnished supplies. In April 1880 he was toasted for his efforts at a banquet in Cork. Courtesy of Library of Congress.

reported to the Senate and Vice-President William A. Wheeler that the public authorities and people of Ireland “were impressed...that the Government of the United States had fitted out a national vessel upon this mission of benevolence” and expressed their gratitude to the officers of *Constellation* for sending a warship full of food and clothing for the Irish people. Thompson also noted that the Navy bore the costs of the voyage and Potter had not drawn on any of the money appropriated by Congress.<sup>61</sup> The report included copies of letters sent by the British government thanking the American government for aiding the Irish poor. In mid-May Sir Edward Thornton, British Ambassador to the United States, on orders from Earl Granville, British Secretary for Foreign Affairs, informed Secretary of State William Evarts that Queen Victoria and the British government thanked the United States for its generosity in sending *Constellation* “loaded with provisions which were so much needed for the relief of the distressed subjects of Her Majesty in Ireland” and was of “substantial aid to them in their affliction.”<sup>62</sup>

#### LEADERS IN INTERNATIONAL PHILANTHROPY

In the nineteenth century, Americans emerged as the leaders in international philanthropy. Three times during that century Americans aided the Irish. According to journalist James Redpath, a special correspondent for the *New York Tribune* who reported on the famine conditions in Ireland, by August 1880 Americans had sent five-million dollars to the Irish since 1879. Redpath listed ten different channels used by Americans to help the Irish.<sup>63</sup> The generosity came from the American people who individually or through temporary public committees, like those in New York City and Wilmington, North Carolina, donated to feed the desperate people of Ireland. The American government refused to directly provide assistance to the starving, whether it was the Irish in 1847 or 1880, or the Russians in 1892. Public officials at the national and state levels viewed foreign aid an unconstitutional expenditure of public funds. Presidential and congressional opposition vanished, however, when citizens and members of Congress proposed the use of American warships to carry privately donated food and clothing to help the starving in Ireland and

Scotland in 1847 and the Irish in 1880. In 1847 we sent the *Jamestown* and *Macedonian* on their errand of mercy followed by *Constellation* in 1880. In 1871, the United States sent the new sloop of war *Worcester* with a cargo of privately donated food for the French during the Franco-Prussian War. During the famine in Russia in 1891–92 *Constellation* carried a cargo of grain to Russia. Americans throughout the nineteenth century provided voluntary food, clothing, and money to people abroad suffering from famine or natural disasters or man-made disasters, whether in New Brunswick, Crete, Ireland, or Russia.<sup>64</sup>

Americans became the most generous donors to foreign tragedies, whether from Beckie Harvey of New York City who sold her toys to donate to Irish relief in 1847 or four dollars in 1880 from “a little North Carolina girl who on her deathbed expressed great sorrow for the poor sufferers in Ireland for want of food.”<sup>65</sup> What historians Henry Lee and H.A. Forbes wrote about American aid in 1847 also applies to American actions in 1863 and 1880: “This spontaneous and voluntary response comprised...an act of unparalleled benevolence from one people to another.”<sup>66</sup> Historian Rob Goodbody observed that “donations from the United States were so great as to virtually overshadow all other sources.”<sup>67</sup> Writing about 1847, historian Christine Kinealy concluded that “a wave had swept across America that prompted people, rich and poor, from all religious persuasions often with no direct connections to Ireland, to raise money to take food and clothes to Ireland.”<sup>68</sup> The same spirit was repeated in 1862–63 and 1879–80 for Irish relief. Kinealy noted that in 1863 American donations made the United States “the centre of these activities,” and in 1880 “American support was prompt and generous.”<sup>69</sup> Contemporary observers made the same points about the importance of American assistance and the gratitude of the Irish people. In March 1847, Jonathan Pim, one of the leaders of the Quaker relief operation in Ireland, described American aid as “one of the most remarkable manifestations of national sympathy on

record.”<sup>70</sup> The Mansion House Committee in 1880 considered the outpouring of kindness and gratefulness directed at the officers of *Constellation* as “tokens of the profound gratitude with which all ranks and classes of the Irish people were inspired by the unexampled generosity of America.”<sup>71</sup> In 1847 the sending of *Jamestown* and *Macedonian*, and in 1880 the voyage of *Constellation*, turned warships into messengers of peace and benevolence from the United States. Their mission to Ireland was part of a larger campaign of international voluntary philanthropy by the American people to the people of Ireland. In each case the people of New York City played a crucial role in the donation of funds and transportation of food and clothing to Ireland.

## Endnotes

*The author gratefully acknowledges the partial financial assistance of the Sage Colleges from the award of the Harder-McClellan Fellowship for 2015–17.*

- 1 The historian Gerard Moran is the leading expert on the “Little or Near Famine.” See Gerard Moran, “Near Famine: The Roman Catholic Church and the Subsistence Crisis of 1879–82,” *Studia Hibernica* 32 (2002/2003), 155–177; Gerard Moran, “Near Famine: The Crisis in the West of Ireland, 1879–82,” *Irish Studies Review* 5:18 (Spring 1997), 14–21; Citation from Timothy O’Neill, “Minor Famines and Relief in the County of Galway, 1815–1925,” in Gerard Moran, ed., *Galway: History and Society* (Dublin: Geography Publications, 1996), 465. The full article is chapter 14, 445–85. Also, see James Green, “American Catholics and the Irish Land League,” *Catholic Historical Review* 35:1 (April 1949), 19–42.
- 2 Moran, “Crisis in West of Ireland,” 15.
- 3 Dublin Mansion House, *The Irish Crisis of 1879–80: Proceedings of the Dublin House Relief Committee, 1880* (Dublin: Browne and Nolan, 1881), 37.
- 4 *Ibid.*, 5.
- 5 *Ibid.*, 15.
- 6 W.H. Martin, Chairman, and Paul Leonard, Secretary, Fenian Brotherhood to Charles Daly, 15 December 1879, December 1879 folder, Box 5,

- Charles Daly Papers, Manuscripts and Archives Division, New York Public Library (42nd Street), (NYPL).
- 7 HR 140, 46th Congress, Center for Legislative Archives, National Archives Washington, D.C. This is the handwritten copy of the resolution. See *Congressional Records, 46th Congress, 2nd Sess.*, 1879, X Pt. 1, 41, 43. Also, see: Entries for 9 December, Mr. Frost, HR 140 #73, 9 December, Mr. Gillette, HR 141, # 74, Docket Volume, 14 April 1879–28 February 1881, Foreign Affairs, 46th Congress, Records of the House of Representatives, Record Group 233, Center for Legislative Archives, National Archives. (NA)
  - 8 HR 141, 46th Congress, Center for Legislative Archives, National Archives. Gillette was a member of a third political party that sprang up in the Middle West, Greenback Party, that represented farming interests and their desire for currency reform to help farmers in debt. This suggested that support for the Irish in 1879–80 spanned the American political spectrum.
  - 9 HR 177, 46th Congress, Center for Legislative Archives, National Archives, for handwritten copy of the resolution. See *Congressional Record, 46th Congress, 2nd Sess.*, X, Pt. 1, 418.
  - 10 HR 193, 46th Congress, Center for Legislative Archives, National Archives. This is the original handwritten draft of the joint resolution. Also, see *Congressional Record, 46th Congress, 2nd Sess. X, Pt 1*, 649.
  - 11 Memorial of the Saint Paul Chamber of Commerce, in behalf of an appropriation for the people of Ireland, 9 February 1880, Referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, 16 February 1880, in HR46A-H9.2, Petitions and Memorials Referred to the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, 46th Congress, Center for Legislative Archives, National Archives.
  - 12 Washington *National Republican*, 21 January 1880; Washington *Evening Star*, 21 January 1880; Washington *Post*, 21 January 1880.
  - 13 Richard Gilmour, Bishop of Cleveland, "The Irish Famine," Cleveland *Catholic Universe*, 6 November 1879. Courtesy of the Archives of the Diocese of Cleveland.
  - 14 William McCloskey to Rev. McCabe, 12 January 1880, 346/1/III/1, Archbishop Edward McCabe Papers, Archives of the Diocese of Dublin, Ireland.
  - 15 New York *Herald*, 2 February 1880; Charleston *News*, 19, 20, 21, 28 January 1880. See the letter of L. Gillooly, Bishop of Elphin, Sligo, 14 February 1880 to Mayor Courtenay in the *News*, 28 February 1880 expressing his gratitude for the contributions from Charleston, South Carolina.
  - 16 Albany *Argus*, 22 January 1880. See the letter from Mayor Nolan to Bishop Doane, 20 January 1880 and the response of Bishop William Crosswell Doane of the same date. Nolan was the first Irish Catholic mayor of Albany. Doane's father was an Episcopal bishop of New Jersey instrumental in organizing Irish relief in the Garden State during the Great Hunger in 1847. William Crosswell Doane was the first Episcopal bishop of Albany. The Catholic bishop of Albany, Frances Mc Nierney, in his reply of 21 January 1880 indicated he would call on all his parishioners to contribute.
  - 17 Trenton State Gazette, 31 January 1880.
  - 18 Milwaukee Irish Relief Committee to E. Dwyer Gray, Lord Mayor Dublin, 14 February 1880, 1/11/26, Mansion House Relief Fund, Dublin City Archives, Dublin.
  - 19 New York *Freeman's Journal*, 10 April 1880.
  - 20 *Irish-Canadian*, 17 December 1879.
  - 21 *Congressional Record, 46th Cong., 2nd Sess.*, 393–394, 664–665.
  - 22 New York *Herald*, 6 March 1880.
  - 23 *Congressional Record, 46th Cong., 2nd Sess.*, 1571–72; U.S. Congress, "Relief for the Irish People," Report of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, #465, House of Representatives, 46th Congress, 2nd Session, (March 10, 1880)
  - 24 Ibid. For a summary of American aid to Ireland in 1879–80, see Curti, *American Philanthropy*, 82–98.
  - 25 Original draft of the Joint Resolution, HR 238, 46th Congress, Center for Legislative Archives, National Archives.
  - 26 Merle Curti, *American Philanthropy Abroad: A History* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1963), 95.
  - 27 Original draft of Ward's, H.R. 4298, 46th Congress, Center for Legislative Archives, National Archives. Also, see *Congressional Record, 46th Cong, 2nd Session*, 763 (9 February 1880).



- 28 *Congressional Record*, 46th Congress, 2nd Session, 938, 963; Citation from Curti, *American Philanthropy*, 95.
- 29 *Congressional Record*, 46th Congress, 2nd Session, 1046, 1065, 1076, 1175; Original Draft of S.R.80 Joint Resolution, Senate Bills and Resolutions (Approved Resolution, 18 February 1880), Center for Legislative Archives, National Archives. For the Approved House Resolution, *Congressional Record*, 46th Congress, 2nd Sess., Res. 16, 25 February 1880.
- 30 R.W. Thompson to Commander Edward E. Potter, 25 March 1880 in the *Washington Post*, 26 March 1880. The *Constellation* is currently a floating museum in Baltimore harbor. For the original letter, R.W. Thompson, Secretary of the Navy, to Commander E.E. Potter, 24 March 1880, Letter Copybook, 263–64, Thompson Manuscripts, Lilly Library, Indiana University (IU).
- 31 *Washington Evening Star*, 8 March 1880. There are two histories of the *Constellation*. Geoffrey Footner, U.S.S. *Constellation* (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 2003), contains one sentence reference to the trip to Ireland and 1880 drawing from *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, 29 May 1880, 259–260. The drawing is of U.S.S. *Constellation*, Cork Harbor, Ireland, 1880. Also, Stephen Bockmiller and Lawrence Bopp, *U.S.S. Constellation: An Illustrated History* (Charleston, S.C.: Arcadia Publishing, 2002) contains a drawing of the *Constellation* loading in New York and several photos of the ship and crew in Cork, 58–60.
- 32 Levi Morton to Whitelaw Reid, 17 March 1880, Whitelaw Reid Papers, LC. Morton served in Congress from 1879–81, as Minister to France from 1881–85, Vice-President from 1889–93, and Governor of New York, 1895–96.
- 33 Levi Morton to the Editor of the *New York Herald*, 9 March 1880. Published in *Herald*, 10 March 1880. “Cargo for the Famine Ship,” page 1, Political Papers, Box 8, Levi Morton Papers, NYPL. The major biographer of Levi Morton only briefly mentions his role in famine relief. Robert McElroy. *Levi Parsons Morton: Banker, Diplomat and Statesman* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1930), 92.
- 34 *New York Herald*, editorial, 10 March 1880. Used the copy in the Levi Morton Papers, NYPL. See, “Cargo for the Famine Ship,” page 2, Political Papers, Box 8.
- 35 William Grace to Edmund O'Brien, 27 February 1880. William Grace Papers, Columbia University (CU).
- 36 William Grace to Editor, *New York Herald*, 16 March 1880. William Grace Papers, CU. There are about twenty-five letters written by Grace about the supplying and loading of *Constellation*. There is a brief mention of Grace's role in 1880 in Marquis James, *Merchant Adventurer: The Story of W.R. Grace* (Wilmington, Delaware: Scholarly Books, 1993), 140–41.
- 37 “Relief ship *Constellation*,” 54, Political Papers, Box 8, Levi Morton Papers, NYPL. *New York Herald*, 27 March 1880. This file contains a mimeographed copy of articles that appeared in *Herald*, 10 March 1880–21 June 1880.
- 38 *Ibid*, 36, *New York Herald*, 23 March 1880.
- 39 *Ibid*, 43, *New York Herald*, 24 March 1880.
- 40 *Ibid*, 24, *New York Herald*, 19 March 1880.
- 41 Mrs. George De Cunha to the Editor of the *Herald*, 10 March 1880, “Cargo for the Famine Ship,” 4, Political Papers, Box 8, Levi Morton Papers, NYPL. See: William Grace to G.H. Nicholas, *New York Herald*, 27 March 1880, William Grace Papers, (CU) for a discussion of contributions by Mrs. De Cunha.
- 42 *Ibid*, “Various Donations,” 8–10; “Statement of Shipment by W.R. Grace and Consigned to the New York Herald Irish Relief Fund Committee, Dublin.” In “Relief Ship *Constellation*,” 53–57, *New York Herald*, 27 March 1880., Political Papers, Box 8, Levi Morton Papers, NYPL.
- 43 *New York Herald*, 19 March 1880.
- 44 “Relief Ship *Constellation*,” 59, *New York Herald*, 27–28 March 1880; Political Papers, Box 8, Levi Morton Papers, NYPL.
- 45 *Ibid*, 52.
- 46 *Ibid*, 60. Also, see *New York Tribune*, 28 March 1880.
- 47 Secretary of the Navy Thompson to Commander Potter, 24, 25 March 1880, Letter Copybook, Thompson Manuscripts, Lilly Library, IU. Also, see *New York Times*, 26 March 1880.
- 48 *New York Tribune*, 28 March 1880.

- 49 See, for example, the entries for 16, 17 and 18 April 1880, Journal of Midshipman Alfred L. Hall, Entry 608, vol. 137. RG 45 Naval Records Collection, National Archives.
- 50 For details of the unloading of the cargo and the role of the Duke of Edinburgh's (the Duke was Queen Victoria's second son) relief fleet: "Relief Ship Constellation, 62–76, 81–82, 93–94, New York *Herald*, 9, 16, 21, 22, 23, 25, 28, 30, and 21 June 1880, Political Papers, Box 8, Levi Morton Papers, NYPL; New York Times, 26 April 1880; Edward Potter, Commander, to R.W. Thompson, Secretary of the Navy, 20, 28, April, 1 May 1880 in R.W. Thompson, Secretary of the Navy to William Wheeler, Vice-President of the United States, "Letter of the Secretary of the Navy Transmitting the Report of the Commander of the Relief Ship Constellation, 14 June 1880" 46th Congress, 2nd Sess., Senate, Ex Doc. No. 215, 1–4. The total report is seven pages. Timothy Collins, "HMS *Valorous*: Her Contribution to Galway Maritime History," *Journal of the Galway Archaeological and Historical Society* 49 (1997), 130–136. The complete article is 122–42.
- 51 New York *Herald*, 22 April 1880.
- 52 Stephen Ashlin, Admiral, Chairman, et al, Committee of Presentation, to Captain Potter, 25 April 1880, "Letter...Relief ship Constellation," 5.
- 53 Ibid.
- 54 Nicholas Mahoney, Chairman of the Board of Guardians to Captain Potter, 22 April 1880, Ibid, 4.
- 55 "From the People of the County and city of Cork to Captain Potter, officers, and crew of *Constellation*." undated, Ibid, 5.
- 56 Edward Brooks to John Hay, 11 May 1880, Despatches of the United States Consuls in Cork, 1800–1906, Reel 7, 10 January 1870 to 22 October 1880, Department of State, NA Brooks also reported a minor incident of annoyance while the Americans were in Ireland. A local customs officer demanded the right to search the vessel for contraband and to charge the Americans customs duties. Brooks and Potter complained to British civilian and naval officials who quickly apologized and reprimanded the customs officer.
- 57 New York *Herald*, 4 May 1880. Also, 5 May 1880.
- 58 Ibid, 6 May 1880.
- 59 Brooks to Hay, 11 May 1880, Despatches, NA.
- 60 Edward Potter to R.W. Thompson, 12 June 1880, Letter from the Secretary of the Navy, 7.
- 61 Ibid, R.W. Thompson, Secretary of the Navy to William Wheeler, Vice-President of the United States, 14 June 1880, 1.
- 62 Ibid, Sir Edward Thornton to William Evarts, 14 May 1880, 7. Also, Ibid, William Evarts to Richard Thompson, Secretary of the Navy, 25 May 1880, 7. Handwritten copies of both letters can be found in Letters Received by the Secretary of the Navy from the President and Executive Departments, 1837–1886 in roll 43, Volumes 112–113, 1 October 1879–30 June 1880, 166, NA. These documents contain a second set of correspondence from Brooks about the protests by Brooks and Potter over the conduct of the customs officer.
- 63 New York *Tribune*, 15 August 1880.
- 64 Curti, *American Philanthropy Abroad* provides the most comprehensive account of American voluntary philanthropy and documents a dozen cases of American assistance.
- 65 Alexander Sprunt, Treasurer, Wilmington Irish Relief Committee, to E. Gray, Chairman of the Mansion House Committee for the Relief of Irish Sufferers, 2 June 1880, 1/11/52, Mansion House Relief Fund, Dublin City Archives. By the way, Sprunt, a cotton merchant, was one of the richest men in Wilmington in 1880.
- 66 Henry Forbes and Henry Lee, *Massachusetts Help to Ireland during the Great Famine* (Milton. MA: Captain Forbes House, 1967), xxi.
- 67 Rob Goodbody, *Suitable Channel: Quaker Relief in the Great Famine* (Bray, Ireland: Pale Publishing, 1995), 82.
- 68 Christine Kinealy, *Charity and the Great Hunger in Ireland* (London and New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013), 255.
- 69 Ibid, 289–290.
- 70 Cited in Helen Hatton, *Largest Amount of Good: Quaker Relief in Ireland, 1654–1921* (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1993), 126.
- 71 *The Irish Crisis of 1879–80*, 23.