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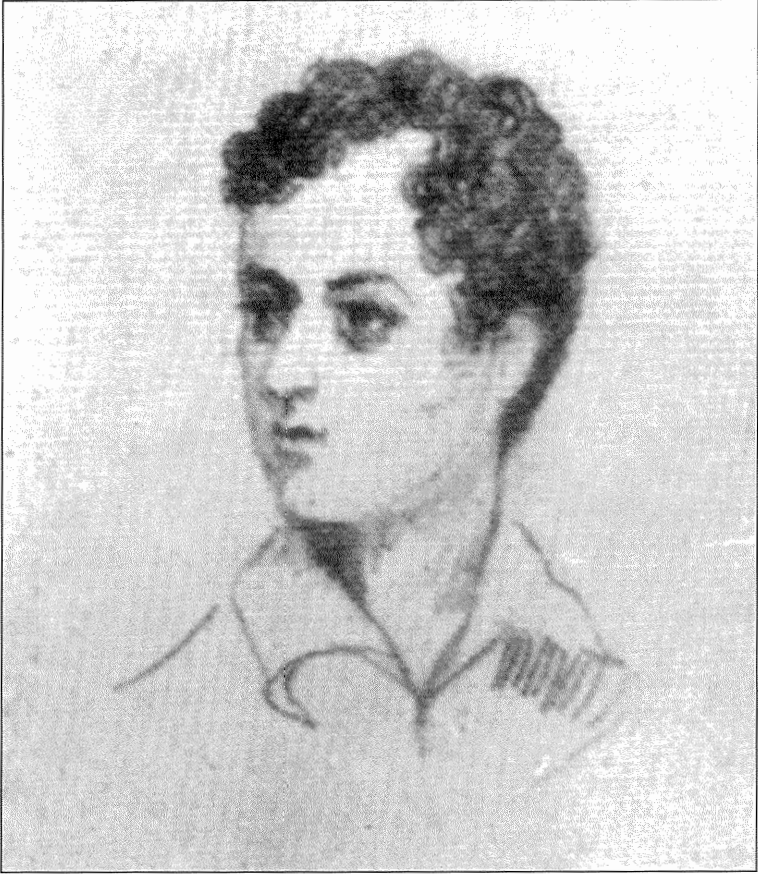
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Meagher as a boy.

EDITORIAL

IN HER seminal work on the Russian Revolution professor Sheila Fitzpatrick asserts that all revolutions have *liberte, egalite, fraternite* and other noble slogans inscribed on their banners. Indeed all revolutionaries are to some degree enthusiasts, zealots and utopians with dreams of creating a new world in which the injustice, corruption and apathy of the old world are banished forever. Revolutionaries are unrealistic and usually inexperienced in government and believe society can be a *tabula rasa* on which the revolution will write. However, it is in the nature of revolutions to end in disillusionment and disappointment as zeal wanes; enthusiasm becomes forced, and the moment of madness and euphoria passes. The relationship between the revolutionaries and the people becomes complicated as it appears that the will or the people is not necessarily monolithic and transparent. To a large extent Ireland's unsuccessful 1848 revolution fits into this generic similarity; but like every revolution it, also, had its own character. In spawning a cadre of middle class revolutionaries who were individually to leave an indelible mark on the foreign countries of their adoption, it begs the question as to how different Ireland would have been had they been allowed perform similar service to the country of their birth. Instead, it was their legacy that endured.

In this, my last edition of *Decies* as editor, I have again followed a thematic concept. I have devoted a section of the journal to examining the many 'lives' of one of these revolutionaries and a major contributor to this legacy, Thomas Francis Meagher. In so doing, I have endeavoured to open a debate to discover the 'real' Meagher. The result of this has been a collection of scholarly articles that constitute, perhaps, the largest and most diverse body of work assembled on his life in the last fifty years. From this has emerged a picture of a highly intelligent, enigmatic, controversial and complex individual who is as much revered as he is reviled; especially in America. Nonetheless, it is argued herein that Meagher's uncompromising support for the Union during the American Civil War was important in allowing the assimilation of the Irish into *post bellum* American society. It is perhaps true to say that there is more known about Thomas Francis Meagher in America than in Ireland; or indeed even in Waterford. It is my hope that this body of work will eliminate that deficit.

From the outset I have endeavoured to broaden the content and appeal of *Decies*. This has not been without criticism. However, I make no apologies for this. To confine 'local' history to the geographic boundaries of a very small county would, I believe, be a recipe for a sterile journal. To quote professor Joe Lee from his foreword in *Decies 57*, 'the best local history, like the best national history, has to be always seen in a wider context in order to allow us place our conclusions in proper comparative perspective'. This has been my guiding principle during my time as editor and, I believe, this has been achieved without compromising the integrity of the journal.

During my tenure as editor, Waterford has witnessed many changes, both demographic and environmental. The unique visual panorama of the city has been unnecessarily altered in meeting the demands of these changes. This Society is not against change and not all of these changes have been bad. Indeed, the Waterford Museum of Treasures at the Granary, William Vincent Wallace Plaza, the pedestrianisation of the city centre and the refurbishment of Government Buildings have all been notable achievements. However, it would seem from recent experience that we are one of the few organisations interested enough in questioning the manner in which local policy in this regard is formulated and implemented. The heritage of Waterford is not the sole preserve of the city fathers. But the city fathers are the trustees and guardians of the heritage of Ireland's oldest city. As such, it is not alone incumbent on those elected and non-elected representatives to be familiar with legislation protecting Waterford's unique heritage; it is a moral imperative. It is also essential that decisions that impinge on that heritage be open and transparent. But vision is also needed. Perhaps a monument to Thomas Francis Meagher would be one way of demonstrating such vision given the huge tourist potential that such a project could exploit. It would certainly be a fitting tribute to one of Waterford's most neglected sons.

I am greatly encouraged by the recent decision to allow Waterford Institute of Technology award its own degrees. This is a major step forward and will allow the Institute develop innovative courses and to expand existing ones. The study of local history will benefit as history is one of the areas being expanded. 2003 also witnessed celebrations marking the millennium of Waterford's most visible landmark, Reginald's Tower. It was indeed fitting that the newly refurbished Tower should be the centrepiece of The European Walled Town's Conference which was held in Waterford during the Summer. A painting of Reginald's Tower by Fergus Dillon adorns the back cover of this journal. Finally, on behalf of the Society, I would like to take this opportunity to welcome the new city manager, Mr Con Murray, to the city. We wish him well in his endeavours to develop Waterford city to meet the demands of the twenty - first century and, in so doing, that due cognisance will be taken of the city's unique historic and archaeological heritage.

In conclusion, I wish my successor well in her or his term of office as editor of *Decies*. Over the last few years the expansive scope of the journal has meant that the position is now almost a full-time one. A strong editorial committee is now, more than ever, essential in coping with the heavy workload. In this regard, I would like to acknowledge the support of my own editorial committee and in particular to extend special thanks to Eddie Synnott who expertly typesets this journal. The support of Waterford City Council, Waterford County Council and many businesses in Waterford is also greatly appreciated and, indeed, essential in ensuring the survival of the journal. With such support *Decies* has a bright future.

List of Contributors

Jon Axeline is a cultural resource specialist/historian working with the Montana Department of Transportation in Helena, Montana. He is also an adjunct faculty member at Helena College of Technology (University of Montana) lecturing on the History of the American West. A regular contributor to historic and archaeological journals in the states of North Western America, he was also contributing author to *Speaking Ill of the Dead: Jerks in Montana History* (2000). Jon was awarded the Montana State Historic Preservation award in 1997.

Eugene Broderick is a native of Cork city but has been domiciled in Waterford city for many years. He teaches History and English at Our Lady of Mercy Secondary School in the city. Has contributed many articles to *Decies* and other national journals, as well as to many books on Waterford during the 1990s. He is a graduate of NUI Cork and holds a PhD (2000) and MA (1991).

Eibhlín Ní Chrotaigh – Ellen (Nellie) Crotty – was born at Ballinamintra, Dunmore East in 1899. She was involved in the struggle for independence as a member of *Cumann na mBan* and played a prominent part in *Conradh na Gaeilge* (the Gaelic League). She was a prolific writer of verse and spent a period as teacher of Irish at Ring College.

Rory Thomas Cornish, whose mother is from Donegal, was born in London, and was educated at the University of East Anglia, Davidson College, North Carolina, and University College London. Having taught at Gonzaga University, Whitman College and the University of Louisiana at Monroe, he was appointed Chair of the History Department at Winthrop University, South Carolina, in 2002. The author of a book on George Grenville and a contributor to six joint publications, he wrote the new entry on Thomas Francis Meagher in the forthcoming *New Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004. He is presently working on the writings of Loyalist Joseph Galloway for the forthcoming *Historians of the American Revolution*, 2004.

Jim Cullinane obtained an MA from Manhattanville College after retiring from the Transit Authority. His thesis the play, *Love So Blind* was produced in Ireland in 2000 and in the Irish Art Theatre in Manhattan in July of the same year. His works have been published in *Inkwell Magazine*, *New Orleans Review* and *Toronto Irish News*.

John M. Hearne is a native of Waterford and teaches History and Economics at St. Paul's Community College in the city. A graduate of NUI Cork, he is current editor of *Decies* to which he has been a regular contributor. He has also contributed to many books pertaining to Waterford's history.

Tom Hunt is a native of Clonea Power, Co. Waterford. He is a history and geography graduate of NUI Dublin and completed an MA in local history at NUI Maynooth. His thesis, *Portlaw, County Waterford, 1825-1876: Portrait of an Industrial Village and its Cotton Industry*, was published as part of the Maynooth Studies in Irish Local History series. He teaches at Mullingar Community College, Co. Westmeath and was the first winner of R.T.E.'s *Know Your Sport* competition.

David Knight has been at Stonyhurst College since 1967 where, for more than thirty years, he has taught Geology and Biology. For the past six years he has devoted much of his time to the libraries and archives and, having become fascinated by its unique history and architecture, he is now the official archivist of the College.

John Mannion is a native of Dunmore, Co. Galway. He obtained a BA (1963) and an MA (1965) in Geography from UCD. Obtained a Ph.D from the University of Toronto, 1971. Professor of Geography at Memorial University, St. John's, Newfoundland, since 1969. Has published widely in Canada and worldwide.

Anthony McCann was born in Adamstown, Co. Wexford, but now resides in Cork. He has previously had articles published in the *Tipperary Historical Journal*, the *Old Kilkenny Review* and in *Decies*.

Pat McCarthy was born in Waterford city and educated at Mount Sion CBS. He holds a PhD in Chemistry and an MBA from NUI, Dublin, where he currently lives. He is employed in the pharmaceutical industry and is Correspondence Secretary of the Military History Society and a frequent contributor to *Decies*.

Anne E. O'Brien is a native of Cork and graduated from U.C.C. with a degree in History and Italian. She completed a Masters in Italian Studies at Johns Hopkins University (Baltimore, U.S.A.) and is at present completing a Ph.D. at the Department of Italian, University of Birmingham. Her research interests include nineteenth-century literature and culture, history and memory, and travel literature. She has published articles on nineteenth-century Florence, George Eliot's Italian literature and Lady Morgan's travel writing.

Anthony Pierce was born in Roslare, County Wexford and was a teacher of Mathematics and Latin at St. Peter's College, Wexford from 1967 to 1978. Since that time he has taught History, Mathematics and Latin at Clongowes Wood College, County Kildare.

Olaf Schmidt-Rutsch was born in Herne, Germany. His Doctoral thesis on William Thomas Mulvany was submitted to Ruhr-Universitat, Bochum in 2001. He specialises in the history of mining and transportation in the Ruhr. Olaf is currently Curator at the Westphalian Industrial Museum, Dortmund. His book on William Thomas Mulvany has recently been published.

Elliot West is professor of History at the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville. He is author of *The Saloon on the Rocky Mountain Mining Frontier* and has written many articles about social and cultural life in the American West.

From Comfortable Farms to Mercantile Commerce and Cultural Politics: The Social Origins and Family Connections of Thomas Francis Meagher

By John Mannion

GROWING up in his native Waterford Thomas Francis Meagher (1823-1867) belonged to an extended family and social group in political and cultural transition. They were mainly urban, mercantile, and middle class. All were Catholic and, at least in Waterford city, English was the language of public discourse. For more than a generation the various leaders of this upwardly mobile group were engaged in a constitutional campaign for civil and religious rights. Meagher was only six when O'Connell and his party secured Catholic emancipation and witnessed the subsequent struggle for repeal of the union and the fight for local municipal reform. His own father, Thomas Jr. (1789-1874), born and raised in St. John's, Newfoundland, but a prominent merchant in Waterford from 1820, played a leading role in the battle for reform. A talented orator and political organizer, a champion of the poor and disadvantaged, his politically moderate course earned the respect and support of emerging liberal Protestants in the city and environs. One measure of Meagher's progress was his election as mayor of Waterford in 1842, the first Catholic to hold that position in more than two centuries. He was also chief magistrate and chair of city council. In 1847 Meagher was elected member of the House of Commons for his adopted city and served in that capacity for a decade.

Thomas Francis Meagher chose a very different political path. He joined Young Ireland in Dublin in 1842, rejected the O'Connellite policy of peaceful reform, and became instead one of the leading spokesmen for radical political change and physical force. His father refused to support him as an election candidate for Waterford. The differences were highlighted in 1848 when 'Meagher of the Sword' was arrested at the family residence on the Mall, was convicted of treason, and sentenced to death. Thomas Jr. was then serving his second year as member of parliament for Waterford in London.

Thomas Francis Meagher's turbulent political career was the focus of enormous popular interest even as it evolved on three continents over the relatively short span of two decades and is, of course, the subject of much modern scholarly research and writing. This essay does not seek to add to that literature. It focuses instead on the social, cultural and economic background of Thomas Francis Meagher, using his name as a point of reference to trace the evolution of his

extended family over three or more generations. Despite novel influences and radical departures in the mid-1840s, much of Meagher's character remained rooted in a rich family heritage. His formal education, for example, followed some family precedent. An uncle, Patrick Meagher, born in St. John's in 1799, attended the Jesuit College at Stonyhurst, in Lancashire, between 1813-1820, and thence to Dublin to study law. So did his more illustrious nephew.

Thomas Francis' mother Alicia (1797-1827) died at her home - site of the modern Granville - on the quay of Waterford when he was only a child. Meagher and his three surviving siblings (Figure 1) were raised by their father and their grandparents Thomas Meagher Sr. (1759-1837) and Mary Meagher (1754-1831). Following Mary's death the young Meaghers were cared for largely by their unmarried aunts, Christina and Johanna Quan. Christina was Thomas Francis' god-mother; Johanna was later to stand as sponsor to his son. The Quan sisters ran an 'academy' on the Mall where the Meagher children probably first went to school. Mention of the Quans nurturing role is a reminder of the importance of kinship connections in the early life of Thomas Francis Meagher. Extended family links were equally important in the economic sphere where marriage settlements, for example, brought landed property and merchant capital together to propel families such as the Meaghers and Quans to a prominent position in Waterford society.

Rural roots

Most of Thomas Francis Meagher's ancestry can be traced back to Catholic tenant farms in the hinterland of Waterford, specifically in southeast Kilkenny, southeast Tipperary, and east Waterford in the eighteenth century. One line hailed from Morristown, in distant Kildare. Some of these families were substantial farmers, operating holdings of 200 acres or more. One of Thomas Francis Meagher's great-great grandfathers was Thomas Wyse (1677-1752), a farmer in Ticorr, just west of Waterford city. He was kin to the Wyses of the manor of St. John's, amongst Waterford's most prominent Catholic families since the Reformation. The Ticorr branch typified the large farmer class from whence the mercantile Meaghers had sprung. Thomas Wyse and his wife, Ellen Connor (1687-1747) had three sons. Thomas Jr. inherited the ancestral farm at Ticorr. His brother Stephen moved to a large farm in Ballygunner, a few miles east of the city, while their third son, James, entered trade in Waterford around 1740. Two decades later James Wyse was one of Waterford's principal Catholic merchants in the salt provisions trade, particularly in butter, with extensive urban property, commercial and residential. He also retained or expanded his interests in his brothers farms and lands adjoining, notably at Ballygunner.¹ Arthur Young, who stayed at the Bolton residence in

1 Registry of Deeds (RD), Dublin, 178280 (1755), 296 542 (1773), 324 518 (1774), 324 469 (1778), 494 389 (1788), 610 216 (1809), 75665 (1820), 807 237-8 (1825); Minute Book, Waterford Corporation, Admission of Freeman 29 June, 1747, National Library of Ireland (NLI); Abstracts, Jennings Wills, Public Record Office (PRO), Dublin, Stephen Wyse, Ballygunnermore, farmer, 3 February, 1774; William Quan, Ballygunner, 9 February, 1784; James Wyse, Waterford, merchant, 1794, proved 1799. For a summary of the Wyse family in Waterford see Eamonn McEneaney, ed., (1995) *A History of Waterford and its Mayors* (Waterford), 104-110; McEneaney, *Discover Waterford* (Dublin, no date), 52-54.

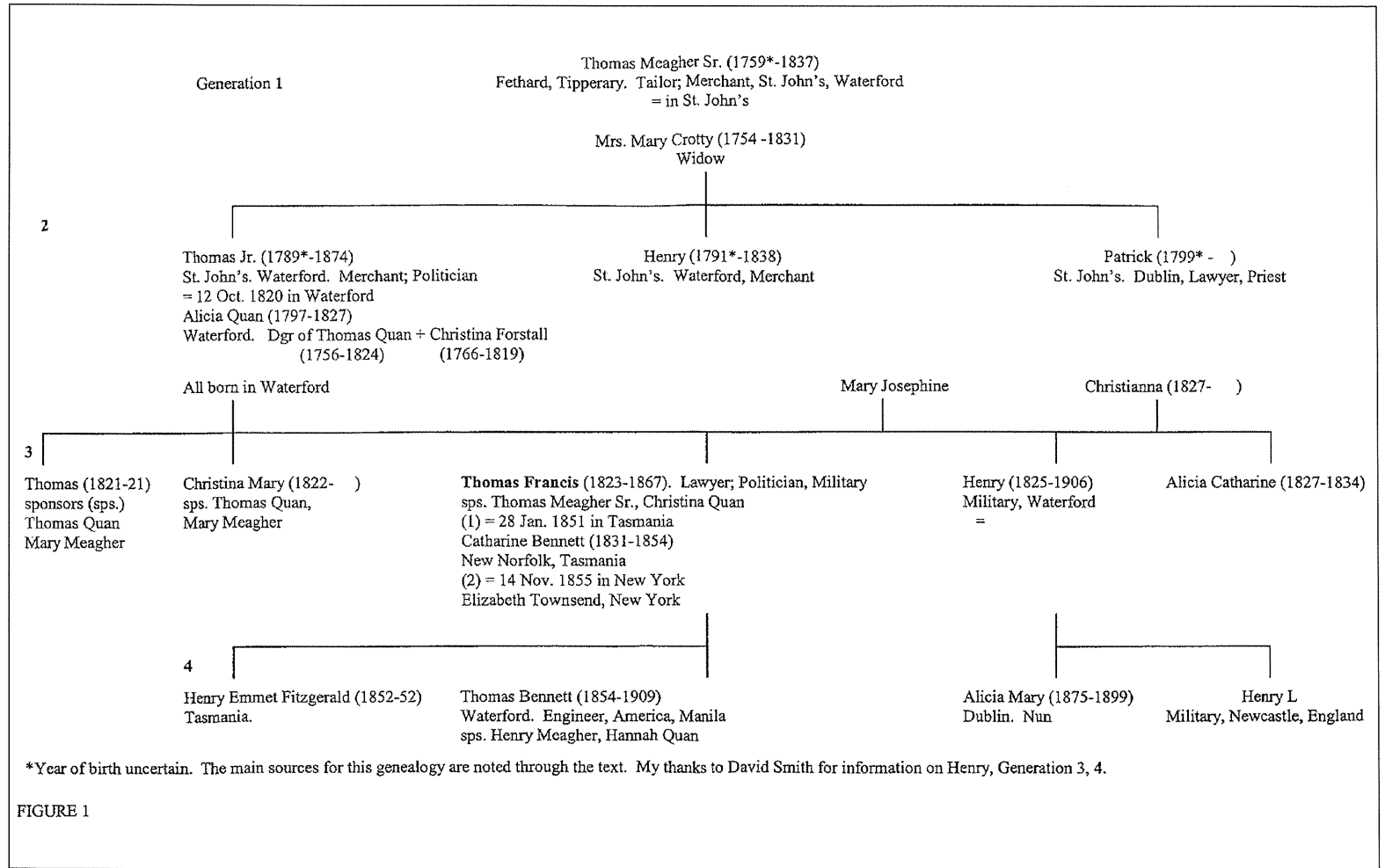
nearby Ballycanvan, (later the home of Thomas Meagher Sr), described in detail the improved farming of James Wyse in 1774 and 1775.² Wyse's lands in Ballygunnermore, comprising 271 Irish acres at £260 rental a year, were shared by William Quan, married to the sister of James and Stephen Wyse. The Quans were big farmers in Islandkeane, near Tramore, and tenants of Thomas Wyse of the manor of St. John's. Thomas Quan (1756-1824), grandfather of Thomas Francis Meagher, was raised in Ballygunner with his brother James (1761-1832) and their four sisters. The Quan brothers were taken as apprentices by James Wyse in Waterford, and by 1775 had graduated to partnership status with another Wyse in-law, Roger Cashin. Thomas Quan was pivotal in establishing Meagher's Waterford enterprise through the marriage of his daughter Alicia to Thomas Meagher Jr. in 1820 (Figure 1).³

Amongst TF Meagher's most distinguished ancestors were the Forstalls of Ringville and Rochestown in the modern Catholic parish of Glenmore in southeast Kilkenny. They were, like the Wyse, of Anglo-Norman origins with a keen sense of genealogy and sub-gentry status. TF Meagher's maternal grandmother, Christina Forstall (1766-1819) could trace her lineage back six generations to the castle at Carrickcloney, by the river Barrow. It was one of five or six Forstall castles spread over a medieval manorial estate of perhaps a dozen townlands. Much of this patrimony was lost in the conquest and confiscations of the seventeenth century, but some Forstall branches managed to retain leasehold interests in large farms.⁴ Meagher's greatgrandfather's greatgrandfather, Edmund Forstall, was established at Rinn, just north of the Butler castle at Ballinlaw, in the mid-seventeenth century. His wife, Eleanor Butler of Dangan, was related to the Ormond Butlers, Kilkenny's premier Norman clan. It was noted with some pride by Letitia Forstall of Rochestown (Meagher's first cousin, once removed) in her letters to a distant

2 Arthur Young, *A Tour in Ireland, 1776-1779* (Shannon, reprinted 1970), 406-415. The integration of farming and mercantile trade by James Wyse is outlined in John Mannion 'Waterford and the South of England: Spatial Patterns in Shipping Commerce, 1766-1776' *International Journal of Maritime History* 6:2 (1994), 115-153.

3 Roman Catholic Cathedral Parish, City of Waterford, Register of Marriages, 12 October, 1820; RD 714229 (1817), 747361 (1819), 73694 (1820), 790572-3 (1824), 803264 (1825).

4 RD 13111, 15211 (1714), 49470 (1716), 185 584 (1741), 330 552 (1766), 387 250, 393 496, 395 387 (1788). My thanks to Richard Forstall of Virginia for detailed letters on the family, 1770-1774, 1844, and 1856-1861. They reveal the importance of primogeniture over six generations of Forstall inheritance in Glenmore. They also show knowledge of kinship links extending to third cousins, including Thomas Meagher Jr., TF Meagher and the Forstalls of New Orleans. The latter were descendants of Nicholas Forstall of Gurteens castle, Slieveroe parish, who established first at Nantes as a merchant, then at Martinique in the West Indies. His son Nicholas was commander of Louisiana under the Spanish. See Irene Neu (1967), 'From Kilkenny to Louisiana: Notes on Eighteenth-Century Irish Emigration' *Mid-America* 49, 101-114.



Forstall cousin in New Orleans as late as 1860. Meagher's ancestors included Nicholas Aylward of Shankill, Esquire, Henry Meade of Ballyhale, Michael Keating of Shanballyduff, all prominent Kilkenny families, and the Lattins and Kennedys of Morrinstown in Kildare. To what extent Meagher was aware of the depth of his middle-class roots in rural Kilkenny and Kildare is unclear, but his grandaunt Juliet Forstall (1771-1848) and her son Roger Forstall Sweetman (1798-1861), close friends of the Meaghers in Waterford (see below) were familiar with their distinguished Forstall ancestry, as were the Quans. Both the Quans and the Sweetmans had extensive interests in the Forstall estate largely through marriage settlements in 1791, but the Meaghers did not. When Alicia Quan married Thomas Meagher Jr. in 1820 she released her one quarter share in the Forstall lands at Ballinlaw to her three sisters Christina, Johanna, and Mary Anne.⁵

The Meagher themselves are more difficult to trace. In notes prepared on the family by Thomas Francis Meagher, his grandfather Thomas Sr. was described as 'a respectable farmer born at Nine Mile Hill County Tipperary who early in life emigrated from this country and settled in St. John's Newfoundland where he amassed a large fortune....'⁶ Nine Mile Hill may refer to the village of Ninemilehouse in the civil parish of Grangemockler on the old turnpike between Clonmel and Kilkenny. Maurice Lenihan, born in Waterford in 1811 and a friend of the Meaghers, stated Thomas Sr. was a farmer near Fethard, a large town west of Grangemockler.⁷ A friend of TF Meagher in Ireland and America, Michael Cavanaugh of Cappoquin, followed Linehan in stating that Thomas Sr. came from Tipperary, 'had been a farmer in early manhood, but preferred seeking his fortune in another and more independent sphere. He emigrated to Newfoundland and became in turn a trader, a merchant, and a shipowner'.⁸

5 RD 74297 (1819), 606141 (1808). The lands, comprising 162 acres at £146 a year in 1812, were in the possession of Edmund Forstall (1737-1797) and his wife, Alicia Kennedy (17-1802), of Ringville and then Rochestown, parents of Christina and Juliet. They married in 1791 Thomas Quan and Pierce Sweetman respectively. Sweetmans lived at Blenheim Lodge, beside Ballycanvan, 1810-1855.

6 Meagher Papers, Royal Irish Academy, Dublin. Written on or after 1847, they contain a short but accurate account of the careers of Thomas Sr. and his three sons, Thomas Jr., Henry and Patrick, and of Henry, son of Thomas Jr. and brother of Thomas Francis. My thanks to Willie Nolan, Department of Geography, University College, Dublin, for a copy of the RIA Meagher Papers, and to the Meaghers of Tullowhea, near Ninemilehouse, who claim kinship to Thomas Francis Meagher. There were over a dozen large to middling-sized Meagher farms in the triangle between Kilcash, Fethard, and Ninemilehouse in the early to mid-19th century. Tithe Applotment Books, 1833, 275/106, Vol. 101 and Griffith's Valuation (1850).

7 *Limerick Reporter*, March 3, 1874. The Meagher letters in the RIA were apparently prepared for Lenihan, a journalist, who himself claimed kinship to the Meaghers of Cloneen and Kilburry, near Fethard.

8 Michael Cavanaugh (1892), *Memoirs of Gen. Thomas Francis Meagher* (Worcester, Mass.), 12. Egan follows Cavanaugh on Meagher's rural roots in Tipperary, adding that 'circumstances compelled him to go to Newfoundland'. P.M. Egan (1895), *History, Guide and Directory of the County and City of Waterford* (Kilkenny), 324.

Meagher's achievements as a merchant in St. John's, his outstanding record of public service there, and the political careers of his son and grandson, generated a keen interest in the family in Newfoundland. One of the most interesting accounts of the commercial career of Thomas Sr. comes from Michael Howley (1843-1914) member of another talented family of southeast Tipperary origins in St. John's. Trained at All Hallows, in Dublin, Howley was the first native Newfoundlander to be appointed an archbishop. While in Ireland he visited his Howley kin at Clonmel, compiled a detailed genealogy, tracing his ancestry to Glangoole, New Birmingham, where the family operated a large farm through the eighteenth century. His grandfather moved to Fethard to farm, and thence to Cheekpoint, near Passage, Waterford, where they managed the local inn. Howley's father and two uncles emigrated to St. John's and became prominent merchants. Because of their common geographical origins, migrations, and mercantile pursuits, the Howley and Meagher families were close. Mary Meagher was godmother to an aunt of Archbishop Howley's in St. John's. Bridget Howley of Clonmel, another aunt of the archbishop, was engaged to marry TF Meagher prior to his deportation, and amongst the extensive Howley family papers in St. John's is Meagher's copy of the poems of Thomas Davis, published in Dublin in 1846.⁹

Migration to Newfoundland

Howley differs from other authors in stating Meagher Sr. came from Clonmel. He is also the only one to note Meagher's rather humble beginnings as an apprentice to a tailor, Mr. Crotty, in St. John's¹⁰ Crotty died and Meagher married his widow, Mary, whose birthplace and maiden name are not known. Howley's account of Meagher's start in St. John's is supported in the documents. In 1795 the family is recorded in the centre of town, between the 'Engine House and the Kings Beach'. They are the only Meaghers amongst over 600 heads of household recorded that winter, one of several tenants of William Thomas, member of a prominent and long-established merchant family of Dartmouth origins in St. John's. The precise location cannot be pinpointed but the Meagher home was around a hundred metres east of Church Hill and Cliff's Cove. 'They were almost certainly on the Lower Path (later Water St.) or on a lane leading off it.'¹¹ Meagher is described as a tailor in 1795. The household consisted of only his wife, son, and daughter. Meagher himself was actually absent, as were a number of male heads of household during the winter of 1795. Some were merchants and traders in Britain on business. Amongst notes on his grandfather T F Meagher reported that 'in 1795 in the course of one of his many passages to and from St. John's he [Thomas Sr.] was captured by a French privateer and brought into Havre where for several months he was

9 The book is signed 'Thomas Francis Meagher Clonmel Gaol Oct. 23rd 1848, the day upon which I was sentenced to death for High Treason'. My thanks to Michael and John Howley of St. John's for this item and a copy of the Howley Papers.

10 Rev. M.F. Howley (1904), 'How Meagher became a Millionaire: A True Story of Old St. John's,' *The Newfoundland Quarterly* 4:3, 2-3.

11 Government of Newfoundland (GN) 2/39/A - 1795, Census, District of St. John's. All Newfoundland references are at the Provincial Archives in St. John's, unless otherwise noted.

detained a prisoner by order of the French Republic'. Howley's claim that Meagher succeeded Crotty through a strategic marriage to an older woman is reinforced by birth dates (Fig. 1) and by the fact that the Meaghers were on or near the same site as was Crotty a decade before.¹²

Tailoring was a craft still in its infancy when Thomas Meagher moved to St. John's in the early 1780s. Much of the Newfoundland population was composed of young male servants out from England and Ireland for a season or two to work at the fishery. 'A great point for them' wrote Arthur Young on the spring migration from Waterford of over 5,000 servants in 1777 'is to be able to carry out all their slops, for everything there is exceedingly dear, one or two hundred per cent dearer than they can get them at home. They are not allowed to take out any woolen goods but for their own use'.¹³

The last decade of the eighteenth century was a period of considerable transition in St. John's, with the collapse of the old migratory ship fishery and the rise of family settlement. Crafts such as tailoring expanded. It was dominated by the Irish. All but one of the nineteen tailors recorded in 1795, for example, were of Irish birth or descent. Like most trades popular amongst the Irish in the town, tailoring required little start-up capital for premises, equipment, or materials. Success depended more on individual skill, reputation, and cultural connections. It could be a profitable trade. Meagher was one of a number of Irish tailors in St. John's who advanced to mercantile status. Progress, however, was usually slow. Meagher was still listed as a tailor as late as May, 1808, but as a chapman that July. By then he was close to fifty, and had spent more than twenty years in St. John's.¹⁴ The transition from tailor trader to fully-fledged merchant was expedited in 1808 with the acquisition of a sixty ton brig for deep-sea trade. It was replaced by a much larger vessel the following year.¹⁵ A pattern of trading quickly emerged that was typical of the nascent Irish merchant in St. John's. In the autumn of 1809 Meagher shipped over 1,300 quintals (67,500 kilograms) of dried cod from St. John's to Waterford. The vessel arrived back the following spring with salt pork, beef, butter, bread, oatmeal and 62 passengers. It was then sent to Boston in ballast on the first of three round trips that summer, bringing back butter, bread, flour, livestock and other produce. In December the ship was again loaded at St. John's for Waterford to commence another circuit of voyages.¹⁶

12 GN 5/2/A/10,66, 'Petition of Michael Crotty, Stephen Woolcock et al. v Elliott Elmes, 28 September, 1784.

13 Young, *Tour*, 406-407. Amongst the exports recorded from Waterford to Newfoundland were apparel, drapery, frizes, hats, stockings, stuffs, and linen. Ledgers of Imports and Exports, Customs 15, Waterford, 1771-1823, ms 353, NLI.

14 GN 5/2/A/9, Administration Bonds, Supreme Court, Central District, St. John's, 1 May, 1 July, 1808. Meagher acted as executor for the estates of a Tipperary shoemaker and two sailors, one from Waterford, the other from Prince Edward Island.

15 Lloyds Register of Vessels (LR), March 1808, 504. Printed in London, 1969; Governor Duckworth Papers (DP) 1/5, 18 December, 1809.

16 Llyods List of Voyages (LV) 20 February, 1810; *Waterford Mirror* (WM) 24 April, 1810; DP1/5/28, 11 June 1810, 1/5/25, 21 July, 2 September, 1/5/68, 17 December, 1810; *Royal Gazette and Newfoundland Advertiser* (RG) 22 September, 17 December, 1810, 14 January, 1811.

Meagher entered maritime trade on the crest of a boom in the cod economy. The final years of the Napoleonic wars witnessed a rising demand for Newfoundland fish in Europe. This was especially the case in Spain where a lowering of tariffs on cod imports from the island in 1808 resulted in a virtual monopoly by Newfoundland merchants. Prices soared, as did servants wages in the fishery. Traffic in passengers and provisions from the port and harbour of Waterford to St. John's increased dramatically between 1809 and 1815. The demand for cod in Waterford and its hinterland also expanded, a reflection of rapid population growth there, particularly amongst the poor.

Much of Meagher's trade at Waterford can be reconstructed from the ledgers of his agent and principal supplier Richard Fogarty (1773-1840). Meagher claims to have known him since 1792 although he does not state where or in what capacity.¹⁷ The Fogartys were coopers on Hanover Street in the 1790s and included Thomas, a master cooper who died in 1798, David who died in 1803, Richard, and Thomas who lived until 1862. The precise kinship relationships are not clear; it is likely that Thomas the master cooper was father of David, Richard, and Thomas.¹⁸ Richard Fogarty had achieved merchant status by 1800, with a house on the quay and a large warehouse at the rear, on Hanover Street East. He quickly emerged as a leading merchant in the Newfoundland trade. Thomas Fogarty moved to St. John's in 1810 as agent and junior partner. Although Fogarty's ledger survived for only three years, it remains the best source on the structure of Waterford's commerce with Newfoundland for the early nineteenth century. Fogarty supplied close to fifty merchants and traders across the Atlantic. Almost all were based in St. John's.. Thomas Meagher was Fogarty's leading customer, accounting for £12,000 or 20% of the firm's total trade over three years. Each fall Fogarty received Meagher's produce which he disposed of locally on Meagher's account. Cod dominated this commerce, but cod and seal oil, seal skins, salmon, herring, capelin, ox hides, barrel staves, plank, board and other small timber were also imported. A single shipment fetched up to £2,000 in the Waterford market. It was usually accompanied by orders for the following season; passengers to serve specific planters and artisans in Newfoundland, and provisions. Bills of exchange drawn in St. John's on British and Irish houses engaged in the fishery were sent with these orders. They were deposited by Fogarty in Newport's bank or other discounting houses in Waterford. During the winter and early spring Fogarty assembled supplies from local artisans, retailers and merchants, arranged for their payment through the private banks, organized local transportation, packing, warehousing and eventually loading on to Meagher's or some other vessel bound for St. John's. Fogarty also recruited suitable servants who were usually charged six guineas for their passage. Apart from

17 *Waterford Chronicle* (CH) 4 April, 1822; Ledgers of Richard Fogarty, Waterford, 1 November, 1810 - 1 November, 1813.

18 RD 541512 (1795), 51137 (1797), 65173 (1809), 648447 (1812). Like the Quans, Meaghers, and Cashins, the Fogartys were also connected by marriage to a junior branch of the Wyses of Waterford.

specialized contract or indentured labour, Meagher also transported ordinary emigrants. Finally, Fogarty arranged insurance for the voyage, paid local port charges, paid off Meagher's mariners, hired replacements, and deducted his own commission charges.

Some Waterford merchants and artisans dealt directly with Meagher. Davis and Strangman, a Quaker brewing firm located in the far west end of the city, sent out beer and porter, cordwainers John Burke and John Farrell sent boots specially made for the fishery, and Thomas Fogarty, who returned from St. John's to set up business on his own account, sent feather beds and leather. Almost all transactions were paid for in bills but there were occasional examples of barter, an indication of the intimacy of commercial links across a vast ocean. Thomas Fogarty took ox hides from St. John's for his tannery and with Burke and Farrell, cod and seal oil for softening leather.

Meagher did not depend solely on his own ship for transatlantic trade. Waterford shipowners carried goods for him as did sea captains from southwest England. Meagher, moreover, rented space on his own vessel to traders on both sides of the Atlantic or took goods on freight. Flexibility in shipping and the diversification of imports were important. Meagher imported a wide range of supplies from British ports, particularly from Liverpool, where he registered his third ship in 1813.¹⁹ They included salt and fishing equipment, coal, iron, tinware, bricks, glass, household goods and clothing. The latter category dominated Meagher's early years as a tailor trader. It included 'bales of slops,' fabrics, cloth, linen, woolen and cotton goods of every description, and finished clothes, mainly for men. London emerged to rival Liverpool as a source for clothing, with substantial shipments from the southwest English ports and smaller amounts from Waterford.²⁰

Traffic between Newfoundland and America, prosecuted only under special license when Meagher began trading overseas, was halted by the war of 1812. It was trifling for a decade thereafter. Commerce with the Maritimes intensified instead. Meagher adapted to this change. Irish emigrants and some British manufacturers were reshipped from St. John's and staples collected: fresh farm produce and livestock from Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, coal from Sydney, Cape Breton, West Indies and other goods from Halifax, Nova Scotia, and timber from St. Andrews and St. John, New Brunswick.

Most of Meagher's imports were sold in St. John's, either directly to consumers from his shop on Water Street, or to the growing retailer community in the town. The clientele was heavily Irish. Some seventy heads of household are recorded dealing with Meagher between 1800 and 1822; more than two-thirds were Irish.²¹ Prior to December, 1805, with one exception, writs issued by Meagher to debtors

19 Data on vessels and voyages come from shipping news in papers already mentioned plus the *Mercantile Journal* (MJ) St. John's, 1817-1823, and Lloyds lists and register.

20 Data on commodities traded come from a wide range of sources, notably advertisements of sales in local newspapers and itemized lists of cargoes on Meagher vessels.

21 GN 5/2/A/4, Writs, 1800-1822; GN 5/2A/9. Additional names come from the St. John's newspapers, 1810-1820.

were for small sums of £3 - £6; debts sometimes exceeding £100 appear thereafter. Clients embraced a wide range of occupations, from merchants, traders and shopkeepers to artisans, planters, and servants. Meagher's trade also included the harbours near St. John's, extended northwest into Conception Bay, along the shore south of St. John's, and westwards as far as Burin.

The Newfoundland cod fishery entered a recession in the wake of the Napoleonic wars. Trade with Spain dropped dramatically in the face of high tariffs and increasing competition from Norwegian fish. A number of important merchant houses in St. John's collapsed or quickly withdrew. Merchants such as Meagher, smaller in scale, were less affected by the problems besetting the south European markets because, unlike the Wexford firms of Elmes, Koughs and Sweetmans, for example, they did not deal directly there. By contrast, the demand for fish in Waterford continued to increase. Imports had trebled between 1794 and 1813 and doubled over the next decade.²² The rapid expansion of permanent settlement in southeastern Newfoundland ensured a continuing demand there for imported supplies.

Late in 1815 Meagher admitted his two sons, Thomas Jr. and Henry, as full partners.²³ Their brother Patrick was by then in Stonyhurst,²⁴ a choice perhaps influenced by Meagher's trade with Liverpool where his close merchant friends, the Ryans of St. John's and Burin, had established a base, with Joseph Ryan appointed resident agent (see below). Nothing is known of Meagher's mercantile sons education or training. Thomas Jr. was especially erudite and may have been educated abroad.

Meagher and Sons took advantage of bankrupt houses to expand their clientele. They captured part of custom of the insolvent Koughs, a New Ross company long established in St. John's. Meaghers were also appointed joint trustees for other notable estates, including that of Luke Maddock from Waterford, Dalton and Ryan, and Cornelius Quirk of Kilcash. All were considerably in debt to Thomas Meagher, an indicator of the latter's economic status in the town.

Most merchants invested in landed property, particularly in waterfront premises and dwellings. Profits derived from leases helped finance maritime trade. Alternatively, the profits from ocean commerce were invested in the local land market. Thomas Meagher Sr. followed both strategies. In 1795 two-thirds of St. John's was owned by the English, most of the remainder by the Irish. The latter, however, accounted for two-thirds of the population and this proportion increased over the next four decades. Most Irish householders were tenants in 1795. Meagher was a tenant of William Bevil Thomas, and is recorded on the Thomas estate again in 1809, in 1810, and in 1816. His premises were located in the middle of the

22 Customs 15. On December 17, 1817, the *Waterford Chronicle* reported that 6,800 quintals of Newfoundland fish had already arrived, the greatest in many years.

23 RG 21 December, 1815.

24 My thanks to F.J. Turner, S.J. Archivist, Stonyhurst College, for details on Patrick Meagher, 1813-1820. Meagher's fees were paid through Mr. Davies, a Liverpool banker.

block between Clifts Cove and Hunter's Cove.²⁵ Meagher paid £1,000 insurance for each of two contiguous premises in 1809. One was owned by Thomas, the other by John Flood, a publican and trader from Iristioge, Co. Kilkenny. Part of Flood's estate, including the wharf complex, was occupied by LeMessurier, a Jersey firm. It is difficult to establish the precise nature of Meagher's insurance interest in this property. He may have shared Flood's wharf with LeMessurier but he lived on the neighbouring Thomas estate to the east. Next to it was Carwithen's large plantation, leased to the Elmes family or their undertenants in 1810 and mentioned in connection with Michael Crotty in 1784 (see above). Meagher, Flood, and Elmes typified the Irish ascent to middle class status and property in the heart of town whereas the Carwithens, who acquired their plantation through marriage, were absentee landlords living in south Devon.

Meagher's house and shop were on the north side of Water Street (the lower path), with his store and counting house on the south side. Jones reported in 1809 that warehouses still dominated the south side, leading down to the wharves. There is considerable information from 1809 onwards on Meagher's location and properties. In 1812 a house was advertised for rent on the road from Mr. Meagher's shop to the upper street (Duckworth St.). Patrick Doyle, a leading merchant and uncle of Patrick Morris (see below) was a neighbour, occupying 'a commodious house on a lane leading from the lower street by Mr. Meagher's' in 1813.²⁶ In 1816 Meaghers relocated their premises to the west at Codner's Cove, and William B. Thomas advertized for rent 'that well known valuable premises formerly occupied by Mr. Thomas Meagher.' It contained a house, shop, counting house and store located 'in the most eligible part of town for business' and 'also well calculated for retail trade'.²⁷

Apart from the space reserved for formal trade, Meagher acquired considerable interests in property on the waterfront. He ranked 12th of 26 merchants recorded by Jones in 1809. James Murphy of Kilcash and his merchant partner Matthew Gleeson of Nenagh rented Meagher's interest in a room (waterfront space and structures) owned by a Greenock firm and insured by Meagher for £500 a year.²⁸ It is amongst the first records of homeland county links that characterized Meagher's dealings, both commercial and social, during his sojourn in St. John's.

25 Jenkins Jones, Policy 303748, 303768, 'In Lower St. opposite this wharf all Meagher's property' 6 June, 1809, Phoenix Fire Insurance P7/B/18; Lionel Chancey, surveyor, 'Plan of Carwithen's, Thomas' & Flood's Wharfs, taken 1810;' 'Plan of the Town of St. John's destroyed by fire on the 21 November, 1817,' Map Collection, PANL.

26 RG 15 October, 1812, 20 May, 1813. Meagher was most likely located on the corner of the Scanlan's Lane or Parson's Lane, a mere 60' apart, on the north side of Water St. Traces of both lanes survive.

27 MJ 9, 19 October, 1816; 16 May, 1820, 14 February, 1822; CH 19 August, 1819.

28 GN 5/2A/1, 28 December, 1808, 2 January, 1809; GN5/2A/4, 146, 1809; Jones, Insurance Policy 303768, 1809. The rent for this room was set at £83 a year.

The migratory ship fishery, based largely in south Devon, collapsed around 1790 but the laws protecting ships rooms in St. John's remained, frustrating private development. In 1811 a concerted effort was made by merchants, traders and other leading inhabitants resident in the town to have these restrictions repealed. The government in London finally yielded, freeing prime waterfront property for entrepreneurs. Meagher, who was involved in the public protest, rented two properties, one in the Admiral's Room, the other in Church Hill, for £120 a year. These were relet to undertenants at a substantial profit.²⁹

Meagher also acquired farm land on the edges of town, connecting him conceptually with his cultural background in Tipperary. In 1809 he held a field of six acres south of Fort Townshend which was still in the hands of his son, Thomas Jr., as late as 1849.³⁰ He is also recorded leasing a garden on the Newman estate, south of the Catholic chapel, which he sublet to the Benevolent Irish Society in 1811 for 10 guineas a year.³¹ Agricultural land on the fringes of St. John's had become more valuable than much of the farm land in southeast Tipperary. Many leading citizens in the town operated gardens and pastures and even farms, either for their personal use as a source of fresh food, as commercial units, or for rent. Meagher and Sons, for example, leased a house and eight acres to an Irish farmer on the south side of *Quidi Vidi* pond.³² This middleman role in land transactions was widespread amongst the merchants and traders of St. John's, irrespective of ethnic origins. Landholding structures were rooted in common law general throughout the British Isles, and in Newfoundland.

Society and Culture in a Colonial Port

Migration to Newfoundland resulted in a mingling of people to a degree without precedent in their homelands. For a migrant from south Tipperary, where Catholics composed the vast majority of inhabitants, the presence of so many people of Protestant English birth or descent in St. John's represented a sudden and dramatic cultural change. Much of Meagher's commercial dealings involved his new English neighbours. This was particularly the case at the mercantile level. He carried on a lively trade with English and Scottish houses. British shipowners transported goods to and from his wharf, bills of exchange were drawn on British firms, and he leased his properties primarily from British proprietors. William Thomas was credited by Howley as a central figure in Meagher's ascent to merchant status. Although Howley's account of windfall profits by Meagher and Thomas from the sale of silk taken off an American vessel during the war of 1812 is fanciful, they were involved in some joint ventures. Formal trading partnerships between the two

29 1 September, 1811 GN 5/2/A/16, 2, 17, 25; 12 October, 1811, DP1/5/22; 22 November, 1811, CO 194/52, 51-67.

30 29 July, 1809 GN 5/2/A/1/20; RG 31 January, 20 December, 1811; *Morning Post*, St. John's, 22 November, 1849; *Public Ledger* (PL) St. John's, 29 October, 1858.

31 DP 12, 14 October, 1811, 22/28, 22/66.

32 *MJ* 1 May, 1818.

dominant cultural groups in St. John's, however, were rare. Meagher did supply English families and rented houses to them, but his clientele remained predominantly Irish.

One of the central experiences of Irish immigrants and migrants in St. John's was gradual assimilation into a new sense of Irishness, a merging or discarding of highly localized homeland traditions. Prior to migration, Meagher's life was almost certainly confined to his home place in south Tipperary. In St. John's he worked with migrants and immigrants from five other counties, and with native Newfoundlanders of Irish or mixed ancestry. St. John's was a melting pot where religion outstripped language as the salient symbol of ethnic identity. Although there is no reference to it in the documents, Thomas Meagher almost certainly spoke Irish in his native Tipperary; English, however, was the language of commerce in Newfoundland. His close friend Timothy Flannery, a fellow tailor-trader, from Stradbally, Co. Waterford, was a fluent Gaelic speaker, acting as translator in court for Irish migrants with no English. But however widely Irish may have been spoken in St. John's, there is no evidence of generational transmission. It is highly unlikely that any of Meagher's three sons, for example, could speak it.

Migration from Ireland accelerated cultural change. Yet some sense of identification or attachment to home places persisted. Surviving data on Meagher suggest considerable social interaction and commercial clannishness amongst immigrants from his native Tipperary. Apart from those Tipperary immigrants already noted - Murphy and Gleeson, Cornelius Quirk, the Howleys - they included several mercantile families: Timothy Ryan and Sons, Henry Shea and Geoffrey Morris of Carrick-on-Suir, the O'Donnells of Kilcash, and Timothy Hogan of Clonmel. His closest ties were with Ryan and Co., Tipperary's foremost traders in early nineteenth-century Newfoundland. It was headed by Timothy Ryan and included his two sons, Patrick and Joseph, and two sons-in-law, Henry Shea and Geoffrey Morris. Joseph Ryan was company agent in Liverpool, Timothy operated in St. John's with Shea, and Patrick Ryan was based in Burin on the south coast, with Morris. Their ledger and letter books survive for Burin and give a detailed picture of the patterns of trade. Joseph Ryan also acted as Meagher's agent in Liverpool, shipping a wide variety of manufacturers each season on commission, and sometimes on Meagher's vessel. Some of these goods were sent to Burin in exchange for fish.³³ Meagher and Shea were appointed administrators of Patrick Ryan's considerable property following his sudden death in 1814, and Meagher later acted as trustee for the insolvent estates of both Timothy Ryan and Henry Shea.³⁴

Social and economic links amongst the immigrant Irish were reinforced and articulated through the Catholic church. It was formally established in 1784 by Dr. James Louis O'Donel of Knocklofty in south Tipperary, with financial support and

33 Ryan and Morris Ledger, 13 October, 1813, 12 March, 1814, 17 August, 19 September, 1817, 9, 30 May, 1818; *RG* 10 February, 1814; *MJ* 29 May, 16 December, 1817.

34 A broader context is provided in John Mannion 'Henry Shea (1767-1830) - A Tipperary Trader in Newfoundland' *Tipperary Historical Journal* 1, 182-191.

stimulus coming from the emerging Irish middle class, primarily in St. John's. The Catholic church was overwhelmingly an Irish institution and was central in sustaining an ethnic consciousness in Newfoundland. Meagher witnessed its beginnings, having arrived about the same time as O'Donel, and was most likely married by him. Once established as a merchant, Thomas Meager played a prominent role in parish affairs. He provided 'a very liberal gift of books' to a newly established Sunday school in St. John's in 1812, for example, and chaired a committee in charge of construction of a new house for the Catholic clergy there two years later.³⁵

Comprehensive data on Roman Catholic marriages and baptism for the parish of St. John's survive from 1802.³⁶ It is too late for any record of their own children's baptisms, but both Thomas and Mary Meagher appear as witnesses to marriages and as godparents between 1803 and 1817. Choice of witnesses and sponsors reflected residential location in St. John's (near neighbours), ethnicity, occupations and commercial connections, social status, and sometimes regional origins in southeast Ireland. Thomas Meagher is recorded as godfather to seventeen children, his wife to at least six. All parents were Catholic Irish by birth or descent. Around one-third had Tipperary connections, some of them well established merchants. They included Henry Shea, James Murphy (noted above) John Wall and Timothy Hogan of Clonmel who married Mary O'Donnell of Kilcash. Meagher witnessed Hogan's marriage and was godfather to one of their children. An immigrant from Thurles chose young Henry Meagher as a sponsor. Memories of home were sustained through these relationships. More impressive were Meagher's social links with immigrants from places in southeast Ireland that a south Tipperary native would normally not know: Limerick, southeast Cork, south Waterford, southeast Kilkenny, Wexford and Enniskillen. Most families were well established, upwardly mobile, or already middle class. Meagher was godfather in 1815 to the daughter of Patrick Morris, a native of Waterford and by now a leading merchant and emerging politician in St. John's. Both Thomas and Mary were sponsors for John Dowsley, another Waterford merchant trading with Meagher. Most of their godchildren came from established retailing families and artisans in the town. They included a master carpenter, a master cooper, a baker, a blockmaker, a publican, a shopkeeper, a farmer, and a group of tailors largely from south and west Waterford. Amongst the latter was William Slator (1777-1833) of Clashmore who was married to Mary Flannery of Stradbally, niece of Timothy Flannery, tailor (see above). Slator and Meagher established a partnership in the cloth trade which was dissolved late in 1811.³⁷ Meagher also established close links with Thomas Foley (1763-1839) from the parish of Whitechurch, beside Clashmore, who began his career in Harbour Grace as a tailor. He became a leading merchant there. Foley's daughter married

35 *RG* 27 February, 1812, 22 December, 1814. The school opened February 23, 1812 and despite severe weather, 99 boys and 84 girls attended. It was probably non-denominational.

36 Roman Catholic register, St. John's, marriages and baptisms, 1802-1817.

37 *RG* 26 December, 1811.

Patrick Morris in 1814. Meagher and his neighbour Patrick Doyle were godparents to their only child. These links suggest a close-knit network woven around religion, occupations and place origins. It typified the social geography of the more established Irish in St. John's.

Meagher's long residence in Newfoundland, and consequent knowledge of its economic and cultural character, meant that he was frequently called upon for public duty. He served as a petty juror from 1804 and in 1811 was appointed to the Grand Jury. With Henry Shea he was one of only a dozen Catholic Irish thus honoured in the early nineteenth century.³⁸ His talents were sought as an assessor of property, as an arbitrator over boundary disputes, litigation over payments for goods and services, and in cases related to the passenger and supply trades, theft, assault and murder.

The family's most notable public service in Newfoundland was to the Benevolent Irish Society (hereafter BIS). Established early in 1806 to alleviate distress amongst the Irish poor in St. John's, particularly newcomers, membership of the society was restricted to men of Irish birth or descent. Although over 90% of the original 286 members were Catholics, the founding executive was exclusively Protestant apart from Henry Shea. They were drawn from the military, the professional class and the small Irish Anglican trading community in the town. Thomas Meagher was one of a handful of Catholics chosen in 1806 to serve on a committee.³⁹ Within a decade, however, Irish Catholics had come to dominate the running of the society. Meagher succeeded his deceased friend Patrick Ryan as treasurer in 1814. Following his final departure for Waterford four years later, Thomas Meagher Jr. was appointed treasurer. It was a seminal appointment in a public career that spanned almost half a century of Waterford politics. Amongst his colleagues on the executive were Henry Shea, acting president in the absence of James MacBair, Patrick Morris, Patrick Doyle, John Dowsley and John Burke, later grandfather of Archbishop Howley. Thomas Jr. relinquished his position on his move to Waterford, but the family remained active in the society. Patrick Morris reported that the BIS had collected and disbursed £8,000 between 1806 and 1827, and had £1,500 in deposits, probably in Newport's bank at Waterford. Morris and Meagher Jr., both resident in Waterford, were trustees, with James MacBair. At the annual banquet in St. John's that winter, the Meaghers were toasted as 'staunch friends and able supporters of the Society.'⁴⁰ It is a reminder of the close

38 GN 5/2/A/1 21 August, 1804, 1 September, 1 October, 31 December, 1806, 1, 3 September, 1807, 2 September, 8 October, 1808, 5 October, 1809, 17, 24, 29 June, 2 September, 11 October, 26 November, 6 December, 1811, 19 June, 5 July, 31 August, 6 September, 13 December, 1812, 1 October, 1813, 17 January, 6 June, 22 August, 3 October, 7 November, 22 December, 1814, 17 January, 1815, 13 June, 1816.

39 'List of Original Members of the Newfoundland Irish Society' *Centenary Volume, Benevolent Irish Society, 1806-1906* (Cork, 1906), 195-196; GN 2/1/19 (1806), 7-8, 17.

40 RG 25 February, 1813, 24 February, 1814, 23 February, 1815, 8 June, 1 July, 1817, 25 February, 1819, 20 March, 1827, 18 February, 21 March, 1828, CO 194/75 (1827), 172-174.

cultural ties between the two ports, ties that were sustained by ethnic institutions such as the BIS and the Catholic church and in which Thomas Meagher Jr. in particular played a prominent role.

Return to the Homeland

Of the vast numbers of Irish moving to North America only a tiny minority ever returned permanently. Newfoundland's transatlantic migratory cod fishery was an exception. In the eighteenth century most Irish migrants were seasonal workers or temporary residents who eventually came home. This annual autumnal migration declined dramatically with the advent of the Napoleonic wars and the recession that ensued. Increasingly, Irish servants settled in Newfoundland, married, and formed families. Successful merchants such as the Meaghers, by contrast, could afford to return to the homeland. Some did so to establish mercantile bases and expand their commerce through a more vertically organized company structure. Others abandoned the cod fishery altogether, investing instead in the local land market. Still others retired from trade to enjoy the fruits of colonial endeavor.

The progression from apprentice tailor to mercantile status was an impressive accomplishment and illustrates the links between migration and upward social mobility. Meagher's decision to leave southeast Tipperary, with its rising population and unpromising prospects for sons of farmers, and settle in an expanding colonial port, ultimately brought its reward. Precisely why he succeeded where so many failed to make significant progress is impossible to assess but likely relates to personal factors such as sacrifice, discipline, determination, social connections, and entrepreneurial skills. Between 1780 and 1820 more than fifty Irish migrants like Meagher advanced from relatively humble beginnings to merchant status. Some began as apprentices to artisans, others as clerks in the counting houses, or as agents. Henry Shea began as a clerk to a New England merchant, Patrick Morris a merchant kinsman from Waterford. Almost all young Irishmen destined for mercantile careers were literate and numerate, were fluent in English, and were not the sons of labourers. Some may even have had a small amount of capital to begin with, or hoarded meager wages and profits to make a start on their own account. A strategic marriage such as Meagher's accelerated the process.

In 1817 James MacBaire, president of the BIS and Ireland's most successful merchant in St. John's, decided to relocate company headquarters in Greenock. It was one of his main source areas for supplies. As treasurer of the BIS, Meagher Sr. was involved in procuring 'a piece of plate, suitably inscribed' from Dublin as a gift for the departing and highly popular president. Meagher Sr. and Jr. attended a BIS banquet for him that June. Like MacBaire, Meagher had also decided to leave. He did so that Fall, taking his wife and perhaps his son Henry to Waterford, long the focus of their transatlantic trade. Thomas Jr. remained in St. John's to continue company operations. In December he advertised the family's horse, gig and sleight for sale.⁴¹ He was single, and probably without kin in Newfoundland.

41 *MJ* 8 June, 23 November, 2 December, 1817; *RG* July, 1817.

Meaghers typified the social structure of an Irish firm engaged in the fishery: patriarchal, small in scale, and centred on the nuclear family. Formal partnerships involving non-kin or even extended family members were relatively rare. Commerce in the fishery did not require the extensive capital associated with other colonial staples such as timber, tobacco, or sugar. Although there were some large vertically integrated houses, particularly amongst shipowning firms negotiating the south European markets, the cod trade was dominated by small family firms not unlike the commission houses in Irish provisions ports such as Waterford. Meagher's move represented more a continuation and extension of a shipping system in place than a new beginning. He simply assumed the duties of his agent Richard Fogarty and used his own expertise and connections to continue the traditions of Waterford - St. John's commerce.

A crucial factor in Meagher's successful relocation was the considerable capital he had accumulated in St. John's and had transferred to Waterford. It exceeded £20,000 and was deposited in Newport's bank. Shortage of working capital was the bane of Irish merchants and Meagher's windfall profits from the fishery were invested in acquiring an extensive trading premises on the quay to match those in place in St. John's, and impressive accommodation for his family. Within a year of his return Meagher leased an imposing Georgian villa at Ballycanvan. Formerly the residence of the Boltons, a landed family of Cromwellian origins and subgentry status, the estate was rented to Samuel Roberts, a city banker, for £183 a year plus a lease fine of £1,600.⁴² Roberts invested a further £5,000 in renovations and improvements. Located four miles downstream from Waterford, on the south bank of the Suir, with a commanding view of the river and its traffic, it was the ideal location for a shipowning merchant. The estate comprised of sixty Irish acres, with an elegant tree-lined avenue, walled gardens, a coach house, and outbuildings. The Meaghers had been living in some style in St. John's, as an advertisement for their furniture there reveals,⁴³ but there was nothing in St. John's or elsewhere in Newfoundland in 1818 to equal the elegance of this commodious abode.

In spring 1818 Thomas Meagher assembled his first cargo in Waterford for his son in St. John's. It included traditional salt provisions, salt, and passengers. Meagher used his own ship, the *Berisford*, under the command of captain Sinnott. The *Berisford* had been plying this route for Meagher since 1813, making two round trips most years. It did so in 1818. A more detailed inventory of the second shipment, in September, survives. It included 66 barrels of pork, 18 barrels of beef, 189 cwts of butter, 389 bags of bread, 249 barrels of oatmeal, 6 cwts of lard, 5 feather beds, and 5 casks of glass.⁴⁴ It was a typical Waterford cargo, and both in

42 LEC 46/35, 1857, PRO, Dublin; RD 737579 (1818); M 3 April, 1805; William (1815) *Wilson, Traveller's Directory through Ireland* (Dublin), 456.

43 *MJ* 3 July, 1818. Meagher's furniture and other provisions in St. John's included a dining table, chairs and card tables, all of mahogany, oak chairs, chests of drawers, knife cases, liquor cases, cellarets, dinner ware, china and glass ware, silver ware, poll lamps, an eight-day clock, a register stove, a bookcase, a pleasure boat, and a gig and sleigh with full harness.

44 *Ch* 4 April, 7, 12 September, 1818; *MJ* 15 May, 5 June, 11 July, 22 October, 12 November, 1818.

range and quantities, one Meagher had become thoroughly familiar with over a decade of trading. Most Waterford merchants in the Newfoundland trade operated on a commission basis, assembling cargoes for southwest English shipowners. Meagher, by contrast, worked from the outset on his own account, initially as an importer in St. John's, subsequently as an exporter based in Waterford.

In the summer of 1818 the Meaghers recruited Thomas Beck (1782-1845) as a partner to assist Thomas Jr. in St. John's. A native of Thomastown, Co. Kilkenny, Beck was an established merchant focusing on the Irish passenger and provisions trades. He already had links with the Meaghers through his marriage to the daughter of Henry Duggan, a baker and close associate of Thomas Sr. in St. John's.⁴⁵ The company's activities in St. John's are well documented over the next year. Thomas Jr. continued his father's dealings in the St. John's land market, paying rents and collecting rents from undertenants, acting as an administrator or trustee for clients' estates, issuing writs, and settling accounts. Advertisements were placed regularly in the St. John's newspapers detailing a wide range of supplies for sale at their wharf, warehouse, or shop on Water St.⁴⁶ The company had a schooner delivering supplies and collecting fish and oil in outharbours along the east coast, and another engaged in catching cod. Waterford remained the main market for their Newfoundland produce, and the principal source of supply. Apart from company commerce there, they acted as agents for Thomas Fogarty of Waterford who had a vessel in the St. John's trade.

In August 1819 the three Meaghers leased an extensive premises on the quay of Waterford from Thomas and James Quan for £100 a year. It extended 129' along the quay west of Hanover St., and 154' south to King St. on the west side. The property included *The Singeing Bed* a store on the corner of Hanover West and the quay, site of the modern Granary, and *The Long Bacon Cellar*.⁴⁷ Thomas Jr. joined his family in Waterford that summer, leaving Thomas Beck in sole charge of company business in St. John's. A fire destroyed the premises at Codner's Cove in July, but the company rebuilt that Fall.⁴⁸ The departure of Thomas Jr. marked the end of a family presence in St. John's. None of them ever returned. It is possible that the Meaghers had already decided to cut back or wind down their

45 *MJ* 19 July, 1818; *GN* 5/2/A/9, 2 July, 1818. In November, 1817, Thomas Meagher Jr. stood as godfather for Beck's son. The firm was renamed Thomas Meagher, Sons & Co.

46 *MJ* 19 July, 10 September, 1819; *GN* 5/2/A/30, 10 September, 1819. Meaghers escaped the two fires of November 1817, prompting Thomas Jr., with Patrick Morris, to publish a note of 'thanks to the many people who helped in the preservation of their properties ... the greater number of whom, though classed amongst the lower orders of this community, yet their conduct on both occasions was marked with the strictest integrity' *MJ* 25 November, 1817.

47 *RD* 74736, 18 August, 1819.

48 *MJ* 19 July, 10 September, 1819. The last reference to Thomas Meagher Jr. in St. John's is 9 July, 1819, when he acted as administrator of the Maddock estate with Patrick Morris. He appears at Ballycanvan in August, with his father and brother.

Newfoundland ventures and focus instead on the burgeoning bacon trade between Waterford and England. By 1820 bacon exports had supplanted salt pork in the meat industry, and Waterford's Newfoundland trade was in rapid decline.

In October, 1820, Thomas Meagher Jr. married Alicia Quan. The marriage settlement reveals two families with substantial wealth. In return for a bond of £4,000 from the Meaghers, the Quans assigned Thomas Jr. their leasehold interests in three properties: the premises rented to Meaghers in 1819, the *Poor House Lot* on south King St., and *Samuel Fowkes Garden*, located close by. *The Poor House Lot* had been developed by James Wyse in the late eighteenth century, and contained warehouses, granaries, stores and stables leased to undertenants for £75 for a year.⁴⁹ Thomas Jr. took up residence on north King St. where he is recorded with his wife and brother Henry in 1821. He quickly emerged as the most active member of the firm. Meaghers had £7,600 in Newport's bank at the time of its crash in June 1820 and Thomas Jr. was appointed principal assignee with the bacon merchant John Harris. As Waterford's leading bank, Newport's had a large clientele that included landowners, substantial tenant farmers, merchants, retailers, and artisans. Meetings with creditors extended over two years exposing Thomas Jr. not only to the local commercial community but also to the complexities of financial exchange in an Old World port.

Thomas Meagher Sr. was himself called as an expert witness in a landmark case on Newport's collapse. It focuses on commercial practices surrounding the conduct of the Waterford-Newfoundland trade. In January 1820 Thomas Foley (noted above), arrived in Waterford with the intention of investing in the local land market. When Foley entered merchant commerce shortly after 1800 Meagher recommended Richard Fogarty as his Waterford factor. Each Fall thereafter Foley remitted bills of exchange from Harbour Grace, usually drawn in 'the most respectable of English houses' notably in Bristol, an important centre for Harbour Grace commerce. Fogarty used these bills as payment for provisions assembled and dispatched to Newfoundland in the spring.

On arrival in Waterford Foley first sought out Meagher, 'a very old and highly respected friend' for advice on investment. Meagher recommended he speak to Fogarty and their attorney, George Ivie. The latter recommended land in the Bessborough estate at Piltown in nearby Kilkenny. The leasehold interest there was assessed at £6,000, double what Foley had delivered in bills of exchange to Fogarty. Meagher agreed to invest £3,000 of his own capital jointly with Foley provided the estate was free of all 'charges' and 'encumbancies' and clear title secured. Fogarty deposited Foley's bills in Newport's bank while negotiations proceeded.

Foley was unusual in merchant circles in that he was illiterate and innumerate with little understanding of banks or the complexities of the Irish land market. In Newfoundland he relied for guidance on Patrick Morris, his son-in-law. Morris'

49 Pierce Kelly, attorney, *Deeds relating to the families of Meagher and Quan*, 1794-1875, MS 8142, D 10041-61, NLI. The trustees for the marriage settlement were Patrick Meagher, son of Thomas Sr. & Edmund Pierce Quan, son of Thomas.

wife died in childbirth in 1815 leaving a daughter who was sent to the Morrises in Waterford to be raised. Thomas Meagher Sr. was her godfather. Patrick Morris was supplied by his brother James in Waterford and partly out of family loyalty or pressure Foley decided to replace Fogarty with James Morris as his factor, and Joseph Fanning, the latter's attorney, and a relative, for George Ivie. Meagher disapproved and refused to deal with Fanning, claiming Ivie was a much more experienced agent. Should Foley abandon the Bessborough search, Meagher proposed investing the entire £6,000 required and advise Foley on some other landed security. It is another example of the considerable capital at Meagher's disposal.

Foley decided to return to Harbour Grace in April. He got a statement of his current account with Fogarty, and receipts for the bills of exchange. The latter he left with Meagher at Ballycanvan 'a gentleman who, amongst the many respectable merchants concerned with the trade in Newfoundland stands in the foremost class.' Foley had instructed his new agents that no investments be made unless Meagher approved.

In June the bank collapsed and Foley subsequently sued Fogarty for £3,000. He alleged that Fogarty, and not the bank, was responsible for the bills of exchange. The trial 'caused much excitement amongst commercial interests in Waterford City' and was reported in detail in the local newspaper.⁵⁰ It was held in Clonmel at Foley's request, claiming he would not get an impartial jury in Waterford because of Fogarty's status and influence there. Meagher was the key witness; his detailed and balanced testimony was instrumental in exonerating Fogarty. Foley did succeed in recovering £900 from the bankrupt Newport estate. The case yields important information on four prominent Catholic Irish houses engaged in Waterford-Newfoundland commerce, the relationship between principal and factors, credit arrangements, bills of exchange, banking, the role of overseas mercantile capital in the rural land market, and the importance of social and kinship connections in the conduct of trade.

Commercial re-orientation at Waterford, 1820-1830

Just as the Meaghers seemed poised to expand their Newfoundland trade, they decided to abandon it. By 1820 the transatlantic provisions trade out of Waterford was in rapid decline. Unprocessed or semi-processed foodstuffs - livestock, grain, flour - had dislodged salt meat and breadstuffs. Bacon and pigs replaced salt pork, cattle replaced salt beef, and the English market for butter intensified, resulting in a contraction in Waterford's continental and colonial exports. Increasingly merchants in the Newfoundland trade looked elsewhere for provisions. The growth of agriculture in the Maritimes and Quebec, and the resumption of food imports from America, reduced Irish commerce. Fewer than a dozen Waterford houses remained active in the trade in 1820, one-third the number in 1770. By the end of the 1820s ports in northern Europe - Hamburg, Bremen, Danzig - had emerged as important centres for victualling Newfoundland. Merchants such as Patrick Morris and Pierce

50 CH 30 March, 2, 4, 6 April, 1822.

Sweetman sent their ships to those distant ports for supplies. Finally, a recession in the cod fishery - which Thomas Foley had identified as a reason for his plan to return to Waterford - was a serious concern for the Meaghers.

In August 1820 the family announced the dissolution of their partnership with Thomas Beck in St. John's, effective at the end of the year. The company had advertised their main vessel, the *Berisford* for sale that June, and their premises in July.⁵¹ Their premises were advertized again in December, with an explicit statement by the Meaghers that they were withdrawing from the Newfoundland trade. It did not happen right away. The *Berisford* continued to sail, making two round transatlantic trips in 1821 and 1822 with winter voyages from Waterford to Liverpool. It sank in the Atlantic in December, 1822. Meaghers and Beck had lost a second vessel off Kinsale in May, and a third the following year.⁵² There is no record of shipowning thereafter, or of exports to Newfoundland. If Meaghers continued with the exports, they were modest and likely on commission. They did retain some leasehold interests in property in St. John's; the rents were collected by Thomas Beck and remitted to Waterford.

Meaghers switched to the English trade, but it did not flourish. In 1827 they shipped only £3,235 wort of provisions, primarily bacon, placing them seventy-first out of ninety-seven merchant firms in Waterford.⁵³ They are listed as Newfoundland merchants in *Pigot's Directory* in 1824 and as late as 1831 received a cargo of cod oil from St. John's.⁵⁴ Thomas Sr. served on a committee of merchants, shipowners, shipmasters and traders seeking improvements to Waterford harbour the previous spring; it was more a reflection of his expertise than activity as a merchant.

Meagher's return migration led to the socially more prestigious pursuit of profit in the urban property market, and careers for his sons in politics, the law, the military, and the church. As one of the leading creditors of Newports bankrupt estate, the Meaghers acquired further leasehold interests in city lands and buildings. The most strategic was on old lot 3 of the New Quay, west of Barronstrand St. It was originally demised by the Waterford corporation to Simon Newport, a merchant, in 1731. The lease was renewed to the Newports as head tenants in 1789. They had probably built the impressive Georgian house that preceded the Granville. Around 1760 Newports sublet the premises to Philip Long, one of Waterford's foremost Catholic provisions merchants. The Longs were succeeded by the Quans. Thomas Quan is recorded there in 1789, and may have taken up residence in 1783 on his marriage to Anne Wyse. In 1794 Simon Newport leased the premises to Thomas and James Quan for 130 years at £70 a year. It measured 40' on the quay,

51 *MJ* 1 June, 27 July, 21 August, 8 December, 1820.

52 *Registry of vessels*, St. John's, 1820-1823, Maritime History Archives, (MHA) Memorial University of Newfoundland.

53 'Value of the Export of Provisions from the Port of Waterford for the year ending 30th of April, 1828.' Monteaule Papers, ms. 13,370 (10), NLI

54 *City of Dublin and Hibernian Provincial Directory* (London, 1824), 316; CH 23 March, 1830; *Kough Letter Book*, New Ross, P3B16, 5 February, 1831, MHA.

as in 1731, was 205' deep, widening beyond the remnants of the old city wall to 92', with an exit to Little Barronstrand St./George St. at the rear, along Rogers Lane.⁵⁵ Located in the mercantile heart of Waterford, the property straddled the boundary between St. Patrick's parish and Trinity Within.

Thomas Quan's six surviving children by his second wife, Christina Forstall, were born and raised here. They included Edmund Pierce, born in 1795, and Alicia, in 1797. She married Thomas Meager Jr. in 1820 and initially they lived on King St., as noted above. Precisely when they moved to her home on the quay is not clear. Thomas and James Quan, both widowers, and three children of Thomas were recorded there in 1821. The house had 4 storeys and faced the quay. In June 1822 Sir John Newport assigned to Thomas Meagher Sr. of Ballycanvan Newport's interest in Quans premises.⁵⁶ Quans themselves declared bankruptcy in 1823; Francis Wyse, a kinsman, was appointed assignee. Meaghers paid over £2,000 for Quans holdings. Thomas Quan died at his house on the quay that December and his brother James left Waterford, clearing the way for the Meaghers' occupancy.⁵⁷

In spring 1825 the Meaghers advertised their provisions and corn stores on the quay west of Hanover. They were leased to Edward Lynch, a merchant, and the Quaker, Samuel White, for £185 a year.⁵⁸ Whites had occupied the southern section of this block, along King St. north, since the 1770s. They were still there, leasing part of their premises from Meaghers, a century later. It is an example of tenurial and residential continuity relatively rare amongst merchant families in an urban economy characterized by rapid change. It was also a clear indication that the Meaghers did not plan to expand their overseas provisions trade.

Early in 1827 Alicia Meagher died in the house she was raised in on the quay. Her death left Thomas Jr. with four young children, and his brother Henry. Two years later Thomas Sr. and his wife sold their interests in Ballycanvan for £1,400 to Richard Morris Esq. of Waterford and joined Thomas Jr. on the quay.⁵⁹ Mary Meagher died there late in 1831 and the family finally withdrew from maritime trade. They advertised their house, furniture, and premises, including extensive pork and bacon-curing and packing equipment. Charles Bianconi, the carriage entrepreneur, rented the property for £120 a year plus a payment of £600 to

55 Kelly, *Deeds*, 24 October, 1794; RD 3280 (1872).

56 RD 775251 (1822).

57 RD 790573 (1824), 803264 (1825); CH 13 December, 1824; M 15, 18 December, 1824. A week after Thomas Quan's death the 'house and stores on the quay, lately occupied by the Quans,' were advertised for sale. In 1848 T.F. Meagher, on a political tour of Tipperary, was told that his (maternal) grandfather's funeral 'covered the length of the quay'.

58 M 30 March, 1825; RD 801277, 876399, 876401 (1825).

59 Estate of Cornelius Henry Bolton, LEC 4635, 1857, PRO, Dublin; CH 24 August, 1829. Thomas Maher, Esq. is recorded at Ballycanvan with 94 acres leased from Mrs. Bolton in 1826. *Tithe Applotment Book*, 29/52, 1826, p. 5, Parish of Kill St. Nicholas. Over 65 acres were described as first class land, the rest mainly marsh. He paid £7.14.8 in tithes.

Meaghers. It was converted to a stagecoach station, with Edward Commins establishing a hotel in Meaghers house on the quay.⁶⁰

From Newfoundland to Ireland: Cultural Politics and the Catholic Middle Class

The Meaghers departed St. John's just before the emergence of organized public protest and the politicization of the general population, particularly the Catholic Irish, in the town. For more than two centuries Newfoundland had been ruled directly from London. It was normally headed by a governor who until 1817 was present for the summer only. There were no elections or formal political parties. Most of the positions in the colonial administration were held by Protestants. In 1820 a Committee of Inhabitants, under the chairmanship of Patrick Morris, was established in St. John's to pursue political and legal reform. Initially dominated by the growing Irish Catholic middle class, it expanded rapidly to include leading Protestants. Important changes to the legal structure were instituted in 1824, Catholic emancipation established in 1830, and a local legislature formed in 1832.

Waterford's political culture had some parallels with St. John's. The old-world port was run largely by Protestants, many of them descended from seventeenth-century British settlers. There was a corporation, a chamber of commerce and other formal civic institutions and societies not evident in a colonial port. By 1820 the Catholic middle class in Waterford - merchants, traders, master craftsman, well-to-do leaseholders - had begun to challenge Protestant hegemony in municipal government. The Meaghers, relatively rare in Irish municipal politics in that their experience was colonial, were quickly drawn in to what was defined as the struggle for civil and religious liberty. Their introduction was facilitated through the influence and expertise of Thomas Quan. As far back as 1793 Quan was one of six delegates representing Waterford at the Catholic convention in Dublin. It resulted in a limited franchise, the right to bear arms, commissions for Catholics in the army and navy, and the right to sit on grand and petty juries. Thomas Quan was the first Catholic, with fellow merchants John Blackney and John Archbold, to be appointed a grand juror for Waterford in 1793. Thomas Meagher Sr., as noted above, held a similar position in St. John's.

In a little over a year after his marriage to Alicia Quan, and only two years resident in Waterford, Thomas Meagher Jr. was reported speaking 'at great length, and with great ability' on the unfair dismissal of the Recorder of Waterford. He put forward several resolutions which were passed.⁶¹ It marked the beginning of a long career in Waterford municipal politics. Two years later Thomas Jr. was admitted to the Chamber of Commerce and appointed treasurer.⁶² Originally almost exclusively a Protestant preserve, the composition of the Chamber was in transition as the Catholic merchant community expanded and became more politically engaged. Thomas Meagher Sr., Richard and Thomas Fogarty, and Pierce Sweetman, for

60 CH 12, 15 November, 1831, 18 February, 8 March, 2 June, 1832; M 15 February, 1832, Kelly, *Deeds*, 24 March, 1832, RD 1338 (1833).

61 CH 18 December, 1821.

62 M 29 November, 1823. Only 8 of the 87 members of the Chamber in 1815 were Catholic. *Charter of Incorporation* (Waterford, 1815).

example, were foremost in petitioning the corporation regarding improvements to Waterford harbour. They requested that the harbour commissioners be elected primarily from the ranks of shipowners, merchants and traders instead of patronage appointments by the conservative, largely non-mercantile corporation.⁶³ Efforts to reform the archaic municipal administration continued, with limited success.⁶⁴ It was not until 1840 that a Municipal Corporation Act for Ireland was finally passed allowing a Catholic to be appointed mayor. In 1841 Daniel O'Connell became the first Catholic mayor of Dublin since 1688, and Thomas Meagher Jr. was elected for Waterford.

The Meaghers relocation at Waterford also coincided with the emergence of the city as a major centre in Daniel O'Connell's campaign for Catholic emancipation. In April, 1823, O'Connell established the Catholic Association. Membership was set at a guinea per annum. All three male Meaghers were members, but the Association was largely middle class. A year later O'Connell made the momentous decision to expand membership for a subscription of one penny per month. It had the effect of introducing, for the first time, the great mass of ordinary Irish Catholics into the political process. Committees were formed initially in the cities and towns, then in the rural parishes. Priests were members *ex officio*.

Thomas Meagher Jr. was appointed secretary to the Waterford Association. In April, 1824, just prior to the opening up of the Association to mass membership, Thomas Jr. spoke on behalf of 150 'of the most respectable Catholics in the city' in a vote of thanks to Sir John Newport, MP for his support.⁶⁵ It was a pivotal appointment in the evolution of Meagher's political career. Waterford became the focus of O'Connell's campaign in 1826 when the liberal Protestant, Villiers Stuart, challenged the Beresfords, a powerful ascendancy family, for a seat in parliament. Under the leadership of O'Connell and the Waterford Association, the large Catholic vote, traditionally in Beresford's hands, flocked to Stuart. His electoral victory was a seminal event in modern Irish political history, part of 'arguably the first mass movement of organized democracy in Europe.'⁶⁶

Thomas Meagher and Sons were generous donors to O'Connell's campaign for Catholic emancipation and, from 1830 onwards, for repeal. Both Thomas Sr. and Jr. served on committees, acted as stewards at repeal dinners, and supervised the collection of the repeal rent for the parishes of Trinity Within, St. Patrick's, and St. John's.⁶⁷ O'Connell became a personal friend. A decade later he recommended Thomas Francis Meagher be admitted to study law at the Queen's Inns in Dublin.

63 *M* 22 February, 1830, *CH* 22 March, 1830.

64 *CH* 7 April, 11 August, 8, 15 October, 1831; *M* 7 January, 1832. The reform bill of 1832 extended the borough franchise to men with property valued at £10 and over.

65 *M* 27 April, 1824.

66 Donal McCartney (1987), *The Dawning of Democracy: Ireland, 1800-1870* (Dublin), 110-116; Oliver MacDonagh (1988), *The Hereditary Bondsman: Daniel O'Connell, 1775-1829* (London), 206-24.

67 *M* 3 January, 13 February, 8 July, 1828, 29 April, 1829, 4 January, 1833; *CH* 7 February, 27, 30 April, 10 August, 1829, 23 January, 3, 9 February, 20 July, 14 October, 4 November, 12, 20 December, 1830, 20 January, 21 March, 7 April, 11 August, 3 December, 1831, 24 April, 1832.

Emancipation and repeal attracted more interest and financial support from the Irish abroad than any other political movement in Ireland up to that time. They played a major role in sustaining expatriate Irish consciousness and identity. Half of Newfoundland's population were of Irish birth or descent and the close ties of their leaders, both lay and clerical, particularly with Waterford, meant that the Newfoundland-Irish played a role highly disproportionate to their numbers in the context of a broad American diaspora. Subscriptions in Newfoundland were organized by Irish merchants and traders there, and forwarded to a committee in Waterford that included Newfoundland merchants such as Patrick Morris, Pierce Sweetman, Richard Fogarty and Thomas Meagher Jr.⁶⁸ Amongst the last donations recorded was from Placentia, where Roger Forstall Sweetman was the leading merchant. It was sent to Thomas Francis Meagher, Sweetman's cousin, then in Dublin.⁶⁹ The process reflects the intimacy and tenacity of transatlantic links between the two islands, and the importance of kinship, migration and commercial connections in cultural politics.

In St. John's the Meaghers had been prominent supporters of charitable institutions and causes. Most of their subscriptions were channeled through the BIS or the Catholic church but they also contributed money and meals informally as crises occurred. Mercantile altruism was an aspect of community life familiar to the Meaghers in their new Waterford home. Several of their Quan kin and business associates were noted supporters of local charities. James Wyse, for example, established a Poor House on King St. in the late eighteenth century, and left property and capital to the poor of Waterford, both Catholics and Protestants. The Quans in turn were regular and generous donors. Christine Quan acted as hostess in her house on the quay at meetings of the ladies committee for the *Friends of Poor Room Keepers*.⁷⁰ It was one of a number of charities run by women for women in distress.

Thomas Meagher Jr. was widely acclaimed for his humanitarian work in Waterford throughout his lengthy residency there. It was a continuation of established family tradition on both sides of the Atlantic. In 1824 Thomas Jr. was appointed treasurer of the Trinitarian Orphan Society, a charitable organization founded in 1811 to feed, clothe and accommodate young boys without means to apprentice as artisans. The Orphan Asylum was located on John St. and cared for some 65 inmates at a cost of around £1,400 a year. Like the BIS in St. John's, the Society was nondenominational but only a handful of Protestants were involved. It was essentially a Catholic charity; a dozen priests served on the committee. The Society was strongly supported in the 1820s by the Fogartys, the Meaghers, and by

68 M 25 January, 1829; CH 21 January, 1829, 24 April, 1832; *Newfoundlander* (NF), St. John's, 16 April, 1829, 1 September, 1831, 12 January, 1832; PL, 7 February, 1832; John Mannion (1986), 'Patrick Morris and Newfoundland Irish Immigration' in *Talamh an Éisc: Canadian and Irish Essays* (Halifax), 180-202, C.J. Byrne and M. Harry, eds.

69 *The Nation*, Dublin, 20 January, 1844.

70 CH 20 February, 1814, 30 January, 1819; M 24 February, 1817.

Patrick Morris who was elected president in 1830.⁷¹ Details of the annual dinners held by the Society were printed in the St. John's newspapers, again an indication of the active participation amongst merchants in the Waterford-Newfoundland trade. Both Richard Fogarty and Thomas Meagher Jr. served as vice-presidents, and as trustees. It is likely that the Orphan Asylum School established by the BIS in St. John's in 1827 was in part modelled on the Waterford Orphan Asylum.

The most familiar and certainly the most pervasive institution in the everyday life of the Meaghers in St. John's and in Waterford was the Catholic church. A fellow Tipperary migrant, Fr. O'Donel, established the parish of St. John's in 1784, about the time Thomas Meagher Sr. settled there. Almost certainly Thomas Sr. was married, and perhaps his children baptized, by O'Donel. Increasingly, community life in St. John's town was church-centered, its structure essentially a reproduction of the Irish Catholic parish system. Waterford was the ecclesiastical capital of Catholic St. John's, and indeed Newfoundland. It was of course far older and larger than the colonial port, and comprised several parishes. One contained a Cathedral, begun in 1793, where the marriage of Thomas Jr. and the baptisms of his children are recorded. Located just around the corner from Meagher's house on the quay, the Cathedral was a focal point in the campaign for reform. Meaghers were close to reform priests such as Fr. Condon and Fr. Sheehan, the latter O'Connell's main lieutenant in the city. Following the death of Dr. Patrick Kelly (1777-1829), bishop of Waterford and a strong supporter of emancipation, both Thomas Sr. and Jr. were active in arranging the construction of a monument in his honour.⁷²

Following the death of Mary Meagher and withdrawal from overseas trade, the family moved to a house on William St. in the fashionable east end. Here Thomas Sr. made his will, leaving 'all my property, whether in Ireland or in Newfoundland or elsewhere to my son Thomas in trust for his children Thomas Francis, Henry, Christianna and Alicia.⁷³ It included the leasehold interests in all the property demised by the Quans on the marriage of Thomas Jr. and Alicia in 1820. These interests were retained by the Meaghers until at least the 1870s when Henry, brother of Thomas Francis, is recorded as heir.⁷⁴

A year after the will of his grandfather, Thomas Francis moved from William St. to Clongowes. He was joined there by his brother, Henry. Their sister Christianna entered the Benedictines and became a nun. Their other sister Alicia died in 1837, the same year as Thomas Sr. His second son, Henry, died the following year. It left Thomas Jr. as the only year-round resident of the Meagher family in Waterford. He moved from William St. to a house around the corner on the

71 *M* 10 January, 1824, 30 December, 1829, 5 January, 1830; *CH* 9 January 1829; *PL* 23 April, 1830.

72 *CH* 13 October, 1829.

73 Kelly, *Deeds relating to Quans and Meaghers...* Will of Thomas Meagher Sr, 3 October, 1833, probate, 1837, MS 8142, NLI; Thomas Hanton (1835), *A complete list of the Poll...City of Waterford*, January, 1835 (Waterford), 18; RD 3280 (1872). CH 28 January, 1837.

74 RD 3280 (1872), 39284 (1874), 29199 (1875), 38111 (1876).

Mall, beside his sisters-in-law, Johanna and Christina Quan. Kinship was again an important factor in his choice of residence. Interest in the Quan-Meagher complex, comprising at least three houses, was in the hands of John Leonard and his wife Alicia Sweetman - a sister of Roger F. - since their marriage in 1815. Alicia was widowed in 1829 and returned to her parents at Blenheim. She and her brother demised part of their interests on the Mall to the Quans and to Thomas Meagher Jr.⁷⁵ This was his fourth and final residence in Waterford. It was the base for his long career in Waterford politics, and home to Thomas Francis and Henry during school holidays and afterwards as they developed their respective careers. Named *Derrynane* after O Connell's home in Kerry, the house became known nationally with the arrest there of Thomas Francis for treason. Roger Forstall Sweetman accompanied him on the carriage through the city and helped calm the crowd. Meagher was arraigned in Dublin, released on bail, and returned to the southeast to organize rebellion. He toured parts of southwest Wexford, South Kilkenny, south-east Tipperary, and his native city.

On Sunday evening, July the 16th (1848), I came down from Slievnamon, and remained at home until the following Thursday, superintending the organization of the Waterford Confederates.

The Thursday I refer to brought us the proclamation of the Arms Act; copies of which, during the early part of the day, were posted upon the walls of my native city. I resolved to leave at once for Dublin, with a view to ascertain there the intentions of the principal Confederates...

In the evening ... I ordered a covered car... Whilst the car was getting ready, I ran up to the drawing room, where my father and aunt (Johanna Quan) were sitting ... to wish them good bye. I put on my tricolour sash - green, white and orange - buckled on my sword belt, cross-belt, cartouche-box-and flourishing a very handsome old sword, which belonged to a granduncle of mine (James Quan) in the days of the Merchant Corps of the Waterford Volunteers (1782).... That evening ... I saw my home for the last time.⁷⁶

From the perspective of kinship and family support, it was a lonely exit. Apart from his father, his aunt, and the Sweetmans at Blenheim, Thomas Francis Meagher had no near relatives remaining in Waterford. His only brother Henry was in Rome with a papal regiment, his only surviving sister a nun in Taunton, Devon. Meagher's aunt and godmother, Johanna Quan, died in 1847 at the Mall; another aunt, Mary Quan, was a nun. There is no mention of his uncles, Edmund or Thomas Quan. Edmund Forstall was the only surviving member of that family in Rochestown. Forstall's sister, Letitia, a widow, was a nun in Dublin.

75 RD 626513 (1811), 647271 (1812), 835579, 848195 (1829), 8625 (1830), 14106 (1835), 20273 (1863); T. Shearman, *The New Commercial Directory* (Kilkenny, 1839).

76 Thomas-Francis Meagher (1910), 'A Personal Narrative of 1848' in Arthur Griffith, ed., *Meagher of the Sword* (Dublin), 173.

Meagher makes little mention in his speeches, reminiscences, or other writings, of his ancestry or extended family. Perhaps it was that in the 1840s there were so few kin around him, and his education and career led to social interaction primarily with colleagues away from home. Details on personal family background rarely entered public discourse. It was a coincidence that Meagher's political tour of the southeast in 1848 should focus on his grandfather's homeland district in Tipperary - Ninemilehouse, Grangemockler, Carrick-on-Suir, Kilcash, Slievenaman - and that his trial was held in Clonmel. There is no reference to his Tipperary roots during this highly publicized campaign, despite Young Ireland's emphasis on Gaelic symbolism and heritage. His friend Michael Cavanaugh's *Memoirs*, written more than forty years later began with the observation 'that the boy's first glance at the outer world lighted on the estuary of the noble river (the Suir) whose fountain - springs are situated in the ancestral patrimony of his father's race ... the scion of a stock that kept possession of their ancient patrimony against all corners for fifteen hundred years.'⁷⁷ There is little, however, on the immediate background or social origins of Thomas Meagher Sr. It is possible that he never reconnected with kin or neighbours since his departure for Newfoundland; if true, then it is likely that by 1848 the links were lost.

Social and geographical mobility could be powerful solvents of traditional family ties. A general lack of interest or deliberate obscuring of ordinary origins were evident in Irish Catholic mercantile society. The immediate challenge of commerce, a focus on the accumulation of wealth, and a concern with social advancement left little time for ancestry and an examination of tradition. Families of middle-class or subgentry status like the Forstalls, Sweetmans and Wyses displayed an interest in heraldry and pedigree not as manifest amongst the Gaelic Meaghers and Quans.⁷⁸ Some tradition endured. Hereditary first names, for example, were part of the Meagher lineage. The name Thomas existed over at least four generations, and Henry over three. Both Alicia and Christina go back to the Kennedys and Lattins in eighteenth-century Kildare. The names appear in the genealogies of the Forstalls, Quans, Sweetmans, and Meaghers.

Despite the serious political rift, Thomas Meagher Jr. stood by his son in 1848. While visiting him in Kilmainham gaol, Thomas Jr. wrote a letter of condolence to Roger Forstall Sweetman on the death of his mother, Juliet, at Blenheim. Born in 1771, she was aunt and godmother to Alicia Meagher, mother of Thomas Francis, and, as already noted, a custodian of much family tradition. Thomas Jr. paid whatever debts were incurred by his son during his incarceration and trial. Indeed it is likely that Thomas Francis depended on his father for money since his return from Stonyhurst. It came from wealth largely accumulated by Thomas Meagher Sr. and largely through the Newfoundland trade.

77 Cavanaugh, *Memoirs*, p. 13.

78 John Mannion (1987), 'A Transatlantic Merchant Fishery: Richard Welsh of New Ross and the Sweetmans of Newbawn in Newfoundland, 1734-1862' in *Wexford: History and Society*, Kevin Whelan and William Nolan, eds. (Dublin), 373-421.

The career of Henry Meagher (1825-1906), the quiet, unobtrusive but scholarly brother of Thomas Francis, was more in keeping with the values of his father and aunts. Following seven years at Clongowes he proceeded to the university of Freiburg in Germany to study Philosophy and Science. Ireland's only university, Trinity College, was regarded by the Meaghers and their class as anti-Catholic and unacceptable. Following his studies in Germany, Henry applied for the Austrian service but war with Italy late in 1846 intruded. He went instead to Rome with an 'address of sympathy' from the people of Waterford to the Pope and to offer his services as an officer in the pontifical guard. Henry was accepted and served in the papal campaign. Following his Italian interlude he returned to Waterford and served as a captain in the militia there.

The two Meaghers were joined at the Mall by Catherine Bennett, the Tasmanian-born wife of Thomas Francis after the latter's escape to America. Thomas Jr. accompanied her to New York to rejoin her husband. Thomas Francis was by now a celebrity in Irish America, engrossed in speaking tours and politics. Catherine became pregnant but the attempt at reconciliation evidently failed. The Meaghers returned to Waterford where Thomas Bennett Meagher (1854-1909) was born. Catherine died in childbirth and is buried in the family tomb at Faithlegg. Thomas Jr., with Henry his godfather and godmother Johanna Quan cared for Thomas Bennett Meagher. Thomas Francis never saw his son. Following the death in America of Thomas Francis, his widow, Elizabeth Townsend Meagher took her stepson to New York and enrolled him at West Point Military Academy. He did not graduate, but qualified as an engineer, moved to San Francisco and finally to the Philippines. Thomas Jr. retired to Bray, near Dublin, with his only son and heir, Henry, following the death of Johanna Quan and Roger Sweetman's permanent settlement in Placentia, Newfoundland. In his will, Thomas Jr. left £50 to his daughter, Christina, £100 to his grandson Thomas Bennett Meagher, and his estate and remaining effects to Henry. Thomas Jr. died in Bray in 1874 and was buried in Glasnevin. He had a long and creative life, witnessing momentous changes in Irish social, economic and political history. The obituaries recognized his own outstanding contribution to public service, and lauded his charity and commitment to his faith.⁷⁹

79 Probate of last will of Thomas Meagher Jr., 1876, MS 8142, D10, 041-061, NLI; Freeman's Journal 2 March, 1874; *Waterford Daily Mail* 3, 6 March, 1874; *Limerick Reporter* 3 March, 1874, 9 November, 1876; Inscription, tomb, Glasnevin, NC 47 "with his son, Henry."



Thomas Francis Meagher (1846).

Source: National Library of Ireland (R13165)

The 'Clongowes' of Thomas Francis Meagher

By Tony Pierce

CLONGOWES Wood College was-and is-a Jesuit – run boarding school situated near the village of Clane in Co. Kildare, some twenty miles from Dublin. Its location was no accident and was dictated by the political conditions of the day-too near Dublin and it would attract the unwelcome attentions of a Government still nervous about such institutions, too far away and it might not attract the ‘sons of the Catholic gentry’ who were its main target.

Its founder, in 1814, was Fr. Peter Kenney S.J, a Dubliner of humble enough origins but then Vice-President of the recently founded Maynooth College. His immediate successor however was Fr. Charles Aylmer S.J, of one of the Aylmers of Painstown, a local "big house". It is he rather than Fr. Kenney who was more representative of the position Clongowes wished to occupy in Irish Catholic Society.

The Medieval Castle which is the centre-piece of the school, was originally built by the Eustace family who had held the surrounding lands since the thirteenth century and are on record in the *Rolls and Registers of Norman Ireland*. They also gave their name to the nearby village of Ballymore Eustace. John Eustace fought against the Cromwellian forces in the 1640's and paid the price. His lands were confiscated under the Cromwellian Settlement and the family disappeared from Irish life. A Cromwellian Chief Justice, Richard Reynell, was granted the lands in 1667 and they were later confirmed to him in *Letters Patent of Charles &*. These documents provided proof of title and were to be of great relevance in 1814 when Fr. Kenney went to buy the estate. By 1730 the estate had passed to Stephen Browne, son of John Browne and Mary, daughter of Viscount Fitzwilliam and he began to restore the Castle that had been half-wrecked by General Monk in 1642. Thus it became known as Castle Browne.

The Brownes were twice connected by marriage with another landed family, the Wogans of nearby Rathcoffey and a certain Thomas Wogan Browne succeeded to the property in 1769. Though officially a Protestant he was in sympathy with the Catholic cause and after a meeting in Naas in 1812 to promote Catholic Emancipation, he was thanked by "RESOLUTION".

‘The moment is fast approaching’, he said, ‘not for Concessions-the name is odious-but for the restoration of all their rights to the Roman Catholics of Ireland’.

When he died in 1812, he left his estate to his brother Lieut-General Michael Browne who, in the service of King of Saxony, Napoleons ally, had been on his way to Moscow when he heard of his brother's death.

It was this man who sold the demesne and castle to Fr. Kenney who after some

discussion, decided to restore the old name, Clongowes Wood. The total purchase cost the Jesuit order some £25,000 which, translated into today's money, comes to a tidy €2.2 million.

Where would the Jesuits, suppressed since 1773 but soon to be restored, get this sort of money? The Jesuits, who have a vow of poverty, are used to being asked questions like this, but there is a ready explanation. Jesuits had been in Ireland on and off since 1542 and though the order itself had been suppressed since 1773, their funds had been preserved by being given to one of the priests who, at his death, handed it to another. Most of this was used to purchase Clongowes and the rest to buy a Church and residence in Gardiner St., Dublin.

Difficulties

As a result of the Catholic Relief Acts at the end of the eighteenth century, many seminars, major and minor, were now opening. Maynooth was founded in 1795, followed by Carlow College, Fr. Kenney's own *Alma Mater*, St. Peter's, Wexford, St. Kieran's, Kilkenny and many others. Although the higher professions were still inaccessible to Catholics, many of them had prospered in trade, thus providing the class of Catholic gentry which, Fr. Kenney hoped, would flock to his new school. This made much sense-if you educate the leaders of society you ought to be able to influence that society itself. Traditionally this class had been receiving its education in Europe-Daniel O'Connell is a case in point-but Fr. Kenney hoped to be able to persuade them to stay in Ireland. He had a few bridges to cross still though.

The opening of Catholic schools was obviously no longer forbidden but Fr. Kenney was told that he would have to buy Castle Browne as an individual and that no trust dedicated to Catholic education could be set up. It was even suggested that it would be safer to have the school in the name of a Protestant gentleman-Thomas Parnell was mentioned and later, Charles Stewart was delighted to hear it-but the idea was later dropped. Apparently opening a school was one thing but opening a Jesuit school was quite another and the English Jesuits of the day were said to have been dismayed when they learned that Fr. Kenney had admitted to the Prime Minister, Peel, that he was a Jesuit. Some Protestants, though by no means all, felt that if the enemy wasn't exactly at the gate, then he wasn't very far away from it either.

Thus the *Hibernian Magazine* commented "Ireland now stands in imminent danger.If Popery succeeds, our fairest plains will once more witness days worthy to rank with those of Bloody Mary and the walls of Derry shall again become the lamentable bulwarks against Popish treachery and massacre". Mild exaggeration if you may but then it was no harm to keep people on their toes! Such rantings mercifully were not typical and while the government huffed and puffed, it actually did nothing and the school opened for business.

For a while too the Jesuits fell foul of the redoubtable J.K.L, recently appointed Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin. Himself somewhat of an ascetic, the good Bishop looked with jaundiced eye at what he considered the luxurious life of the Jesuits at Clongowes, while at the same time admiring its 'castellated towers and umbrageous grounds'.

His renowned asceticism didn't stretch to refusing dinner invitations to the College but he made no attempt to reciprocate, warning the Jesuits that if they were to dine with him they would have to be content with the 'scrag end of lamb'.

But the real row was over the hearing of confessions. The bishop feared that the Jesuits were too lenient and that judicious penitents knew a good thing when they saw one. You see, the bishop was a probabiliorist and the Jesuits were probabilists and I can see my readers nodding sagely that if that wasn't grounds for a row, well then, what was! All ended amicably.

What sort of school was it that young Meagher entered in 1833? The decision to send him there was no doubt influenced by the fact that his uncle, Patrick Meagher, later to become Rector of Belvedere College, had entered the Jesuit order in 1829. He arrived with his brother Henry and his father paid fees of £45.4.3 each, a reduction from the usual 60 guineas because they were brothers. This was not an astronomical sum and his father, a successful businessman, could no doubt well afford it, but to put it in context, it probably represented more than a year's wages for some of his father's workmen. (The great Dr. Croke of Cashel paid his housekeepers £5 a year, but then of course they did live in!). Pocket money amounted to £1.18.0 for both so they were no spendthrifts. A great coat cost £1.6.0, dancing shoes 13/6, and the Dancing master demanded the considerable sum of 4 guineas. We don't know what standard he achieved but in those days dancing was an essential prerequisite if one were to make ones mark on the social scene. For his money he got the very doubtful privilege of remaining in the College at Christmas, for boys did not get a Christmas vacation and indeed, in Fr. Aylmer's second prospectus it was suggested that they remain there for the Summer as well - hard times indeed but in a sense it showed great trust on the part of the parents who apparently were prepared to leave the entire development of the child to the Jesuits. They themselves, like their Victorian counterparts in England, rarely saw him.

Education

Meagher's arrival in the school had been preceded by that of Daniel O'Connell's two sons, Maurice and Morgan (a third son, John was a contemporary of Meagher), and the great man himself, in a letter to the rector, left him in no doubt as to the sort of education he wanted for his sons. Pointing out that he intended both for the Irish Bar he suggested 'the acquisition of much classical learning, a solid formation in the classics, especially Greek, being in my opinion of great value to real education'. He also wished them to learn French, Mathematics and experimental philosophy 'and of course I am most anxious that they be imbued with the strong principles of Catholic faith and natural feeling'. In fact they were both as lazy as sin.

O'Connell seems to have regarded himself as a kind of honorary Clongownian. Once his boys were enrolled, he came each year, often for an extended visit, when he would join the boys in chapel. He planted a tree, 'The Pride of Kildare' and many a boy has sought spurious fame by carving his name on it. It disappeared in the 1980's in circumstances that still haven't been fully explained! He founded the

Debating society and its first secretary was Thomas Francis Meagher. Mrs. O'Connell however, who had a much keener sense of what really mattered, was disappointed at the decline in the boys table manners. Surely she must have known that anyone in boarding school who would affect any refinement in such matters would incur the eternal scorn of his more robust co-diners.

The regimen in Meagher's day was tough and indeed resembled in many ways that of a major seminary like Maynooth. They rose at five in Summer and six in Winter, morning prayers and Mass followed, breakfast was preceded by one hour of study, and on it goes. They were treated to bread and beer at noon but that was no prelude to an afternoon's drinking – they were given beer because it was too dangerous to drink the water. Indeed the number of boys in the school has been seriously depleted in the 1820's by an outbreak of typhus. The school day ended with night prayers at 8.30.

The system of studies in the school was based on that of the Jesuit *Ratio Studiorum* which became the law of the society in 1599. This apparently was so obvious to everyone that the first prospectus of Fr. Kenney doesn't even mention it, merely saying 'It does not seem necessary to detail here the plan of education adopted by Mr. (sic.) Kenney. The system is sufficiently known and widely esteemed'. The same prospectus was quite accommodating and stated that it would help a lot if parents were to indicate 'the department of life for which they would like their children to be prepared'.

Boys coming to Clongowes today are no doubt surprised to find that they are not in First Year, as they would be in any other school, but in Rudiments. Then it goes Grammar, Syntax, Humanities, Poetry and Rhetoric. There is a certain Old World charm about this and perhaps a certain elitism too and it was the same in Meagher's time except that the cycle started with Elements. Scholars who began their Classical studies should finish it five years later at the age of fifteen or sixteen. They then studied Mathematics, Science, Logic, Psychology and Ethics and by the age of eighteen they had finished the full Arts Curriculum.

From 1835 on (Meagher came in 1833), Scientific Studies included Mechanics, Hydrostatics, Electricity and Chemistry. Fr. Kenney read out to the whole school, three times a year, a full academic report, sometimes censuring whole classes, but generally commending the good work done. The hierarchy of subjects is made very clear – 'Geography, History, Writing, Arithmetic are necessary acquirements, yet they are acquirements of which we may say that it is rather a disgrace to be ignorant of them than an honour to know them'! Consigning the study of History to this lowly position may go along way towards explaining what Meagher has to say later on about what he was taught. Fr. Kenney goes on – 'you must remember that though you knew (these subjects) in the most perfect manner, you would still not be a scholar, and you could not be said to be a man of liberal education or of a cultivated mind'. Quite.

Well how then would you become a scholar? 'An individual is not meant to be for himself. He must be a useful and valuable member of society. The heart is formed by virtue, the mind by knowledge and both form the man. In your classics

you will find virtue extolled and vice branded. You will find this in Cicero addressing the Roman people in the Forum. Knowledge gives a taste for noble pursuits: it is knowledge that you are endeavouring to secure'.

So Greek and Latin it was then and at a serious level too. The syllabus proposed for 1818 would do justice to that required for an Honours B.A in more recent times – Demostheres, Homer, Horace, Cicero, Livy, Virgil, Lucan. Poor Maurice O'Connell! – for it was he who had to study this lot. Perhaps the change of laziness usually levelled against him should be commuted to one of exhaustion! Meagher's own curriculum in 1838 went some thing like this. Homer's Iliad, Aeneid V, Cicero's Pro Archia, Livy, Horace, Gospels of Mark, Luke and John, La Fontaine-Fables, Algebra and Euclid. For 1835 and 1837 we may add in Irish History, which seems to give the lie to Meagher's later tirade.

That's the fault I find with Clongowes. They talked to us about Mount Olympus and the Vales of Thessaly; they birched us into a flippant acquaintance with the disreputable gods and goodness of the golden and heroic age; , they entangled us in Euclid, turned our brains with the terrestrial globe; chilled our blood in dizzy excursions through the Milky Way; paralysed our Lilliputian loins with the shaggy spoils of Hercules, bewildered us with the Battle of the Frogs and mice, pitched us precipitately into England, amongst the impetuous Normans and stupid Saxons; gave us a look , through an interminable telescope at what was doing in the New World, but as far as Ireland was concerned, they left us, like blind and crippled children, in the dark. They never spoke of Ireland, never gave us what is left of it, her history to read, never quickened the young bright life they controlled into lofty conceptions and prayers by a reference to the martyrdoms, the wrongs, the soldierships, the statesmanship, the magnificent memories and illuminating hopes of the poor old land. All this was then to me a cloud. Now I look back to it, shake my hand against it and say it was a curse. What true scholars and patriots they might have made, those old Jesuits of Clongowes, had they taken their pupils to the battlefields of William Aylmer's army or to the Geraldine ruins of Maynooth or the grave of Wolfe Tone in Bodenstown churchyard, or to the town of Prosperous where Dr. Esmonde buried the Red Cross under the hot ashes of his insurgent torch, or to the woods and mansions of Rathcoffey where Hamilton Rowan once loved....and where an old man still mumbled and shuffled along the decayed avenue, showing the worn pike at the end of his staff which he had charged with against the North Cork at Maynooth – what true scholars and patriots, Irishmen in nerve and soul, might they have made us had they taken up these sites instead of keeping us within the Parthenon or the forum and shambles of the Tiber....we wandered with them , day after day, miles upon miles over these fields and localities without a

finger to mark them on our memories...Ireland was the last nation we were taught to think of, to respect, to love and remember

This is wonderful stuff and probably sums up in a nut shell why Meagher wanted to learn Irish History and why the Jesuits were reluctant to teach him any! The Jesuits distrusted the cause of nationalism. They had suffered much in nineteenth century Europe at the hands of Nationalists. Their duty was the Christian care of the boys not their political development.

He was more devoted to English and apparently was much taken with a book of Sheil's and O'Connell's speeches. 'The very pleasantest times I had in that old College of Clongowes, I spent with this indigent volume...It contained for me a heap of the rarest emeralds'.

His description of the pleasure grounds – 'whose laurels, once brushed by the velvet and brocade of the great lady, are now swept by the surge of the sons of Ignatius' was a favourite quote among the literary classes. Delivered in the English accent which he had cultivated at Stonyhurst, it might have been an acquired taste! The oratorical style of the day leaned towards the florid and of the florid he was an acknowledged master. The teacher had his card well marked too. 'Each master will receive his scholars near to the door of his schoolroom and will never suffer them to anticipate his arrival. He will watch suspicious characters! The soft and effeminate should be kept from dangerous companions and be constantly employed. The obstinately idle, they who seek private conversations and are engaged in particular friendships are objects of suspicion'. Clearly there were some bad people about and ceaseless vigilance was the order of the day. The class got off to an excellent start with the Lord's prayer and the Hail Mary, the Angelus was said at noon and if it was still felt at this stage that an insufficient amount of divine aid had been invoked, 'a short invocation of the Sacred Heart, though strongly recommended is quite optional'. The advice continues sagely: 'A master can never hope to enjoy the confidence and respect of his class unless they be persuaded that he is eminently qualified to instruct them. Corporal punishment is to be avoided as far as possible and never resorted to until all other means of correction have failed. The teacher himself must never punish. He must never condemn to punishment in a moment of anger. Punishment appearing to proceed from the impulse of passion, wounded pride or vindictiveness serves only to exasperate instead of correcting'. And Shaw said 'never strike a child except in anger', so where does that leave us?

Clongowes is now renowned for its feats on the Rugby field but in Meagher's day, the boy from Rugby School had but recently picked up the ball and run with it. This news, though greeted in England with the sort of panic normally reserved for foreign invasions, had not yet reached Ireland and so there was no Rugby. A letter written in the 1880's by a former pupil who styled himself a very old Clongownian (in fact C.Kiernan.O.C 1820-24) tells us 'our games were marbles, peggtops, hardball, football and cricket such as it was – slabs of stones about 18 inches high being on wickets, one slab for single and two for double and our bats were made of ash by a man in Mainham and cost 10d. each, the silver tenpenny

piece being one of the current coins in Ireland. The shape of the bat was more what we would call a hurley'. Indeed cricket still has a small following and the presence of a cricket pavilion in the grounds would no doubt prompt some to wonder if after all the men of 1916 had died in vain! A proper cricket pitch had first been laid down in 1866, though Clongowes had defeated a Trinity "Sixteen" in an away match in 1861. The Irish Parliamentary Party leader John Redmond, an 'efficient but not a brilliant player' was Hon. Sec. of the Cricket Club in 1872. The renowned Fr. Delaney is said to have given lavish entertainment to visiting teams, prompting one gentleman to note that the boys at Clongowes were better off than those at Eton. The football mentioned is gravel football, a game also played at Stonyhurst. It's rules were apparently quite complex but it seems like an earlier form of soccer, played, not on grass, but on the gravel ground behind the Castle. When Clongowes amalgamated with its sister school, Tullabeg in 1886, soccer and then rugby was introduced. Gravel football was relegated to the short recreation and thus it is described by Joyce in *Portrait of the Artist*. Rugby became the school game after 1886.

Clongowes and Young Ireland

The popular perception of Clongowes, by those who know little of it, is probably that of a slightly West British, rugby playing establishment sitting on the edge of the Pale, where rich men's sons do a stint before returning to their estates in Co. Meath or Kildare, where, in the absence of a suitable Unionist party, they vote Fine Gael. Names like Chief Baron Palles, Sir Gilbert Laithwaite and Lord O'Brien of Kilfenora (Peter the Packer), some of the more distinguished past pupils, do little to dispel the illusion.

The historian Denis Gwynn, another distinguished alumnus, says he was taught nothing of the national tradition. Fifty years earlier, Meagher had the same complaint. 'It is an odd fiction which represents the Irish Jesuits as conspirators against the stability of the English empire in Ireland. With two or three exceptions, they were not O'Connellites even. In that beautiful, grand castle of theirs, they lived and taught, so it seems to me now, rather as hostages and aliens than as freemen and citizens'. Yet he used the phrase 'the dear old College' and claimed that he could not bear to say anything against the place. A school that could produce such affectionate memories may not have been as unsympathetic to Irish patriotism as its critics make out and whereas Meagher's revolutionary ideas may not have been formed by the Jesuits. I have no doubt that the school, then as now, encouraged people to do their own thinking.

Meagher didn't start his political career by supporting revolution. In fact he supported O'Connell and it was only when he, like other Young Irelanders, grew weary of O'Connell's continuing distrust of force, that he began to pursue a path that would take him long way further than O'Connell would ever have gone. His "Sword" speech articulated the principle of his life, to match words and action. The madness of leading into armed conflict a nation that had lost two million of its people in the greatest disaster that befell nineteenth century Europe did not

apparently occur to him. To resort to armed rebellion is one thing, to attempt to disrupt the status quo by more peaceful means is another, and many of Meagher's contemporaries were prepared to stand up and be counted. The ludicrously styled *The O'Gorman Mahon*; actually plain James Mahon from Ennis, had been instrumental in getting O'Connell elected in Clare though of course as a Catholic he couldn't yet take his seat.

When Thomas Davis launched the *Nation*, John O'Connell, the *Liberator's* younger son and Meagher's contemporary gave the newspaper his blessing.

Another contributor to the *Nation* was Thomas McNevin (Clongowes 1825-28) and his brilliant style and sardonic wit were a constant delight to its editors.

He grew weary of O'Connell's bombastic methods and wrote a bitter pamphlet *Young Ireland*, in which he contrasted their own austere and intellectual programme with the irresponsible demagoguery of the O'Connellites.

Thus Clongownians no doubt reflecting the views of their parents and their school had become identified with O'Connell's Repeal and Catholic agitation but the younger amongst them were becoming increasingly restless under the continuing leadership of the older men. McNevin and the *Nation* group were more vociferous and P.J Smyth, his friend and great rival in the Clongowes Debating Society, were to play an even more active role in what followed.

Meagher's subsequent career has been well recorded elsewhere but his sojourn in Clongowes came to a somewhat ignominious end. Denis McVeagh, a contemporary of Meagher's writing as late as 1900, tells the story;

Higher line (i.e., Rhetoric, Poetry and First Grammar) went on long walks on play days, and it was on one of those walks to "Carton," under the charge of Father Callan, that the so-called "Gallant Seven," headed by Tom Meagher, pulled across the Liffey in a boat, and ran off to Dublin. It caused a great sensation. We were all instantly hurried back to the College, and a pursuit party, headed by Father John MacDonnell, started off, and found them in the height of enjoyment after dinner at an inn in Barrack Street, from which the "Clane cars" always started from the College.

The origin of the rebellion I well remember. It was on Michaelmas Day, when a roast goose was supplied to each table. The goose offered to the "Rhetoricians" happened to be a very lean one, and Tom Meagher (who was Imperator) had to carve it. He complained to Father Kelly that we could not get a piece off the bird, so demanded another, or a fatter one. Father Kelly demurred, and requested Tom to cut it, and see how far it would go, but he refused, and they all put down their knives and forks and sulked, eating no dinner! Well, I was the Lector on that day, so had my dinner after all the other boys had gone out to the playground. Father Kelly still stood at the top of the Refectory, when, in about ten minutes after going out, more than half the panes of glass in the great window were smashed in by stones. All

the "Rhetoricians" were sent to the tower, and an inquiry was held. As no one would peach they got solitary confinement for a week, as well as I can remember. Then the first excursion they were allowed was that to "Carton", where the events related above occurred. After the rebels were brought back, four, I think, were expelled, Tom Meagher was transferred to Stonyhurst through the interest of his uncle, Father Meagher, and two were allowed to remain.

A perceptive Headmaster would no doubt have written 'will make good revolutionary' on his Summer report.

Clongowes today is a thriving boarding school of some 450 pupils. The school motto *aeterna non caduca* (seek what lasts, not what passes away) has no doubt, been an inspiration to it.

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The interior of St Peter's Church, Stonyhurst.

By kind permission of Stonyhurst College.

Thomas Francis Meagher: His Stonyhurst years

By David Knight

In the Stonyhurst College archives, he is referred to by his full name: *Thomas Francis Constanting Meagher*. He entered this Jesuit College, at the age of sixteen, on 17 October 1839 and he was to stay for almost four years, finally leaving on 17 August 1843, around the time of his twentieth birthday. It was by no means his first experience of a Jesuit school for he had spent the previous six years at Clongowes Wood in County Kildare, having been sent there – as reported in *The Great Shame* by Thomas Keneally – to acquire 'the attainments and tastes of a nineteenth-century Catholic gentleman'. What he actually acquired was an extraordinarily powerful sense of Irish nationalism and a profound lack of respect for any kind of authority if it failed to correspond with his own expectations and beliefs. Unfortunately, the failure of the Jesuits at Clongowes to encourage any enthusiasm for Irish history or nationalistic sentiment resulted in their being regarded by the young Thomas Meagher as primarily 'English', thereby eclipsing much of the respect they would otherwise have gained for their Catholicism. He also acquired musical skills, becoming proficient on the clarinet, and he became the secretary and founder member of the Debating Society. All of these characteristics were to resurface again at Stonyhurst.

Stonyhurst College, as such, dates back only to 1794. It is a direct descendant, however, of the English College founded in 1593 when Fr Robert Persons SJ established a Catholic College at St Omer, then in the Spanish Netherlands, to provide a Catholic education for English boys at a time when the penal laws prohibited a Catholic education in their own country. In spite of numerous setbacks it remained on continental soil, at St Omer and, later and more briefly, at Bruges and then Liege before being forced to flee to England ahead of the advancing Napoleonic forces. The old mansion of Stonyhurst, together with part of the accompanying estate, was offered to the Jesuits as a refuge and (as it was thought at the time) a *temporary* home by its owner Thomas Weld, a former pupil at both St Omers (the name by which the English College at St Omer is generally known) and Bruges. This has nothing directly to do with Thomas Meagher, of course, but it is necessary to know something of the school's origins and traditions to be able to appreciate the circumstances in which he was to be educated during his four years as a pupil. Above all, Stonyhurst is a Jesuit school with long-established Jesuit traditions and there has always been tangible evidence of its continental origins. For example, the word *place*, although pronounced the English way, was applied to various rooms or areas within the school. Few have now survived, but formerly we had 'the washing place', 'the study place', 'the shoe place'... and so on. There was also the 'common place' (the school lavatories), although in the 1840s this was



The West Front of Stonyhurst College after 1843.

By kind permission of Stonyhurst College.

referred to as 'the necessary'. In the mid-nineteenth century, the games played, too, were unique to Stonyhurst, being survivals from earlier, continental times. Stonyhurst cricket, for example, had quite a close affinity with the game played in Elizabethan England, having been semi-fossilised in a school cut off from the cricketing developments taking place in its homeland.

The buildings, too, were a curious assemblage. The generations of the family who built the original mansion – by coincidence, its building was begun at precisely the same time as the English College was being established at St Omer – were progressively punished and cripplingly fined for their staunch Catholicism and their refusal to attend services of the Church of England. This resulted in a half-completed, although impressive, structure (Oliver Cromwell declared it the finest 'half-house' he had ever seen when he spent the night inside it on his way to defeating the Royalist army at the battle of Preston in 1648) and a motley assortment of mostly earlier buildings, many of which would have been demolished had the new house been completed. All of these buildings had languished, unoccupied, for forty years prior to the school's arrival, with consequent serious deterioration which needed to be swiftly addressed to make them habitable.

Although various embellishments – notably twin cupolas on top of the gatehouse, surmounted by stone eagles – had been added, the West Front of the original house was still in its unfinished state when Thomas Meagher arrived at Stonyhurst. A hastily-erected structure of monumental architectural inappropriateness had been put up in 1800 but it was demolished soon after his arrival, as its presence only added to the lop-sided appearance of the building. It belonged to a third group of buildings: those added after 1794. These tended to be hastily planned and erected, merely utilitarian and lacking in aesthetic value, partly because it was thought that they would be needed only for a limited period and also because of limited funds. The Society of Jesus, which had been suppressed throughout much of Europe since 1775, was finally restored in England in 1828, shortly before the Emancipation Act of the following year. From this time, new buildings at Stonyhurst were designed and constructed to a much higher standard. The first to be completed, in 1835, was St Peter's Church, which was available to both parish and school. During Meagher's time at Stonyhurst, a new Infirmary was built, linked to the main building by a covered corridor and work also commenced on the main (West) front, after the demolition of the hideously inappropriate structure of 1800. Its completion corrected the asymmetry that had prompted Cromwell's remark. But, except when they were sick, neither of these extensions would have impinged on the daily life of the boys, who spent almost all of their time in the plain, uninspiring buildings from the early eighteen-hundreds. The one exception was when they took their meals, in what had been the Great Hall of the old mansion.

By the standards of the time, the building was quite well lit. It had had gas lighting since 1811 and had been, in fact, the first public building in the country to be lit by gas. Otherwise, comforts were few. Some examples will suffice. The washing 'facilities' for the 200 or so pupils were limited to one small room containing a row of taps above an open trough (there were no individual basins) and just

three roller towels. There was no such thing as house shoes at that time and so a boy lived in one pair of very thick shoes from Sunday morning until bed-time on Wednesday and then a second pair for the next three days.

It has been a well-established Jesuit tradition to divide the school not into discrete houses but into year groups, each occupying a different part of the single building. The year groups were – and still are – referred to as 'playrooms', as each year group was allotted its own recreation room. In the 1840s these were extremely basic. The floors were stone-flagged. Warmth (it can scarcely be described as 'heat') was provided by a coal fire in a single small grate, and furnishing was limited to a couple of small benches close to the fire and a litter of box-like tables, in which personal belongings could be kept, scattered randomly around the room.

There was no other provision for indoor games, whilst outdoors circumstances were little better. In spite of the size of the estate, there were no playing fields. All games activities were confined to a relatively small area known as 'the playground', which was enclosed by a high wall. The penalty for climbing the wall, or for transgressing bounds anywhere else, was harsh and there was not all that much that one could do if one did escape. The College was (and still is) set in quite remote countryside. There were fruit trees in the gardens, of course, and the temptations of a hastily consumed meal or glass in the local village hostelry a mile away, followed by the risk of a journey back undertaken within full view of the College windows for an uncomfortable distance. Not surprisingly many who were reckless enough to attempt this escapade were caught!

The main implement of punishment was the ferula, quaintly described for us by Percy Fitzgerald (OS 1843-50) - a near-contemporary of Thomas Meagher, who later wrote two books describing his Stonyhurst experiences - as 'a well-seasoned, springy piece of leather, of the thickness of a harness trace'. It was cunningly designed to inflict a great deal of pain without any risk of significant tissue damage. It was always applied to the hands. The maximum sentence for senior boys was eighteen strokes (nine on each hand), whilst for the younger boys the maximum number of strokes was six. For more serious offences the punishment was called 'a discipline'. This was a number of strokes applied to the shoulders using 'the cat', which appears to have been some kind of 'toned-down' version of the infamous cat-o-nine-tails, used in military and naval circles. The ultimate punishment, needless to say, was expulsion. The point of all this is that it gives some idea of what the young Thomas Meagher was at risk of having to face if he flouted authority.

There were rewards, too, of course. These principally took the form of Good Days, which were certain days throughout the year – fourteen in all – when a particular group within the school, such as the Choir or Band, were allowed a day of relaxed discipline and recreation whilst the rest of the school toiled away as usual. Other individuals could be assigned to one or more of these for meritorious service. On a lesser scale, there were also special meals – known as Good Breakfasts, Good Dinners or Good Suppers - for those who performed a useful service, such as altar servers or being in charge of the Green Room. There is no record of Thomas

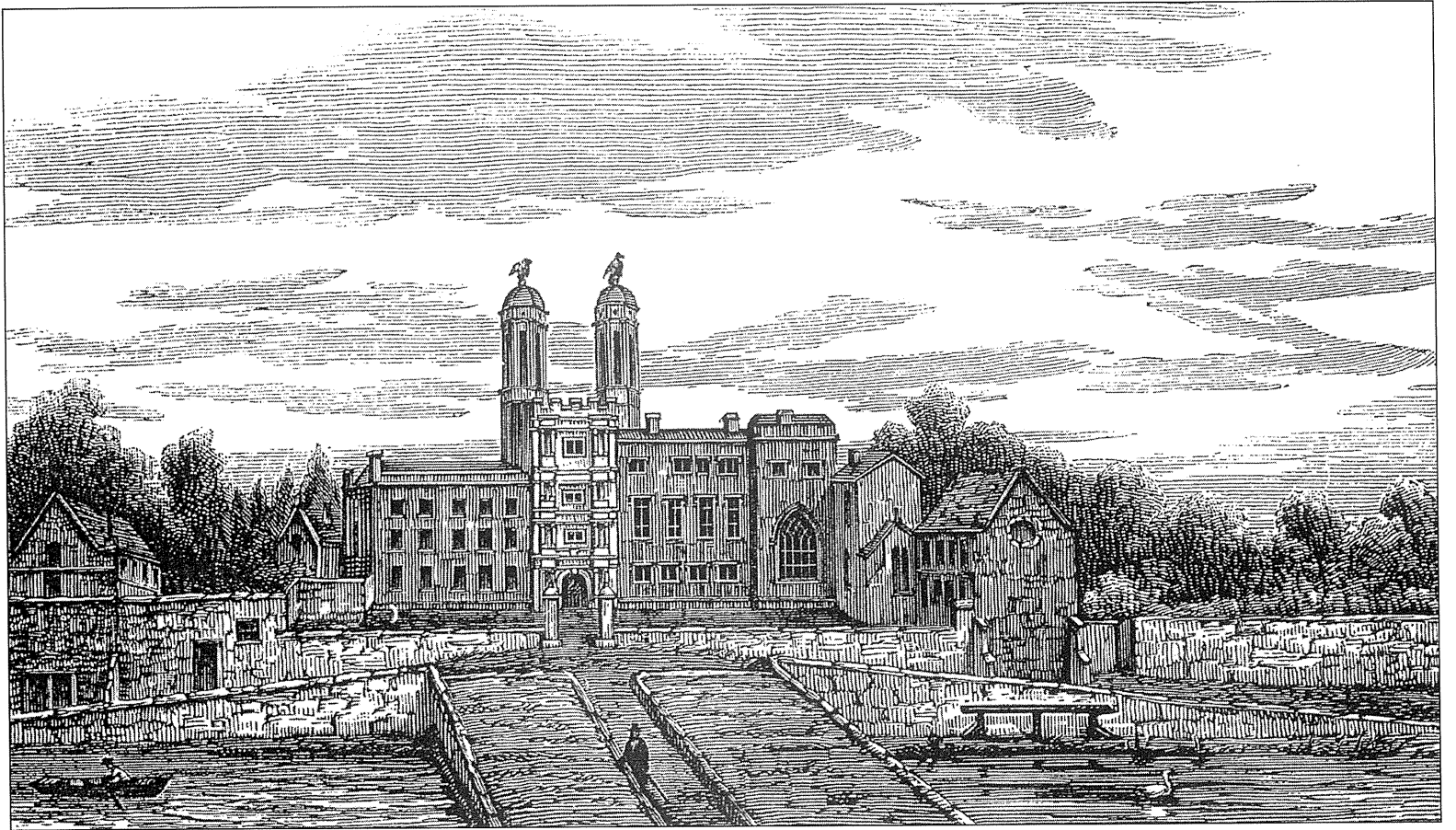
Meagher's punishments or rewards but, as a member of the Band, he would have qualified for at least some of the Good Days, although probably not on every occasion – as we will see.

The school day was long and arduous. The boys were rudely awakened from their beds by a rattle at 5.20 am – summer and winter. They then had to be at the washing place within ten minutes followed by the chapel for morning prayers and Mass at 6.00 am. The day ended with night prayers before being in their beds by 9.00 pm. In between, much of their time was spent in the classroom. The curriculum was predictably weighted towards Latin and Greek but it also included French, English, History, Geography and Mathematics. And, for the senior boys like Thomas Meagher, after 1840 there was also a good deal of Science. As well as the work in the classroom, there were also long sessions in 'the study-place'. This was a sizeable room in which all but the most senior pupils, seated on uncomfortable wooden forms at long wooden desks, were expected to work in silence, supervised by a single Jesuit seated on a rostrum, and for whom the ordeal must have been even greater than it was for the scholars.

Meals were generally conducted in silence, with a boy reading – in Latin – from one of three books kept in the refectory – a work of scripture, a work of history and a Martyrologium. Silence had to be observed, too, when the scholars made their way from place to place in single file, the corridors lined by the Jesuit staff on the look-out for miscreants. All reading matter was carefully vetted and, if judged necessary, dubious pages excised. The weather only added to the privations. In Percy Fitzgerald's words 'the Lancashire winter here seemed extra severe. There was snow and ice and bitter winds that swept down from the Pendle Hills and the neighbouring fells. Most of us suffered from terrible chilblains, which rendered the lads incapable of any action'.

Solace can hardly have been provided by the food. Although there was never any problem with the quantity, the names given by the boys to some of the fare give at least some indication as to how it was perceived. These include 'bug soup', 'salt horse' and 'stewed dog' for some of the savoury dishes, whilst puddings included 'stiff Dick' and 'gas tart'. 'Shouting cake' was a currant cake, so-named because the currants were judged to be so far apart that they were merely in shouting distance of each other. Unfortunately – or perhaps fortunately – few details have survived to facilitate an accurate assessment of the appropriateness of these descriptions!

Disaffection with the food was to lead to organised, although brief, disputes with the authorities in 1844 and again in 1847. In fact, the year 1845, in particular, was one of general unrest and the situation became sufficiently serious for the authorities to embark on a prolonged programme of effective improvements – to the staffing, the buildings, the facilities, the curriculum, the games – which led to the school being transformed over the course of two generations into one of the leading public schools in England. A pupil, like Thomas Meagher, who had experienced the outmoded austerity of the 1840s, would scarcely have been able to recognise the magnificent school of the 1890s.



The West Front of Stonyhurst in the 1830s.

By kind permission of Stonyhurst College.

Although the Stonyhurst of Meagher's day was intolerably repressive and lacking in comforts by modern standards, it should be remembered that life at other English public schools at that time would have been similarly austere and in some cases even worse. It was all part of the Victorian attitude to upbringing, the pupils being trained to cope with privations in later life, perhaps whilst managing the far-flung outposts of the Empire. Although by no means falling within this stereotype, it is likely that Thomas Meagher's Stonyhurst years fitted him well for his own unique combination of future experiences. Percy Fitzgerald, for example, later wrote that the overall effect of the food on one's stomach was to fortify it against all further odds and that he never afterwards suffered from even an instant's indigestion. He also admitted that he looked back on his Stonyhurst schooldays with a fondness amounting almost to longing. He would not have been alone.

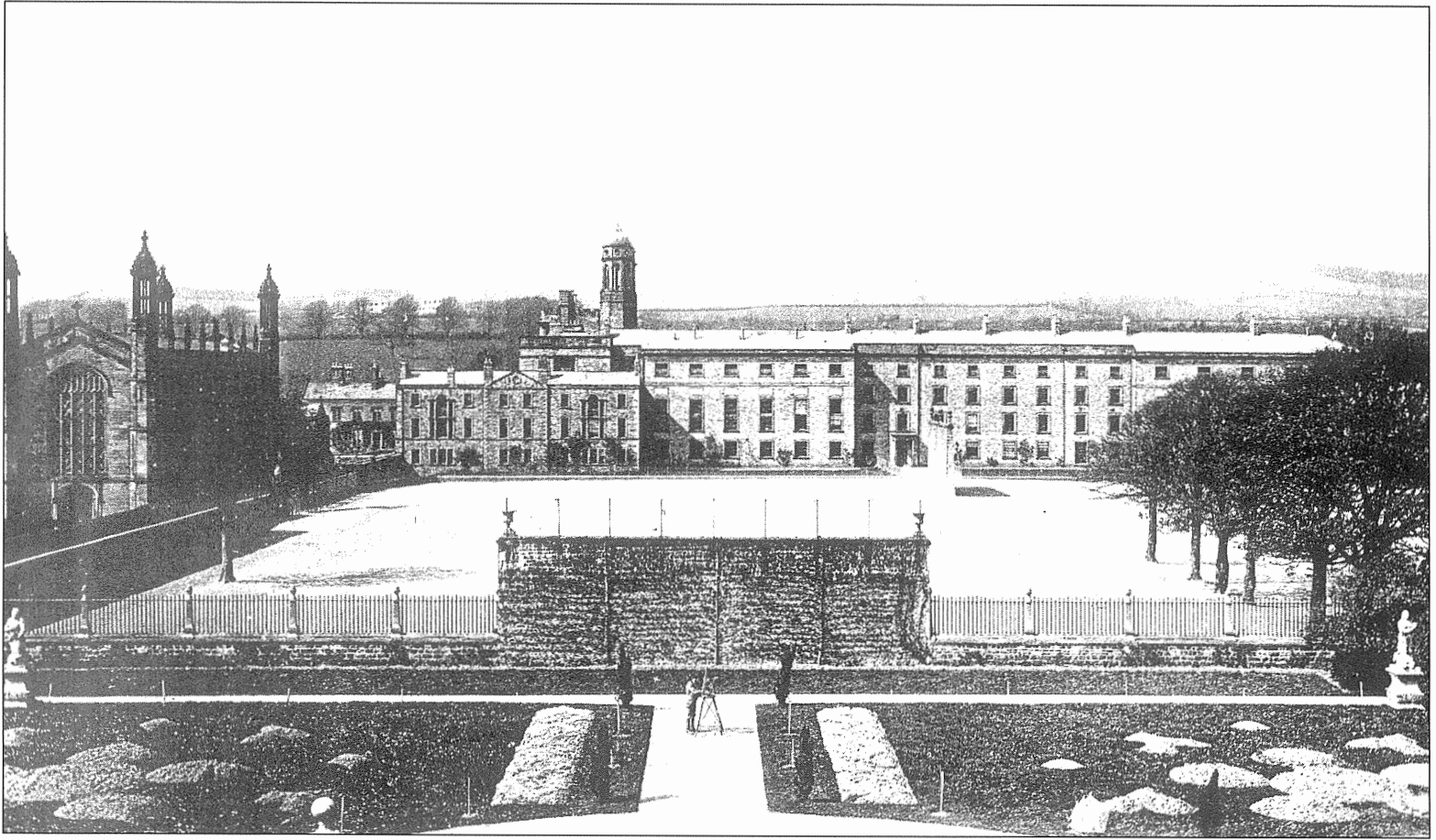
There is evidence that Meagher was happy at Stonyhurst, no doubt encouraged by the prominence given to his three great interests – drama, music and debating. It is unlikely that he applied himself with wholehearted enthusiasm to his studies but he still did well enough to win a silver medal in 1841 for English Composition, for which there were over fifty competitors.

It is of interest that the 'next in merit' for the English Composition prize that year was Frederick Weld, grandson of Thomas Weld, the donor of Stonyhurst. After leaving school he settled in New Zealand and became an enormously successful sheep-farmer, leasing large swathes of land on both islands. In 1864 he became the Prime Minister of New Zealand. Later on, he became Governor of West Australia, followed by Tasmania and finally the Straits Settlements. He was given various honours, culminating in the GCMG. It is curious that both he and Thomas Meagher became linked with Tasmania, but in circumstances that can hardly have been more different! Another of Thomas Meagher's friends at Stonyhurst was Ramon Paez (OS 1840-41), son of the Venezuelan President, who accompanied him on his expedition to Central America in 1857.

In 1841, Meagher was also awarded a 'Prize of Excellence' for his performance at the annual examination of the *Lectures on Religion* course. In the latter, the Propositions selected for the examination were:

- I Jesus Christ has left to his Church the power of forgiving sins – the obligation of confession, however, is necessarily implied in our Saviour's grant.
- II The body and blood of Jesus Christ are really and substantially present in the blessed Eucharist.
- III Jesus Christ is true God: and the plurality of persons must therefore be admitted to exist in the unity of the Godhead.

At the Annual Distribution of Prizes in 1840, and again in 1841, Thomas Meagher was one of a number of boys who delivered a recitation. As the first of these was *Brianus Boru Heros Hiberniae* it is more than likely that he was given a considerable say in the choice of subject matter. It can be imagined that his other recitation would also have been one with which he would have closely identified:



The Old South Front of Stonyhurst.

By kind permission of Stonyhurst College.

Senatoris Americani coram conventu in mercatum servorum oratio. It is likely that his empathy with the oppression of his fellow Irish by the English would have fuelled his sympathy for the victims of the slave trade. Nevertheless, his academic successes and his taking part in official ceremonies indicate that his natural antipathy to authority and to the Jesuit representatives of the English establishment was under control.

In 1894, there was published a splendid volume in celebration of the centenary of Stonyhurst College, entitled the *Centenary Record*. It was written by Rev John Gerard SJ, himself a former pupil of the College from the early 1850s. In the chapter entitled 'Some Stonyhurst Men' a few lines are devoted to Thomas Francis Meagher. Of his schooldays it is reported that he 'had made himself very conspicuous for his pronounced Nationalism, which he paraded on all possible occasions'. In a compilation by John P Bruce of the lectures (together with messages, speeches etc) given by Meagher when he was Acting Governor of Montana, which was published in 1867, is a biographical sketch (by Richard O'Gorman), which gives a graphic description of one of those occasions when Meagher's nationalistic pride was mortally offended:

'A few months after his arrival (at Stonyhurst) he gave the first public exhibition of that detestation of England which marked his career through life. It being the custom at the college to celebrate the anniversary of the battle of Waterloo by music and other recreations, the college band was, as usual, called upon to play. To the astonishment of all, masters and scholars, young Meagher, who was first clarinet player, positively refused to comply. He never would, he said, sound a note of praise for England's victory, and despite entreaties and threats, he adhered to his determination, and eventually compelled the band to disperse without having delivered the music'.

As well as exercising his musical talents – at least when it suited him to do so – he was also a keen and talented actor. And here he now was, in a school where Drama played an extremely prominent part. One reason for this was related to the school's geographical location and isolation. It was not until 1872 that the scholars (the term by which the boys were generally known at the time) went home – or perhaps to a guardian if they came from overseas – at Christmas and Easter. This meant that various recreations and entertainments were laid on at these times by way of compensation. A series of cricket matches – within the school, of course, as it was a long time before outmatches were played, particularly as before 1860 Stonyhurst cricket would have been incomprehensible to any other team – enlivened the Easter break, whilst at Christmas time the principal excitement was undoubtedly the Drama.

We also need to appreciate that, throughout the nineteenth century – and, for that matter, up to 1916 – there was at Stonyhurst a group of pupils who were actually young men of university age. This facility was provided because of the ban on Catholics attending the university of either Oxford or Cambridge. It was really a

legacy of a policy which had been instituted at Liège Academy, the immediate fore-runner of Stonyhurst. These older pupils were called the Philosophers, although degree-level courses in a variety of other subjects were also available. Indeed, not all Philosophers were studying for a degree at all. A sizeable proportion were sent here – or stayed on here after completing their schooling – from well-to-do families, including some from the European royal houses, as a kind of finishing school. The number of Philosophers remained few until 1840 – coinciding with Thomas Meagher's arrival – when Stonyhurst was affiliated to the University of London and was able to grant external degrees. Our Accounts Book shows that by April 1842 Thomas Meagher had become a Philosopher, as his fees had been increased from 50 guineas to 100 guineas per year. At the same time his pocket money – paid separately by his parents but rationed by the school – was increased from twenty-six shillings to two pounds, in each case for a whole six-month period! Other items which were not included in the main fee payment included music and drawing, both of them appearing regularly in Thomas Meagher's accounts record. Another sign of progress dating from this time was the commencement of the penny post in January 1840, which meant that personal communication with home and the outside world took a significant step forwards.

The fair sex was almost entirely barred from the premises, including visits by mothers, sisters or other female relatives. The only exception was a small number of female servants, probably selected for their lack of feminine charms and referred to by the boys as 'the hags'. Quite what the authorities were afraid of is difficult to judge at this distance in time, but this anti-female policy was extended to the Drama, and no plays were allowed which had female characters, as boys were forbidden to appear on stage in female attire. As might be expected, this led at times to situations which seem to us now to be completely absurd. The outstanding educational and cultural merit of Shakespeare had long been recognised, the problem of female characters being solved by re-writing the play whereby they were eliminated. If the female character was important enough to the plot, it was converted to a male one. Thus, in the 1817 production of *Henry IV, Part Two* Mistress Quickly became 'Quickly' and in the *Hamlet* of 1834 Ophelia appeared as Hamlet's brother! During Meagher's time at Stonyhurst two of Shakespeare's plays were performed: *King Lear* in 1840 and *Macbeth* in 1842. In the case of the latter, the part of Lady Macbeth was replaced by that of Donald, Macbeth's son whilst Lady Macduff was simply left out. Lady Macbeth was not to make an appearance on the Stonyhurst stage until 1910, although there was still no Lady Macduff.

Meagher didn't appear in *Macbeth* but he was given a part in *King Lear*. What happened is described for us quite vividly in *The Great Shame*. The English Jesuits apparently detested his Irish brogue: 'The sweetest words', said Meagher, 'uttered with an Irish accent....was more than enough to give hysterics to the reverend William Johnson, Professor of Rhetoric'. (Meagher should really have referred to William Johnson as the *Master* of Rhetoric, the name given to the most senior of

the school years, the term Professor being reserved for the Jesuits who taught the Philosophers). 'When Meagher rehearsed the part of the Earl of Kent in *King Lear*, Reverend Johnson struck him on the back of the head with a manuscript copy of the play: 'That frightful brogue of yours will never do for Shakespeare ... I must degrade you from the Peerage ... You'll have to be a common soldier.' Meagher later commented that 'it wasn't the first time the brogue entailed the forfeiture of title and estate'.

One can imagine that Thomas Francis' brogue may well have been exaggerated rather than assuaged. There is even a suggestion that, by the time he left Stonyhurst, he had acquired at least a trace of a Lancashire accent. It is referred to in *The Great Shame* in connection with the Young Irelanders' '82 Club, founded in 1845, where members apparently differed in their opinions regarding the extent to which they considered Meagher's accent to have been 'marked by Stonyhurst'.

From 1815 it became routine for three plays to be performed each Christmas-tide and gradually it became established that these were a comedy, a tragedy and a farce, each performed on two week-day nights between Christmas Eve and New Year's Day. Sometimes two short farces were performed rather than a single, longer one. In 1841, for the first time, an additional play was performed by the newly-expanded Philosophers, which gave Thomas Meagher a further opportunity to appear on the Stonyhurst stage. As well as his 'walk-on' part in *King Lear*, in the following year he played the part of Sir Edmund Mortimer in a long, five-act play called *The Iron Chest*, which had to be produced at short notice as the first choice of play – one by Byron – had been thought too scandalous and was forbidden by the Rector. He also played the part of one Fielding in the farce *The Irish Attorney*. Both of these were performed at Christmas-tide 1841 and were the Philosophers' plays for that year. This means that Thomas Meagher must already have joined the Philosophers by this time; he would have been one of the youngest at just over eighteen. Their ages ranged from seventeen to twenty-five.

In an anonymous article (actually by Fr Gerard) entitled *A Stonyhurst Christmas In Olden Time*, published in the 1888 edition of *The Stonyhurst Magazine*, it is explained just how important these plays were and what a great impact they had on the lives of the scholars: 'For the rest of the school year they remained a favourite topic of conversation, and favourite bits were remembered and recited by smaller boys according to their respective inclinations towards tragedy or comedy. Catch phrases were likewise culled from the comic scenes and became a sort of proverbs (sic) for the rest of the year. Altogether the Christmas plays to a very great extent leavened Stonyhurst life, and their influence did much to bring up a race of elocutionists.' John Gerard's own experiences were from the early 1850s but doubtless his words could equally be applied to the preceding decade. And what better example of an 'elocutionist' than Thomas Francis Meagher, even if at different times his Irish brogue and his allegedly Lancashire accent are known to have drawn critical fire!

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The 'Sword' Speech in Context

By John M. Hearne

WHEN Thomas Francis Meagher stood up in Conciliation Hall on 28 July 1846 and delivered what became known as the *Sword Speech*, it was a defining moment in nineteenth century Irish politics. It brought to a head and into the open the simmering ideological differences between Daniel O'Connell's Repeal movement and the younger and more aggressive faction within that movement, the Young Irelanders. Ever since the proclaiming of the Clontarf monster meeting in 1843 and O'Connell's meek acquiescence, this embryonic faction, through its mouthpiece the *Nation*, began openly criticising the conservatism of the Repeal Association and by implication, O'Connell. Its leading writer, Thomas Davis, preached a brand of Teutonic romantic nationalism imbued with an undercurrent of revolutionist militarism. While many in the Association were prepared reluctantly to stomach O'Connell's servility as being a necessary prerequisite against suppression, after Clontarf this outlook changed. It now seemed more than ever that pacifism and loyalty were prices being paid for nothing. Ironically, it was O'Connell himself who sealed the identifications of pacific politics with pusillanimity and bellicose with manliness. Indeed, the assertion of such virility had always been a leitmotiv of O'Connell's own agitation. It was therefore no surprise that revulsion against meekness and submission grew, with a corresponding increase in the feeling that political virility needed to be attested.¹

Following the smothering of Repeal agitation by Peel's government, Peel set about introducing a package of reforms to soften O'Connell's political humiliation. Part of these reforms was in the area of Catholic education and it was to lead to the first open conflict between O'Connell and the Young Irelanders. In 1844, a Charitable Bequests Act was passed which sought to safeguard Catholic charities by giving Catholics a greater say in the operation of bequests and donations. Peel also increased the grant to Maynooth seminary which was warmly received by the bishops. However, it was the enactment of the Education Act in 1845 which established universities in Cork, Galway and Belfast and where no religious tests would apply and, where chairs in theology would be left to private benefactors, that was to cause an open rift between the Repeal movement the Catholic Church and the government. This was far short of the bishops' demands for a fully Catholic University. O'Connell denounced the colleges as 'Godless colleges'. But the Young Irelanders and, in particular, Thomas Davis, openly opposed this view. They welcomed the colleges as instruments for bringing Irishmen of all denominations together.² While the debates in the Association on this issue were bitter and left

1 Oliver Macdonagh (1992) *States of Mind. Two centuries of Anglo-Irish conflict* (London: Pimlico) pp. 77-78.

2 Gearoid O Tuathaigh (1991) *Ireland before the Famine* (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan) pp. 193-94.

deep scars, the sudden death of Davis in the September 1845, and his replacement by John Mitchel, witnessed the tone of the *Nation* change towards insurrection.

But Peel's Catholic measures had also caused deep divisions within his own Tory party. In June 1846, Peel's ministry resigned and was replaced by Lord John Russell and the Whigs. O'Connell had been instrumental in Peel's downfall and it became clear that he was again set on a Whig alliance. But as the Whigs had no time for federalism and did not entertain devolutionary notions, this proposed alliance was anathema to the Young Irelanders who believed that Repeal was a great crusade and, as such, was not negotiable. They saw his trucking with the Whigs as sycophantic while O'Connell saw their constant criticism of the Repeal Association and of his own servility to the Crown as endangering the Association's influence in obtaining local relief and also for private jobbery. When Lord John Russell made it clear that the Whigs regarded the Young Irelanders as republican, separatist and revolutionary in inclination, O'Connell saw the Young Irelanders as a threat to the alliance. He determined to force the issue by requiring all members of the Association adopt a direct pledge repudiating physical force in any and all circumstances. He was aware that the Young Irelanders would react negatively to these 'peace resolutions' and might indeed provide ample pretexts for their expulsion from the Association.³ These resolutions came up for determination in Conciliation Hall on 27 July 1846. Daniel O'Connell was not present at this meeting. He sent his son John to represent him and to ensure the implementation of these peace resolutions. The scene was thus set for the historic encounter whereby, in his absence, the movement that O'Connell created would be all but destroyed.⁴

At this meeting John O'Connell insisted that his father's peace resolutions had to be accepted if the Young Irelanders were to remain within the Association. There seems little doubt that he had been instructed by his father to make no concessions whatsoever and thus, during the second day of the meeting, pushed the dispute to extremity by attacking the militaristic tone of the *Nation* and its adherents. In defending the right to free speech and defending attacks from John O'Connell and his supporters on the *Nation* Meagher, in a carefully crafted speech, upheld the right of free speech and of the free expression of opinion.

In the exercise of that right I have differed, sometimes, from the leader of this Association, and would do so again. That right I will not abandon; I will maintain it to the last. In doing so, let me not be told that I seek to undermine the influence of the leader of this Association, and am insensible to his services. My lord, I will uphold his just influence, and I am grateful for his services. This is the first time I have spoken in these terms in this Hall. I did not do so before - I felt it was unnecessary. I hate unnecessary praise: I scorn to receive

3 The peace resolutions as this policy became known was devised by O'Connell's eldest son, John and will be discussed later.

4 Robert Sloan (2000) *William Smith O'Brien and the Young Ireland Rebellion of 1848* (Dublin: Four Courts Press) p. 162.

it - I scorn to bestow it. No, my lord, I am not ungrateful to the man who struck the fetters from my arms, whilst I was yet a child; and by whose influence my father - the first Catholic who did so for two hundred years - sat, for the last two years, in the civic chair of an ancient city. But, my lord, the same god who gave to that great man the power to strike down an odious ascendancy in this country, and enabled him to institute, in this land, the glorious law of religious equality - the same God gave to me a mind that is my own - a mind that has been mortgaged to the opinions of any man or any set of men. My lord, in the exercise of that right, which I have here endeavoured to uphold - a right which this Association should preserve inviolate, if it desires not to become a despotism - in the exercise of that right I have differed from Mr O'Connell on previous occasions, and differ from him now.⁵

Meagher then went on to defend the reputation of the editor of the *Nation*, Charles Gavan Duffy and, of the newspaper itself, stating that

Truth will have its day of triumph, as well as its day of trial; and I do believe that the fearless patriotism which, in those pages, has braved the prejudices of the day, to enunciate new truths will triumph in the end.⁶

This then brought Meagher to what he called the 'question of the day'. This referred to the 'peace resolutions', the declaration by O'Connell that there was no circumstance under which violence could ever be pursued in support of freedom. Meagher gave his reasons for opposing the resolutions and why he voted against the resolutions in committee the previous week. Firstly, he believed that they were unnecessary, 'senseless' and 'wicked' given the present state of the country; and that 'any talk of repealing the Act of Union by force of arms would be to rhapsodise.... and would be a decided failure.' Continuing, he mentioned that the second reason for his dissenting was that to give his assent to the resolutions would mean pledging himself to the unqualified repudiation of physical force in all countries at all times and in every circumstance.

This I could not do; for, my lord, I do not abhor the use of arms in the vindication of national rights. There are times when arms alone will suffice, and when political ameliorations call for a drop of blood, and many thousands drops of blood. Opinion, I admit, will operate against opinion. But, as the honourable member for Kilkenny observed, force must be used against force. The soldier is proof against an argument, but he is not proof against a bullet. The man that will listen to reason, let him be reasoned with; but it is the weaponed arm of the patriot that can alone prevail against battalioned despotism. Then, my lord, I do

5 Arthur Griffith (Ed) (1916) *Meagher of the Sword. The speeches of Thomas Francis Meagher in Ireland 1846 - 1848* (Dublin: M. H. Gill & Son) pp. 32-33.

6 Griffith, *Meagher of the Sword*, p. 34.

not disclaim the use of arms as immoral, nor do I believe it the truth to say, that the God of heaven withhold his sanction from the use of arms. From the in which, in the valley of Bethulia, He nerved the arm of the Jewish girl to smite the drunken tyrant in his tent, down to the hour in which He blessed the insurgent chivalry of the Belgian priests, His Almighty hand hath ever been stretched forth from His throne of light, to consecrate the flag of freedom - to bless the patriot sword. Be it for the defence, or be it for the assertion of a nation's liberty, I look upon the sword as a sacred weapon. And if, my lord, it has sometimes reddened the shroud of the oppressor - like the anointed rod of the high priest, it has, as often, blossomed into flowers to deck the free-man's brow. Abhor the sword? Stigmatise the sword? No, my lord, for at its blow, and in the passes of the Tyrol it cut to pieces the banner of the Bavarian, and through those cragged passes cut a path to fame for the peasant insurrectionist of Innsbruck. Abhor the sword? Stigmatise the sword? No, my lord, for at its blow, and in the quivering of its crimson light a giant nation sprang up from the waters of the Atlantic, and by its redeeming magic the fettered colony became a daring free Republic. Abhor the sword? Stigmatise the sword? No, my lord, for it swept the Dutch marauders out of the fine old towns of Belgium - swept them back to their phlegmatic swamps, and knocked their flag and sceptre, their laws and bayonets, into the sluggish waters of the Scheldt. My lord, I learned that it was the right of a nation to govern itself - not in this Hall, but upon the ramparts of Antwerp. This, is the first article of a nation's creed, I learned upon those ramparts, where freedom was justly estimated, and where the possession of the precious gift was purchased by the effusion of generous blood. My lord, I honour the Belgians, I admire the Belgians, I love the Belgians for their enthusiasm, their courage, their success, and I, for one, will not stigmatise, for I do not abhor, the means by which they obtained a citizen King, a Chamber of Deputies. [Here John O'Connell interposed to prevent Meagher being further heard...].⁷

John O'Connell insisted that Meagher was expressing views entirely in opposition to the principles of the Association. Either Meagher must cease to be a member of the Association or the Association must cease to exist. He would himself withdraw, if the meeting approved such sentiments, but he was there as the official representative of the Liberator. Several of Daniel O'Connell's senior acolytes supported his son's ultimatum, but when William Smith O'Brien defended Meagher (as he had previously done at committee meetings between 9 and 13 July) 'not for his sentiments but for having made an honest avowal of his opinions after he had been invited to express them', the die was cast. Thus O'Brien had come off the

7 Griffith, *Meagher of the Sword*, pp. 35-37.

fence and sided with Young Ireland in a direct contradiction of the Liberator. When Meagher's attempts to resume his interrupted speech were persistently stifled by John O'Connell the Young Irelanders, led by O'Brien, Meagher, John Mitchel, P. J. Smyth and Gavan Duffy walked out of Conciliation for ever.⁸

The peace resolutions which had initiated the acrimony and eventual split in the Repeal Association had been the brainchild of John O'Connell as a means of placating the British prime minister, Lord John Russell, in the wake of his criticisms of the Young Ireland movement. They were introduced by Daniel O'Connell at a meeting of the Association on 13 July, 1846 and were, according to P. J. Smyth, 'intended to imprint a marked line between Young Ireland and Old Ireland'. But from the outset they were opposed by the Young Irelanders, particularly Meagher and Mitchel. Indications that a split was inevitable came with Smith O'Brien's defending of Meagher's criticisms. Moreover, in the two weeks prior to the meeting of 27 July at Conciliation Hall, Dublin to ratify the resolutions, O'Brien and Daniel O'Connell attempted to prevent the inevitable rupture within the Association but were restrained by John O'Connell⁹ who was now accumulating a large power base within the Association with the view of succeeding his terminally ill father. Indeed, in the period between the schism and the forming by the Young Irelanders of the Irish Confederation in January 1847 the O'Connells, accepting the *fait accompli*, became more antagonistic towards the Young Ireland faction believing that they now occupied the moral high ground. And when an attempted reconciliation failed in December 1846 this presumption was copperfastened. However, though O'Connell carried the day and remained till he died secure in mass support, it was a pyrrhic victory. Meagher's instances of armed force overthrowing foreign tyranny and establishing national independence were all familiar and revered cases in Repeal propaganda. Furthermore, as the issue (peace resolutions) had been forced upon the Association it was inevitable that it would eventually polarise in the popular mind, into a choice between cowardice and courage. Thus, for a tactical advantage, O'Connell had sold a good deal of the future. Political virility had been, to a large degree, identified with violence.¹⁰

The *Sword Speech*, it would be fair to conclude, moved the country a step closer to revolution. But revolution was not inevitable. Indeed, while the speech enunciated a moral justification for the use of physical force in pursuit of political independence nonetheless, Meagher's introduction to the speech cautioned against such militarism, deeming it to be impracticable given the prevailing circumstances. The move towards revolutionism had to a large degree been initiated by O'Connell and his glorification of 'historic' violence, a characteristic that adorned the monster meetings. Moreover, it was the subservience and appeasement that characterised the Clontarf climbdown that created the Repeal Association's soft underbelly and made it an easy target for criticism; especially from Thomas Davis and later John

8 Denis Gwynn (1966, O'Donnell Lecture) *Thomas Francis Meagher* (Cork: National University of Ireland) p.14. Also, Sloan, *William Smith O'Brien*, p. 161.

9 Smyth, *Life and Times of Thomas Francis Meagher*, pp. 43 and 52.

10 Macdonagh, *States of Mind*, p. 79.

Mitchel of the *Nation*. But it was the worsening Famine and the inimical response by Lord John Russell's Whig government that was to completely erode O'Connell's credibility and initiate the terminal decline of the Repeal Association. O'Connell's death in May 1847 did not help matters either.

The *Sword Speech* propelled Thomas Francis Meagher into the forefront of nationalist politics and along a career path which even he could hardly have envisaged. A revolution of sorts did occur in 1848 and for his part Meagher was transported to Van Diemen's Land from where, in 1851, he escaped arriving in America in 1852. Although the Young Ireland movement achieved little in practical terms, it did leave a legacy that was to have a profound influence on a later generation of Irish nationalists. And in many respects the *Sword Speech* with its themes of 'blood sacrifice' and morally justifiable violence had a significant influence on latter day revolutionaries Patrick Pearse and Arthur Griffith and thus provided a coherent ideological justification for the violence played out in 1916.



Thomas Francis Meagher (1846).

The Making of an Irish-American – Thomas Francis Meagher in the United States, 1852-1865

Rory Thomas Cornish

ON MAY 27, 1852, a rather short, but handsome man with a strange lispng accent presented himself at the law office of Dillion and O'Gorman, William Street, New York City. Within the hour the city's Irish community was electrified by the news; by 9:00 p.m. that evening seven thousand fellow Irish exiles milled around the neighborhood and companies of the largely Irish 69th New York State Militia paraded in his honour. Reputedly one of Ireland's greatest orators, he declined, due to fatigue, to address the crowd. The previous year Senator Henry Foote of Mississippi had demanded in the United States Senate that this young twenty nine year old political exile, and his other 1848 confederates, be freed from their exile in Van Dieman's Land (Tasmania). The President himself, Millard Fillmore, had urged his Secretary of State, Daniel Webster, to exert pressure upon Great Britain to release its Young Irelanders. This young republican rebel, however, had engineered his own dramatic escape; Thomas Francis Meagher had arrived in the United States.¹ In his famous speech in Constitution Hall Dublin, July 20, 1846, Meagher had not only praised the use of the sword to gain and defend national political freedoms, he had also praised the American Republic:

Abhor the sword-stigmatize the sword?
No my lord, for at its blow, a giant nation
started from the waters of the Atlantic, and
by its crimson light, the crippled colony
sprang into the attitude of a proud Republic—
prosperous, limitless and invincible!²

Having broken his parole, however, Meagher would be exempt from the conditional pardons issued by Lord Palmerston for other Young Irelanders in 1854; Meagher, by force of necessity would remain an exile, becoming a United States citizen in May 1857.

Meagher was not the first of his family to face political exile for in the seventeenth century many O'Meaghers who had supported the unfortunate James II had

1 For Meagher's reception in New York City see, Robert G. Athearn (1949) *Thomas Francis Meagher: An Irish Revolutionary in America* (Boulder: University of Colorado Press) pp. 28-29 and Thomas Keneally (1999) *The Great Shame and the Triumph of the Irish in the English Speaking World* (New York: Doubleday) pp. 241-253.

2 William Jennings Bryan (ed.) (1906) *The World's Famous Orations*, Vol. VI, Ireland (New York: Funk and Wagnall's) p. 215.

been forced to seek their fortunes in the Catholic armies of France and Spain.³ Nonetheless, his immediate family had prospered because of the lucrative provision trade to the many Waterford immigrants in Newfoundland; his father, Thomas Meagher (1796-1874), had been the first Catholic mayor of the city of Waterford, 1842, and was later elected to the British House of Commons, 1847. This scion of a wealthy Waterford family, however, had decided to adopt more radical politics in his youth, took part in the abortive Irish rebellion of 1848, was transported for life, dramatically changed his name to O'Meagher in 1849 and would later extol the bravery of exiled Irish soldiers, including a number of the O'Meaghers, in the English defeat at Fontenoy, May 1745.⁴

While the British authorities remained silent regarding his escape, the Irish nationalist newspaper, the *Nation*, was ecstatic; 'Meagher in America', it boomed, 'what a triumph...we conceive a great career for him under the flag of Washington.' To the republic which had previously opened its doors to the exiles of 1798 and Thomas Addis Emmet, it called for its citizens to honour their new arrival for Meagher would 'fulfill a great destiny there', opening a new chapter in the history of Ireland.⁵ As a symbolic figure in the history of Irish assimilation in the United States and, because of his association with the Union Irish Brigade during the American Civil War, the most traumatic event in the history of the United States, Meagher has attracted more than his fair share of hagiography. Michael Cavanagh, for example, claimed that 'save Lafayette alone, no foreign visitor to this Republic was accorded such a generous, hearty and spontaneous welcome as that given to that of Thomas Francis Meagher on his arrival in New York.'⁶ In a similar vein, William McCarter, an Irish born private in the 116th Pennsylvania Volunteers, thought because of his military skills, courage and bravery Meagher was 'second to none in the army of the Potomac.'⁷ Regarding Meagher's short career in the United States, a number of points need to be made.

First, Meagher was not the only foreign political exile ecstatically welcomed by the citizens of the United States who, proud of their republican principles, flocked to listen to the oratory of their European republican allies. Equally feted had been the 1848 Hungarian rebel recently released from a Turkish jail, Louis Kossuth, who, in the year of Meagher's own arrival, was playing an important role in the

3 For these O'Meagher's see, Joseph Casimer O'Meagher (1890) *Some Historical Notices of the O'Meaghers of Ikerrin* (New York:) pp. 21, 40-44 and 136-37.

4 These included a Major O'Meagher of Dillion's Regiment, Major Patrick O'Meagher of Bulkeley's Regiment and Captain Philip O'Meagher of O'Brien's Regiment; *ibid*, p. 137.

5 Cited in Michael Cavanagh (1892) *Memoirs of Gen. Thomas Meagher* (Worcesters, Massachusetts: Messenger Press) pp. 311-313. On the American careers of these earlier exiles see, David A. Wilson (1998) *United Irishmen, United States Immigrant Radicals in the Early Republic* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press).

6 Cavanagh, *ibid*, p. 309.

7 William McCarter (1996) *My Life in the Irish Brigade. The Civil War Memoirs of William McCarter, 116th Pennsylvania Infantry* (edited by Kevin O'Brien), (Campell, California: Savas Publishing) p. 16.

Whig presidential campaign of 1852.⁸ Meagher's friend and Young Ireland associate John Mitchel would be similarly welcomed in New York City upon his own escape to the United States in 1853; in Mitchel's case the furor lasted for days.⁹ Secondly, Meagher would not be the only Irishman to don the uniform of a Union general; eleven other Irish born figures, including the equally famous Thomas William Sweeny of County Cork and James Shields of County Tyrone, would fight as Union generals during the American Civil War. They would be joined by twelve German born generals, a number of whom were 1848 political exiles, including, perhaps, the most colourful, August Von Willich, a former Prussian officer, turned Marxist, who, on the outbreak of the Civil War, personally recruited fifteen hundred fellow Germans to cause of the Union in a matter of days.¹⁰ Lastly, of course, the welcome extended to such foreign revolutionaries was not without qualification. Not only did their views attract the hostility of the nativism of the Know-Nothing Party, the anti-clerical views of Kossuth, Meagher and Mitchel also attracted criticism from both the Catholic pulpit as well as the Irish-American press.¹¹ Meagher's reputation, in particular, has recently been attacked by Kelly J. O'Grady in his *Clear the Confederate Way! The Irish in the Army of Northern Virginia*.

In defending the dedication of Irish-born Confederate soldiers O'Grady has challenged previous Irish writings on the Civil War. Irish-American nationalists, he has argued, have almost 'exclusively showcased the Union Irish' and their works have amounted to little more than a conscious propaganda campaign to aid Irish assimilation in the post-Civil War years.¹² Not only did the Irish make better Confederates than Federals, but Meagher himself was an inept military leader, a drunken coward who, upon occasions, was mainly interested in his own self promotion. Previous works which have ignored the truth regarding Meagher are, thus, little more 'than emeralds in the crown of Civil War legends', precious 'beads in the rosary of Irish-American dogma.' Meagher's support for the Union betrayed, O'Grady believes, his own 1848 revolutionary roots and his break with Mitchel who, having moved to Tennessee in 1855 and supported the Confederacy was 'one

8 Michael F. Holt (1999) *The Rise and Fall of the American Whig Party. Jacksonian Politics and the Onset of the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press) pp. 692-697.

9 Keneally, *ibid*, pp. 268-270.

10 For brief biographies of all these generals see, Ezra J. Warner (1964) *Generals in Blue. Lives of the Union Commanders* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press). For my account of both the careers of Meagher and Sweeny, as well as the combat record of the Irish Brigade see, David S. Heidler and Jeanne T. Heidler (eds) (2000) *Encyclopedia of the American Civil War. A Political, Social and Military History* (Norton: New York) pp. 1038-1040, 1297-1298 and 1912-1913.

11 Athearn, *ibid*, pp. 34-36; Keneally, *ibid*, pp. 270-272.

12 Kelly J. O'Grady (2000) *Clear the Confederate Way! The Irish in the Army of Northern Virginia* (Mason City, Iowa: Savas Publishing) pp. 118-119.

of the sorrowful mysteries of Irish history.¹³ While 'Grady's largely polemic and inaccurate book itself constitutes a new Irish-Confederate dogma, it does raise some important questions regarding Meagher's career in the United States. Did Meagher's residence in the United States change his political outlook, was his support of the Union a betrayal of his 1848 revolutionary roots? By April 1861, Meagher had become an important figure in the Irish-American community and one of its political leaders in New York City. His name and reputation helped recruit many Irish-born immigrants to the Union and Meagher himself admitted that while he had been a revolutionary in Ireland, he had become a conservative in the United States.¹⁴ If O'Grady's own grasp of Irish history is, in itself shaky, on one specific point regarding Meagher he is totally incorrect. Whether Meagher experienced a change of heart in April 1861, deciding to support the Union against the South, it was not an 'abrupt turn of events', a 'seeming betrayal of a lifetime of resistance against central authority.'¹⁵ Meagher had never opposed central authority, he had, however, opposed arbitrary authority; the establishment of a government which ignored the freedom and rights of the governed.

In 1852, Meagher found an instant constituency in New York City's large Irish population, the Republic's most nationalistic ethnic community. The Democratic Party machine had long manipulated the Irish ethnic block vote and eager to consolidate its recent victory over the Whigs in the presidential election of 1852, its party leaders were quick to entertain such a prominent Irish hero. The President-Elect, Franklin Pierce, invited Meagher to his home in New Hampshire and endorsed Meagher's speaking tour of New England. Pierce personally invited Meagher to his inauguration, March 1853, when Meagher accompanied by James Shields, the Irish hero of the Mexican War and then a Democrat Senator for Illinois, met many prominent national leaders such as Sam Houston and Jefferson Davis, the future President of the Confederate States. In April 1853, Meagher embarked upon his first speaking tour of the South, receiving a warm welcome in both Charleston and New Orleans.¹⁶

Returning to Boston to celebrate his birthday, August 1853, Meagher addressed the sectional differences between North and South, taking the opportunity to evoke the importance of the Union. The Republic, under its 'unviolated and unviolable

13 O'Grady, *ibid*, pp. 118, 43; iv-vii, 74-77, 125-129 and 144-150. To balance O'Grady's attack on previous histories of Meagher and the Irish Brigade it should be noted that not all contemporary or modern accounts were totally uncritical of Meagher. See, for example, McCarter, *ibid*, pp. 15-17, 69-71 and Joseph G. Bilby (1995) *The Irish Brigade in the Civil War. The 69th New York and Other Irish Regiments in the Army of the Potomac* (Pennsylvania: Combined Publishing) pp. 135-143.

14 Meagher's speech at the Boston Music Hall, September 23, 1861. Cited in W. F. Lyons (1870) *Brigadier General Thomas Francis Meagher. His Political and Military Career; with selections from His Speeches and Writings* (New York: D. & J. Sadlier) p. 103. Lyons misdates this speech to June 23, 1863.

15 O'Grady, *ibid*, p. 43.

16 Athearn, *Thomas Francis Meagher*, pp. 36-41; Keneally, *The Great Shame*. pp. 258-260.

flag', supported crucial political freedoms, 'freedom of thought, freedom of speech, (and) freedom of discussion', constitutional rights upheld by its various states.¹⁷ Upon his return to New York City he welcomed the arrival of his fellow 1843 escapee John Mitchel as well as that of his father and his own long suffering wife, Catherine Bennett (1832-1856). Meagher had married Catherine in Tasmania in February 1851, and although there appears to have been no bad blood between father and son, his feelings towards his wife had cooled. Consequently, their visit was short and they soon returned to Waterford when Meagher eagerly accepted an offer from the California Steamship Company for a free trip to visit, via Nicaragua, San Francisco. By 1853, and needing to find a profession, it seemed that he had 'for his own support' decided upon the role of 'lecturer as his avocation'.¹⁸

In his *Memoirs of Gen. Thomas Francis Meagher* Michael Cavanagh was not only incorrect in portraying Meagher as a Fenian, he was also incorrect in suggesting that the 'spoils of office had no attraction for him'.¹⁹ While lecturing certainly proved lucrative, it was not an acceptable career for a self-proclaimed gentleman and Meagher's life in the United States was marked by his search for a position suitable for a man of his class. Constantly concerned about money and status, Meagher was a familiar figure in the antebellum republic; a professional ethnic politician who, while defining and defending the national ethnic identity of his group, was eager to leave the ethnic group himself. As a symbol of Irish nationalism, Meagher hoped to transform his support into a more lasting and suitable station, that of American politician.²⁰ If his second marriage to the socially prominent Elizabeth Townend, November 1855, helped make him a periphery member of upper-class New York society, his own career as an ethnic leader, lawyer, editor and later commander of the Irish Brigade never resulted in his long term plan; to convert his short-term advances into more long-term and substantial benefits. As Meagher gazed out of the windows of his father-in-law's house on Fifth Avenue he may have been aware of his own failure; this, in itself, could explain his violent outbursts of temper and a developing drinking problem commented upon by both contemporaries and historians alike.²¹

The careers of his contemporary exiles, Patrick O'Donoghue, Terence McManus, William Smith O'Brien and even John Mitchel himself well illustrated the transitory nature of a career as an Irish nationalist in the United States. Consequently, while Meagher helped Mitchel establish the Irish nationalist

17 Keneally, *The Great Shame*, p. 259.

18 San Francisco *Daily Herald*, January 24, 1854, cited in Athearn, *Thomas Francis Meagher*, p. 43.

19 Cavanagh, *Memoirs*, p. 367.

20 William L. Burton (1998) *Melting Pot Soldiers. The Union's Ethnic Regiments* (New York: Fordham University Press) pp. 9, 209-10.

21 For Meagher's outburst of temper and his attack on James McMaster, editor of the *Freeman's Journal*, and his battle with Henry Raymond, editor of the New York Times, see, Athearn, *Thomas Francis Meagher*, pp. 57-58, and Keneally, *The Great Shame*, pp. 275, 299. Meagher proved very touchy about the question of breaking his parole in Tasmania and his position as a gentleman.

newspaper, the *Citizen*, he was unwilling to commit any large amount of money to the enterprise. Similarly, while Meagher was willing to entertain the Fenian James Stephens and even escort him to Washington D.C. in 1858 to meet with Fenian sympathizers, in private he quickly distanced himself from the Fenians.²²

As a lecturer Meagher would often deliver public lectures on Irish topics and in 1853 even published his speeches to establish his credentials as a nationalistic leader, *Speeches on the Legislative Independence of Ireland*. However, Meagher was also eager to adopt the posture of an American patriot. In Boston, for example, he suggested that for the first time in her history Ireland had reason to be grateful to a foreign power. The Irish would do well to lean from the United States for in its dynamic growth,

We are reminded by what means a
nation may cease to be poor, and how
it may become great. In the presence of
the American citizens, we are taught that
a nation achieving liberty acquires
the power that enables it to be a benefactor
to the distressed communities of the earth.²³

While hoping that 'the land of Washington and Franklin' would never suffer the 'vicissitudes to which all great nations are subjected' if it did he would be to eager to support 'the Samaritan, rather than be loyal to the Levite.'²⁴ He would follow a similar theme in his speech welcoming John Mitchel in January 1854.

Invoking the grandeur of the American wilderness as a metaphor to illustrate the benefits of American constitutional government Meagher recalled seeing a large sycamore tree whose roots had been exposed by the floodwaters of the Ohio River. While full of life, the exposed roots of the tree 'glistened like bones—whitened, as they were, with water which tumbled through them, and about them, and over them.'²⁵ Like European autocratic governments, the powerful tree would eventually collapse for only a government with strong republican and constitutional roots, firmly supported by the people, could survive. Where there was constitutional law, Meagher suggested, 'there is health and beauty, and great glory, and vast advantages.' Where law was checked, there was decay, bitterness and corruption:

Look to America—look to Austria.
Look to Italy—look to America. Look
at Russia, with her territory, traditions,
fanaticisms, millions. Place her beside America.

22 Burton, *ibid*, pp. 9-12; Keneally, *ibid*, pp. 270-71. On the careers of O'Donoghue, McManus, O'Brien and Mitchell in the United States see, *ibid*, pp. 236-238, 256-260, 268-273 and 307-311.

23 Meagher, 'On American Benevolence – Irish Gratitude' Boston, 1853, in Lyons, *Brigadier General Thomas Francis Meagher*, pp. 228, 225-229.

24 *ibid*, p. 229.

25 Meagher, Speech at the Broadway Theatre, New York, January, 1854, *ibid*, pp. 231, 230-241.

Who will have the temerity to say she stands the competition? And why? Because the vitality of the one is the vitality of freedom.²⁶

In elaborating a theme he would later develop during the 1861 crisis of the Union, Meagher reached his oratorical crescendo;

When a nation is free, the nation is active adventurous, occupied with great projects, competent to achieve greater ends. When a nation is enslaved, she is spiritless, inert and sluggish; is stirred by no proud conception; her strength enervated, she is unequal to an industrious career. The most prosperous days, which nations have enjoyed, have been those in which their freedom was most conspicuous.²⁷

If Meagher would prove to be ambitious, selfish and mercurial in search of a career, and while he had been clearly sympathetic to the South before April 1861, he could not support the destruction of the American Republic by the sword.

Following the death of Catherine in Waterford, May 1854, Meagher, who began to court Elizabeth Townsend, the daughter of the prosperous Peter Townsend, the owner of the New York Sterling Ironworks, began to think about a long-term professional career in the United States. Encouraged by Judge Charles Patrick Daly, a Townsend family friend and Tammany man, Meagher resumed his study of the law. Tutored by Judge Robert Emmet, the son of Thomas Addis Emmet, who had become the Attorney-General of New York, Meagher was called to the New York Bar by special license on September 4, 1855.²⁸ To become a lawyer is one thing, to build a successful practice is, however, another. Proving as restless as ever, Meagher languished in his law office at 20 Anne Street, near New York City Hall, and occasionally, to supplement his income, returned to the lecture circuit. Although not yet a citizen, but a prominent Democrat Party ethnic leader, Meagher in April 1856 decided to create his own newspaper, the *Irish News*, which quickly established a circulation of 50,000. While he may have been sincere in his wish to create a vehicle which would give the Irish in New York City a political voice that would help fight against their continued exclusion, the timing of its creation coincided with the upcoming presidential election of 1856.

26 *ibid*, pp. 238-239.

27 *ibid*, p. 239.

28 Athearn, *Thomas Francis Meagher*, pp. 49-51; Keaneally, *The Great Shame*, pp. 284, 295-296. Judge Robert Emmet was the nephew of the Irish nationalist hero, Robert Emmet, who attempted to revive a continuation of the United Irishmen rebellion in 1803. Hung in Dublin, his elder brother Thomas was exiled and followed a successful career in the United States. Catherine Bennett Meagher died of typhus and their only surviving child, Thomas, who was born in Waterford, would enter West Point and later marrying, settled in San Francisco.

The *Irish News* increased Meagher's political profile and it was both pro-Democrat and noticeably pro-southern. During the election, which for the first time fielded a Republican Party abolitionist candidate, John C. Frémont, Meagher's paper strongly supported James Buchanan, whose father had been born in Donegal. If pro-southern, Meagher never trod the conspiratorial path beaten by John Mitchel who viewed all Know-Nothing supporters, northern reformers, abolitionists and Republicans alike as one large, anti-Irish movement: Meagher was, however, something of a constitutional apologist for slavery.²⁹ Like most Democrats, he was willing to ignore the slavery issue in the interests of national unity. In 1856, he would advise his Irish readership, who were largely anti-Black, to restrain their emotions on the issue;

Just mind your own affairs...and let slavery alone. Slavery, like every other social institution has its dark side; and it would be well, perhaps, if we could get rid of it, but we can't, in our own time, and should therefore continue our own efforts to alleviating the evils that accompany it.³⁰

Buchanan won the election and although he lost New York State, he carried New York City in 1856. Following Buchanan's inauguration Meagher became an American citizen, May 1857, and began to bombard the new president with requests for a diplomatic appointment in either Central or South America. His hope for preferment, however, came to naught for Buchanan, it seemed, thought Meagher's revolutionary background had made him unsuitable for a diplomatic posting.³¹

Eager to prove himself useful to the Democratic Party Meagher in the years before the outbreak of the American Civil War traveled to Central America to promote the need to build a railway to link the eastern seaboard with the Pacific Ocean, defend American filibusters prosecuted under the Neutrality Act of 1818 and attempt to, because of his travels, establish himself a foreign policy expert within the pages of *The Irish News*. In April 1859, he visited Washington D. C. to defend Congressman Daniel Sickles of New York, a friend to both Tammany and the President, who was standing trail for murder. Sickles, a man noted for his own amorous adventures, had, nonetheless, shot his wife's lover in broad daylight. As

29 Keneally, *The Great Shame*, p. 272. Although Meagher is not mentioned in the text, the complex politics of 1856-1857, the American filibuster expeditions and the furor over the Dred Scott Decision are covered excellently in Kenneth M. Stampp (1990) *America in 1857. A Nation on the Brink* (New York: Oxford University Press).

30 *The Irish News*, October 18, 1856; cited in Athearn, *Thomas Francis Meagher*, pp. 55-56.

31 *ibid*, pp 52-54; Keneally, *The Great Shame*, pp. 298-300. Meagher was supported in his search for a posting by an impressive array of supporters such as the historian George Bancroft, Congressman Sickles of New York and Senator Stephen A. Douglas.

part of Sickles' eight-man legal team, Meagher helped gain Sickles an acquittal on the grounds of temporary insanity, the first time such a legal device was successfully used in the United States. Disappointed that the national interest in the Sickles' trial had failed to generate more clients for his neglected law business, Meagher again went on his travels. Undertaking a lecture tour of the South, he later embarked upon a trip to Costa Rica to explore financial opportunities as well as promote the construction of a railway across the isthmus.³² Confident that his friend Senator Stephan A. Douglas would defeat the Republican candidate, Abraham Lincoln, in the election of 1860, Meagher was not in the United States during this impassioned election and did not return to New York City until January, 1861. He returned home to a nation in the grip of a national crisis, a crisis which threatened civil war.

Lincoln's election, due to his public stand on preventing the further expansion of slavery into the Federal western territories, prompted the secession of South Carolina, December 1860. In the new year, 1861, she was followed out of the Union by six other southern states who formed the Confederate States of America. Opposing the continued Federal possession of Fort Sumter in Charleston harbour, Confederate forces under General Pierre Beauregard opened fire on its Federal garrison under Major Robert Anderson, April 12, 1861. This act sparked the outbreak of the American Civil War for on April 15, 1861, President Lincoln called for 75,000 volunteers to suppress the rebellion in the South. The effect upon the Irish in New York City was profound and between April 15 to April 23, 1861, over five hundred Irishmen flocked to the colours of the 69th New York under the Fenian Colonel Michael Corcoran.

Though some were Fenians, the great majority were not, being older, married men who had become American citizens.³³ While Irishmen, both North and South, joined the armies because of the economic downturn brought on by secession itself, in the North many, like Peter Welsh of the 28th Massachusetts, later part of the Irish Brigade, did so to maintain the Union.³⁴ On April 20, 1861, Major Robert Anderson, the commander of the captured Fort Sumter, arrived in New York City to be welcomed by a monster meeting in Union Square. That day the influential weekly newspaper, the *Irish American* proclaimed,

32 Keneally, *ibid.*, pp. 308-311; Athearn, *ibid.*, pp. 59-61, 68-71, 79-84. For Meagher's interest in developing Costa Rica see his 'Holidays in Costa Rica', *Harpers New Monthly Magazine* XX, (December 1859, January 1860, February 1860).

33 Kerby A. Miller (1985) *Emigrants and Exiles: Ireland and the Irish Exodus to North America* (New York: Oxford University Press) p. 359.

34 Lawrence F. Kohl & Margaret C. Richard (eds), (1986) *Irish Green and Union Blue. The Civil War Letters of Peter Walsh*. (New York: Fordham University Press) pp. 1-11. On the Irish response in the North to the crisis and their emotional attachment to the Union see, William L. Burton, *Melting Pot Soldiers*, pp. 52-53, 112-154; Ella Lonn (1951) *Foreigners in the Union Army and Navy* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press) pp. 68-79 and Dean B. Matrin (2002) *The Blessed Place of Freedom. Europeans in Civil War America* (Dulles, Virginia: Brassey's) pp. 21-28.

Irish Americans, we call on you by the
sacred memories of the past, by your
remembrance of the succor extended to
your suffering brethren, by the future
hope of your native land here taking root
and springing towards a vigorous maturity,
to be true to the land of your adoption
in the crisis of her fate.³⁵

By April 22, Meagher had decided to volunteer for Union service. The following day, the day the 69th New York, the militia regiment which had welcome Meagher on May 27, 1852, embarked for Virginia, the *New York Daily Tribune* carried an advertisement calling for a hundred healthy, intelligent Irishmen to join a new company, the Irish Zouaves, later company K, the 69th New York. Privately funded by prominent city supporters, the company would join the regiment in May 1861; its commander, Captain Thomas F. Meagher was about to go to war.³⁶

Colonel Michael Corcoran's regiment had been federalized for ninety-day service. Like most newly minted soldiers, both North and South, Meagher had no idea that the War would be so long and so bloody; nor had he any realistic idea of the horrors that would await him. He was not the only Meagher, of course, who would fight for the Union. In his early work on the O'Meaghers, Joseph Casimer O'Meagher catalogued over three hundred O'Meaghers, Meaghers, Mahers or Marrs who fought for the Union. Some were kinsman to Meagher, such as William O'Meagher of Waterford who became chief surgeon to the Irish Brigade. Some were officers such as the captains Daniel H. Meagher and Daniel Maher, both of who would lose their life in the War, but most were ordinary private soldiers such as Thomas F. Mahar, Thomas A. Meagher and John F. Meagher, of the 28th Massachusetts, who would die of his wounds in Washington D.C.³⁷ These soldiers were drawn to service from regions as far apart as New Hampshire to Minnesota and it is important to note that while Meagher's name aided recruitment to the cause, he did not solely generate the early outpouring of Irish support for the preservation of the Union; Meagher both responded to and reflected it. In his criticism of Meagher's decision Kelly O'Grady, like many apologists for the romantic

35 Cited in Paul Jones (1971) *The Irish Brigade* (London: New English Library) p. 38.

36 Athearn, *Thomas Francis Meagher*, p. 93. Keneally not only misdates the attack on Fort Sumter, he also misdates Meagher's decision to volunteer, *The Great Shame*, pp. 320-321. For Meagher's actions in April, although his account is also questionable, see Michael Cavanagh, *Memoirs of Gen. Thomas Francis Meagher*, pp. 367-374.

37 Joseph C. O'Meagher, *Some Historical Notices of the O'Meaghers*, pp. 157-167. The author also recognizes in his 'American Notes' the southern Meaghers, descendants of James Meagher of Rathcash, Kilkenny. Having emigrated to Newfoundland, relocating to Maine, his sons themselves relocated to Mobile, Alabama, where they operated a sawmill, became Mississippi River steamboat captains, and it seems, indulged in the illegal slave trade, pp. 175-178. The author also notes the Confederate service of William O'Meagher of New Orleans, and Thomas W. Meagher, of Kentucky, who both served as surgeons, p. 182.

'Lost Cause', tend to side-step the questions as to whether the break-up of the American Republic and the preservation of slavery were desirable political or historical objectives. While the Irish in the North did not volunteer to abolish the latter, and would bitterly resent the draft of 1863, they were determined initially to preserve the former.³⁸

At the Battle of Bull Run, the first major engagement of the War, July 1861, the 69th New York Militia fought as well as any other northern unit that day. When caught up in the general route of the Union army, however, the regiment broke up and joined the flight from the battlefield. While attempting to rally his men Colonel Corcoran was captured and Meagher, who had his horse shot from under him, later joined the retreat. Meagher's own account of his actions differs greatly from other contemporary and later historical accounts. Whether he was, as one of his soldiers declared, the bravest man on the continent, or a drunken coward who ran away from advancing Confederates is hard to now assess. Throughout his military career Meagher would often be the target of nativist attacks reflecting the prevalent anti-Catholic, anti-Irish prejudices of his day; prejudices modern historians are themselves, whether subliminal or otherwise, not immune to. When the regiment returned to New York City, July 27, 1861, Meagher was certainly quick in defending the valour of Irish soldiers and published in New York papers and in booklet form *The Last Days of the 69th in Virginia*.³⁹ What is certain, however, is that Meagher retained the esteem of the men in the regiment and while rejecting two offers of a colonelcy in two other Irish regiments, he accepted a commission as a captain in the regular United States Army. Meagher may well have been aware of his own limitations for command or may not have wanted to leave the 69th which, upon its arrival back in New York City had largely re-enlisted for three

38 While the Irish in the North would be less supportive in their support for the Union after the blood lettings of Antietam and Fredericksburg which inflicted heavy casualties on the Irish Brigade, Kelly O'Grady clearly over states his position that the Irish in America made better Confederates than Federals. This is especially true regarding Irish troops from Louisiana. After initial recruitment, many Irish Louisiana troops deserted, took the oath of allegiance to the Union and because of their resentment towards the pre-war Know Nothing administration in New Orleans, actually began to volunteer for Union service after 1862. See the regimental records in Terry L. Jones (2002) *Lee's Tigers. The Louisiana Infantry in the Army of Northern Virginia* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press) pp. 233-254, and G. Howard Hunter, 'The Politics of Resentment: Unionist Regiments and New Orleans Immigrant Community, 1862-1864', *Louisiana History*, Vol. XLIV, 2003, pp. 185-210. The history of the 6th Louisiana, a largely Irish unit which fought well in Confederate service, also suffered from a great deal of desertion and oath taking after the capture of New Orleans; James P. Gannon, *Irish Rebels, Confederate Tigers. A History of the 6th Louisiana Volunteers, 1861-1865* (Mason City, Iowa: Savas Publishing)) pp. 327-392.

39 Joseph G. Bilby, *The Irish Brigade*, pp. 11-17, 137; Paul Jones *The Irish Brigade*, pp. 51-67; William L. Burton, *Melting Pot Soldiers*, pp. 122-123 and William Corby (1992, reprint) *Memoirs of Chaplain Life: Three Years with the Irish Brigade in the Arms of the Potomac* (New York: Fordham University Press) pp.17-19.

years service as the 69th New York Volunteer Infantry. While Meagher would be appointed its colonel, it was clear that, for the immediate future, the regiment would be commanded by Lt. Colonel Robert Nugent as its field officer.⁴⁰

Meagher's role during that August was clearly as a recruiting officer for the projected new Irish Brigade under the possible command of James Shields who had been commissioned a brigadier general that month. The projected brigade would consist of two Irish New York regiments, one commanded by Meagher and the other by Nugent, and an Irish regiment from Philadelphia and one from Boston. While the arrival of Shields was anticipated, Meagher did much to formalize the brigade structure and recruit volunteers.⁴¹ In this role as an Irish national symbol, and by now a veteran officer, Meagher delivered a speech before a vast audience, estimated at 100,000, at the Jones' Wood pleasure grounds on the Upper East Side. He followed this by perhaps his best speech in the United States at the Boston Music Hall, September 23, 1861.

As an Irishman, but an American citizen appearing 'in arms for the National Government', Meagher appealed to his 'countrymen to take up arms in the same righteous cause' not because of their gratitude towards America or to satisfy their 'inverterate and unquenchable hatred for England' which, in supporting the South, hoped for the break up the American Republic, but to support the 'Constitution, which has come down to us unimpaired from the day it was first formed', a constitution which, for the first time, extended rights to Irishman giving them a 'flag under which this country has made such marvelous progress.'⁴² Although a Democrat, he insisted the Lincoln administration had been 'legitimately elected' by the people and while he had voted against Lincoln, once he had took the oath of office under the Constitution Lincoln, as President, deserved support. Lincoln had not begun this war for it had been thrust upon the nation by hot-tempered southerners more interested in sectional advancement than national unity;

Does not South Carolina stand this day
in the presence of all that blood which
is rising up from the fields and woods of
Virginia, from the mountain gorges of
the Alleghenies, from the prairies of
Missouri—does not South Carolina stand
today, as these red mists rise to Heaven,
and feel conscience-smitten that it was she
who commenced this deadly fray?⁴³

40 Athearn, *Thomas Francis Meagher*, pp. 98-102; Joseph G. Bilby, *The Irish Brigade*, pp. 19-22; Michael Cavanagh, *Memoirs of Gen. Thomas Francis Meagher*, pp. 406-425.

41 Athearn, *Thomas Francis Meagher*, pp. 100-101.

42 The text of Meagher's speech is reproduced in Lyons, *Brigadier-General Thomas Francis Meagher*, pp. 91-121. W. F. Lyons, who as a child in Ireland, had been brought to visit Meagher in his cell at Clonmel. Serving as a captain in the Irish Brigade, his book, and especially this speech, was collated because of Meagher's request that his speeches be set down in permanent form; p. 121.

43 *ibid*, p. 97.

In reviewing his own past support for the Democratic Party he attacked the peace Democrats of the North who opposed the War and while admitting his own past support of the South, Meagher was ready to proclaim, that in the present crisis, there were no Democrats, no Republicans; if he himself was killed supporting the Constitution he hoped his grave would recall that Thomas Francis Meagher had 'gave up to party what was meant for mankind.'⁴⁴

In a city which had been renowned for its nativism Meagher proclaimed that 'Know-Nothingism is dead' and that the Irish soldier, taking his place together with the native born American citizen, could now look him 'straight and sternly' in the eye, reminding him 'that he has been equal to him in the allegiance to the Constitution', a constitution which had opened the door to opportunity for the oppressed of the Old World. If he supported the independence of Ireland, he could not, he argued support an independent South and realizing this War would force Irishmen to fight Irishmen, this, he elaborated, was nothing new in either the history of Ireland or even that of the United States;

In '98 brothers met brothers face to face and
foot to foot. In the American Revolution, while
there was one gallant Fitzgerald riding side by
side with Washington, there was another charging
against him, and that was Lord Edward. The thing
to be ascertained is, the right cause. That ascertained,
tand by it; fight for it...⁴⁵

Known for his valour, the Irish soldier had distinguished himself upon many battlefields in the world, but Meagher regretted that so many Irish lives had been lost in establishing the ascendancy of the British empire; it was a cause for which he could not 'hand a laurel to a single Irish soldier.' Calling upon his fellow exiles to 'take sword in hand' and follow General Shields down to the Potomac, he advised those unwilling to rise to the crisis to 'take the next Galway steamer and go home. And I believe this—that he will not only have his expenses paid, but something left in his pocket to enable him to praise England when he gets there.'⁴⁶

General Shields, however, would not be leading the Irish Brigade to the Potomac, this honour would fall to Meagher. His appointment to command has been portrayed as a classic example of ethnic politics in action, his appointment being the result of the Irish 'mafia' in action.⁴⁷ There is no doubt that Meagher who, having raised the 88th New York Infantry, 'Mrs. Meagher's Own', and who had been appointed its colonel, welcomed the command and circumstances between September to October 1861 would lead to his appointment. With Michael

44 *ibid*, p. 99.

45 *ibid*, pp. 102-104, 117.

46 *ibid*, p. 115.

47 William L. Burton, *Melting Pot Soldiers*, pp. 119-120; Joseph M. Herron Jnr. (1968) *Celts, Catholics, and Copperheads: Ireland Views the American Civil War* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press) pp. 18-19.

Corcoran remaining a Confederate prisoner until August 1862, and General Shields declining the command, Meagher, a nationally recognized Irish leader, was the logical choice for command. Indeed, his only competitor for the command, Colonel Robert Nugent of the 69th New York, together with other officers of the Brigade, urged Meagher to accept the command especially when Washington D.C. was considering the appointment of an American-born officer to command the Brigade. While Meagher was no political innocent, when a delegation of Irish Brigade officers went to the Capital to petition the Secretary of War for Meagher's appointment, Lincoln appointed Meagher 'acting' brigadier general, October, 1861, his actual appointment being confirmed by Congress on February 3, 1862.⁴⁸ Lincoln's wish to mobilize Irish support in the North to the cause, and Meagher's friends in Washington D.C., did not, of course, hinder his appointment to brigade command, a new brigade ready to leave for the Virginia front.

Meagher, like many European born officers, showed great partiality for ornate uniforms, though he would tend to wear a simpler blue uniform in action. He also assembled a glittering staff befitting the new commander of the Irish Brigade. Captain John Gosson of Galway had fought in the service of Austria, being commissioned in the Seventh Hussars, a Hungarian regiment commanded by Prince Frederick Lichenstein. Captain John D. Hearn, a native of Waterford, had been one of the founders of the Mitchell Guards and although a Fenian, would later join Meagher in Montana. Dr. Lawrence Reynolds, also born in Waterford, acted as surgeon of the 63rd New York, and was well known for both his poetry and his bravery; he would later be promoted to lieutenant colonel for his distinguished service in the field. Captain James B. Turner also proved to have a literary bent for in the early years of the War he wrote to the Irish-American about the exploits of the Brigade under the pseudonym of 'Gallowglass.' Perhaps the most colourful individual attached to Meagher's staff was a Major Warrington, a distinguished looking former British army officer who was reputedly an illegitimate son of King George IV.⁴⁹

Formally taking command of the Brigade in Virginia on February 11, 1862, Meagher together with General James Shields reviewed the Brigade in a dress parade after which the officers held a banquet in his honour. Addressing his officers, Meagher reviewed the past disasters of Irish history reminding his associates that they did not belong to either a subjugated or obliterated race. If many considered the Brigade as a training ground for soldiers who would take up the cause

48 James Shields, perhaps Ireland's foremost American soldier before the War, had been brevetted major general in the Mexican War and was more interested in the command of a division, to rank as a major general. Although he would be given command of a division, the rank of major general would be denied him, July 1862, which caused a storm in the Irish-American community in the North. On Shields interesting career, see, W. H. Condon (1900) *Life of Major General James Shields, Hero of Three Wars and Senator from Three States* (Chicago). Shields supported, it seems, Meagher's appointment; See Michael Cavanagh, *Memoirs of Gen. Thomas Francis Meagher*, pp. 428-43.

49 Michael Cavanagh, *Memoirs of Gen. Thomas Francis Meagher*, appendix, pp. 15-21.

later of an independent Ireland, he reminded his officers that during the present crisis of the Union all personal considerations should be subordinated to the cause of the American Republic, that the Brigade's bayonets must help 'clear the way for the returning authority of the American Republic.'⁵⁰ He hoped that the former splendid reputation of Irish exiled soldiers would continue to blossom in the New World. It had been, he exclaimed, 'renewed and replenished in the struggles that gave birth to the republics which disenthralled the Andes from the yoke of Spain' and been given rebirth in the valour of Irish soldiers under General James Shields during the Mexican War. It was his hope that this reputation would be further 'perpetuated by the Irish Brigade, fighting for the honour and integrity, the authority of the American Republic.'⁵¹ This sacred duty must be undertaken, he ordered, while ignoring the opinions of newspapers, politicians and the possible annihilation of those involved' until the Stars and Strips float over every inch of their legal domain.' While he hoped to survive to later again take up the cause of Ireland, he reminded all involved of their oath in undertaking military service for this republic, and to 'stand fast, push on or dash ahead as the orders of the General-in-Chief commands us.' If ordered to plunge ourselves 'into the thicket of the most desperate fight, it will be my rapturous happiness to lead the Irish Brigade' he assured his officers, and if killed Meagher would be proud that it was in the service 'for the honour and integrity of the Irish exiles' happiest, proudest, and most prosperous home', the United States of America.⁵² Meagher would not be the most competent general in the American Civil War, nor even the best Irish born general produced by the conflict, yet he was, perhaps, the most eloquent orator who defined the importance of the struggle, a service William O'Grady, a former lieutenant in the British Royal Marines who rose to be a captain in the 88th New York, thought worth thousands of recruits to the Union.⁵³

Meagher's appointment to command the Irish Brigade was clearly the highpoint of his career in the United States. If he hoped that his military service would later result in political advancement, it was a path already trod by Andrew Jackson, Zachery Taylor, Franklin Pierce, James Shields an even Jefferson Davis; following the Civil War, officers, both North and South, would attempt to politically capitalize upon their previous service. From its baptism of fire at Fair Oaks, June 1, 1862, Meagher would lead the Brigade through the Seven Days, where it distinguished itself at Gaines Mill, June 1862, and Malvern Hill, July 1862, through to the most bloody days of the War, Antietam, September 17, 1862, and the futile Union attack on Marye's Heights, Fredericksburg, December 13, 1863, where the Brigade, faced with the carnage of previous failed Union assaults, went into battle shouting the old Irish cheer, *Faugh-a-Bellagh* (Clear the Way). Because of its willingness to fight, the Brigade earned a reputation as one of the Army of the Potomac's finest

50 *ibid*, pp. 432-439. Cavanagh's work prints the whole text of Meagher's address.

51 *ibid*, p. 436.

52 *ibid*, p. 439.

53 William L. D. O'Grady, *New York Herald*, February 10, 1917, cited in Joseph G. Bilby, *The Irish Brigade*, p. 137.

combat units, a reputation which came at an appalling cost; of the nearly eight thousand soldiers, who served in its ranks, by the end of the War in 1865, approximately four thousand had been either killed or mortally wounded.⁵⁴ While many of the Brigade's surviving veterans were proud of their service, publishing numerous memoirs, recent historians have suggested that its high causality rates were due to either Meagher's incompetence or his willingness to sacrifice his men to further his own political career.⁵⁵ While this present work is not intended to review Meagher's career with the Irish Brigade, but his career in the United States as a whole, a few points ought to be made here regarding his military service.

Meagher resigned from command of the Brigade in May 1863, but reinforced and finally consolidated under the command of Thomas A. Smyth, of County Cork, Richard Brynes, of Cavan, and finally, Robert Nugent himself, it experienced equally awful causality rates at Spotsylvania, May 1864, and Cold Harbor, June 1864. While these later commanders served under General U. S. Grant, Meagher served under army commanders clearly unequal to the tactical abilities of their opponent, Confederate General Robert E. Lee, a commander, it should nonetheless be remembered, who was willing to sacrifice his own troops to achieve in the elusive quest for a Confederate victory.⁵⁶ As a unit willing to fight, the Irish Brigade was often thrown into the vortex of battle at critical times; not only was the Brigade in the wrong place at the wrong time, Meagher, while its commander, had to follow the battle orders of his superior officers.⁵⁷

Meagher was, of course, a 'political general', one of many appointed both in the North and South. Lacking formal military training, Meagher never achieved the competence of follow Northern Democrat John A. Logan, whose father had immigrated from Donegal, or a moment of brilliance achieved by the Clones born Confederate general, Joseph Finegan. If willing to initially lead his command into hopeless situations, never requiring 'his command to go where he would not go himself', Meagher at least had the sense, being no tactician himself, to allow his more experienced regimental commanders to manage the Brigade in action.⁵⁸ Private William McCarter, if critical of his own commander, nonetheless thought him 'a shining light' amongst Union generals for his 'unceasing efforts to have his

54 William F. Fox (1898) *Regimental Losses in the American Civil War* (Albany: Albany Publishing Company) pp. 118-119.

55 Apart from all ready cited contemporary works also see; David P. Conyngham (1886) *The Irish Brigade and its Campaigns* (New York: William McSorely and Co.) and St. Clair A. Mulholland (1903) *The Story of the 116th Pennsylvania Volunteers* (Philadelphia: F. McManus & Jr. Co.): Conyngham had been a captain in the Brigade and Mulholland a lt. colonel. For recent criticisms of Meagher see, Kelly O'Grady, *Clear the Confederate Way*, pp. 125-129; William L. Burton, *Melting Pot Soldiers*, pp. 119-125 and Dean B. Martin *The Blessed Place of Freedom*, p. 236.

56 Alan T. Nolan (1991) *Lee Considered. General Robert E. Lee and Civil War History* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press) pp. 91-106.

57 Bilby, *The Irish Brigade*, p. 137; William Corby, *Memoirs of Chaplain Life*, pp. 131-132.

58 Bilby, *ibid*, 137.

soldiers as well provided for and made comfortable.⁵⁹ Upon his resignation Meagher remained popular amongst the Brigade which regretted his resignation. Meagher's later visits to the Brigade were always occasions for celebration and if he was bitterly disappointed at not being allowed to lead his old brigade down Pennsylvania Avenue in the Grand Review of the Army of the Potomac, May 22, 1865, he had the honour of addressing the veterans of the New York regiments when mustered out of service, July 4, 1865.⁶⁰

At the Battle of Chancellorsville, May 1863, another Union defeat, Meagher creditably commanded his undersize brigade covering General Hooker's retreat and the 88th New York was one of the last Union regiments to leave the field. The battle of Antietam, however, had left Meagher very shaken and the night before the Irish Brigade's hopeless attack on Marye's Heights at Fredericksburg, an assault vigorously opposed by Meagher's divisional commander General Winfield S. Hancock, Meagher clearly showed signs of stress and fatigue. After receiving his orders from the army commander, General Ambrose Burnside, Private William McCarter, Meagher's orderly, witnessed Meagher hopelessly drunk, recalling a scene both touching and sad. For McCarter, both a Protestant and temperate soldier, it was a memorable experience but, he added, to Meagher's 'honor and credit, I never saw General Meagher intoxicated again.'⁶¹ Following Fredericksburg, Meagher returned home for Christmas and his wife Elizabeth noticed his depressed, shaken condition. After Antietam he had requested his brigade be taken out of line and sent home to recruit, a request denied by General McClellan. After Chancellorsville he made the same request, which was again denied, to General Hooker. His petitions to Washington D.C. annoyed the War Department and Meagher, who had made enemies in the army by his constant political speeches, had made many enemies. The official refusal to allow the Brigade a furlough, a courtesy granted to other veteran units, not only rankled Meagher, but also the Irish community in the North. With unmilitary frankness Meagher noted that 'the depression caused by the ungenerous and inconsiderate treatment of a gallant remnant of a brigade which had never once failed to do its duty most liberally and heroically' by the government made him unfit for command and on May 8, 1863, Meagher resigned his command of the Irish Brigade. Following a touching

59 McCarter (ed. O'Brien) *My Life in the Irish Brigade*, p. 16.

60 Corby, *Memoirs of a Chaplain*, pp. 383-85; Cavanagh, *Memoirs*, pp. 485-487; Appendix, pp. 28-32; Jones, *The Irish Brigade*, pp. 130-133; W. F. Lyons, *Brigadier General Thomas Francis Meagher*, pp. 180-185.

61 McCarter (ed. O'Brien) *My Life in the Irish Brigade*, pp. 69-71. Much has been said of Meagher's drinking, but as Joseph Bilby has noted, this was a feature of army life and that unlike American born officers, Meagher and his own Irish officers, made no effort to hide their drinking habits; *The Irish Brigade*, pp. 137-38. D. P. Conyngham in his accounts of the Brigade notes its drinking but claims he never saw Meagher himself intoxicated; *The Irish Brigade*; pp. 231-238. Likewise, William Corby, while noting Meagher's drinking, noted Meagher did not drink to excess; *Memoirs of Chaplain Life*, pp. 28-30.

ceremony in which Meagher personally shook the hand of every soldier in the Brigade, he returned to New York City, May 29, 1863.⁶²

The contemporary biographies by his associates, Michael Cavanagh and W. F. Lyons, say little about Meagher's post May 1863 career apart from attempting, in Cavanagh's case, to portray Meagher as a fallen Fenian hero; Lyons, on the other hand, tried to put a positive spin of Meagher's mysterious death, July 1, 1867.⁶³ In retrospect this is not surprising for in the eight months prior to Meagher's reappointment to active command, December 1863, he had been left on the shelf, ignored by the administration in Washington D.C. His return to active command was hardly successful, an anti-climax for the old commander of the Irish Brigade. Furthermore, his continued support for the Union cause placed him at odds with the Irish community which increasingly disillusioned with the War and its aims, became critical of the Lincoln administration. Meagher himself would be also increasingly considered by professional Union officers in a war which was rapidly turning into the first modern way of attrition, as something of a dinosaur; not only an amateur political general, but one rapidly losing his support amongst his own Democratic Party supporters.

His skills as orator and a recruiter for their cause was not now as important as it was in the opening days of the War. While his old divisional commander, General Hancock, would have welcomed Meagher's reappointment, the two rising military stars, General William Sherman and General U. S. Grant, held Meagher in low esteem.⁶⁴ Detached from command of the Irish Brigade Meagher's post-May 1863 career mirrored the frustrating years, 1856 to 1861, and he once again found himself as something of a marginal political figure in search of a position befitting his station. The tragedy of his career in the United States was his inability to find his true niche in his adopted republic, a society whose dynamic growth so reflected Meagher's own personal aspirations.

On June 9, 1863, General Lee began his second invasion of the North and Meagher responded to the panic this excited by writing to President Lincoln to raise another Irish brigade of 3,000 men. When Lincoln proved lukewarm to raising another such command Meagher, backed up by letters from powerful northern political friends visited Washington D.C. to personally lobby for a new command. What ever slim chances Meagher had for such a command were ruined by the outbreak of the New York City Draft Riots, July 13, 1863.

The Democrat Party in the North which opposed Lincoln's war aims, especially emancipation, was seen by the administration as the engine which had fanned the

62 On Meagher's frame of mind see Keneally, *The Great Shame*. pp. 378-379. The text of Meagher's petition to the War Department for a furlough for the Brigade, February 19th, 1863, and the text of his resignation are printed in Cavanagh, *Memoirs*, Appendix, pp. 22-26, 26-27. For Meagher's unpopularity due to his politics see John F. McCormack, 'Never Were Men So Brave,' *Civil War Times*, December 1998.

63 Cavanagh, *Memoirs*, pp. 361-362; Appendix, pp. 1-2, 11-13. Lyons, *Brigadier General Thomas Francis Meagher*, pp. 351-357.

64 Keneally, *The Great Shame*, pp. 393-396.

flames of this serious disorder, a public outbreak of violence in which the New York City Irish played a prominent part.⁶⁵ Meagher increased his distance from his once important constituency by, upon his return to New York, denouncing Peace Democrats, Copperheads and, in particular, their leader Clement Vallandigham. His increasing association with Lincoln brought Meagher criticism in the Irish America. In September 1863, Meagher also began to write directly to Irish newspapers in Dublin to support the cause of the Union, letters which were later reprinted and circulated in the United States in *Loyalty Tract No. 38*.⁶⁶

Perhaps to deflect his growing unpopularity among Irish circles in the North, Meagher briefly flirted with Fenianism but, as usual, did not commit himself, refusing to attend the Fenian convention that November in Chicago. Instead, Meagher, the Union general, visited Michael Corcoran and his Irish Legion which, since November 1862, had largely performed garrison duties around the Washington D. C. defenses. Since his capture at Bull Run, July 1861, Corcoran had been a highly prominent Confederate prisoner. Upon his exchange in August 1862, Corcoran was commissioned a brigadier general, visited the White House, allowed to raise four New York regiments and, no mean public speaker himself, had become another symbol of Irish support for the Union.

Corcoran, however, was a Fenian and as a member of its national council had instilled such sympathies in his command. Meagher's visit was convivial but on December 22, 1863, it ended in tragedy when Corcoran was killed in an accident. When returning from Washington D.C., where he had gone to accompany Meagher to catch his train, he fell from, of all things, Meagher's own horse. The next day, possibly because he was seen as substitute for the dead Corcoran, Meagher was recalled to active duty, December 23, 1863. What hopes Meagher may have entertained about replacing Corcoran as commander of his Irish Legion, they came to naught for the *Irish American* attacked his funeral oration for Corcoran given at the Cooper Institute in the City as being too pro-Lincoln. As the only prominent Irish-American leader to support the re-election of Lincoln in 1864, Meagher would continue to attract the hostility of his once supportive Irish and Democrat Party friends.⁶⁷ His speeches continued to glorify the Union and in San Francisco he would defend his decision to fight for the Union. His career, he reminded his audience, had been

65 *ibid*, *The Great Shame*, pp. 385-387; James M. McPherson (1998) *Battle Cry of Freedom* (Oxford: Oxford University Press) 595-611. Although the Irish were certainly prominent in these riots, especially in the attacks upon free African-Americans, Iver Bernstein has portrayed the riots in a much wider context than just an Irish-American anti-establishment outburst of violence; (1990) *The New York City Draft Riots: Their Significance for American Society and Politics in the Age of the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press).

66 Burton, *Melting Pot Soldiers*, pp. 125-126, 246; Herson, *Celts, Catholics, and Copperheads*, pp. 105-6. Meagher's letters to the *Dublin Irishmen*, Sept. 1863, and to the *Dublin Citizen*, Sept. 1863, can be found in *Loyalty Tract No. 38*, pp. 1-15.

67 Burton, *ibid*, p. 125; Keneally, *The Great Shame*, pp. 388-389; Bilby, *The Irish Brigade*, p. 96. Meagher's funeral oration for Corcoran is printed in Cavanagh *Memoirs*, p. 349-359.

dedicated to the 'imperishable word of FREEDOM!' His commitment to the intrinsic worth to the Republic as all of its activities was motivated by the reality that in the United States 'Labour is Nobility—here Democracy is sovereignty', high 'ends that here invite respect, win honour, command obedience.'⁶⁸ When an active command was finally offered to Meagher, due to his political support of the administration, it was hardly in a strategically important area, one not, as W. F. Lyons suggested, 'critical' to General Sherman's grand movement to the Atlantic. Indeed, Sherman was reluctant to find a position for Meagher upon his arrival in Nashville, Tennessee, but finally appointed him to command two convalescent brigades, constituting the Provisional Division of the Army of the Tennessee.⁶⁹

Ordered to report to general James Steedman, another Democrat political general, who commanded the Etowah District, south of Chattanooga. Meagher's initial role was to defend both the Chattanooga and Knoxville Railroad as well as the Chattanooga and Atlanta Railroad as General Sherman marched to Georgia. When Steedman himself was sent to Nashville, Meagher took temporary command of the military district. In an area overrun with Confederate guerrillas, Meagher efficiently performed his duties and upon Steedman's return to the district, following General Hood's disastrous defeat by Union General George Thomas at Nashville, December 23, 1864, Meagher was ordered to move his division south to join Sherman's main army, January 1865. In a difficult move in the middle of winter Meagher seems to have lost control of his command, but finally re-concentrated it in Annapolis, Maryland, to be taken by steamship to New Bern, North Carolina. While it remains unclear why Meagher so mismanaged this transportation, when his command finally arrived General Innis Palmer, a professional officer from upstate New York, reported that Meagher's command was little more than a mob in uniform. Meagher's record of mismanagement, and, of course, suspected intoxication, had preceded him to New Bern, and General Grant used this as reason to relieve him of command, sending Meagher back to New York City to await orders. It was an inglorious conclusion to a military career which had begun with the fighting 69th New York in July 1861. Nonetheless, following the assassination of President Lincoln, April 14, 1865, Meagher, who still had important political connections, was invited to Washington for form part of the general officer Honour Guard which accompanied the dead president's lying in state.⁷⁰

In accordance with General Order No. 79, Meagher, like all temporary volunteer generals commissioned for the duration of the War, was required to submit his resignation which was accepted on May 15, 1865. Much to his disappointment Meagher's name was omitted from the omnibus promotion of many brigadier generals to brevet major general rank for past service. However, while he had been

68 Meagher's speech at the Music Hall in San Francisco published in W. F. Lyons, *Brigadier General Thomas Francis Meagher*, pp. 242-252. Lyons, dates the speech as January 24, 1864, which is a mistake.

69 Lyons, *ibid*, p. 39. Michael Cavanagh also greatly inflates Meagher's role at this time numbering his command to over twelve thousand troops, *Memoirs*, pp. 492-493.

70 Keneally, *The Great Shame*, pp. 393-396; Bilby, *The Irish Brigade*, pp. 140-41.

in Nashville Meagher had stumped for the election of Lincoln and his vice-presidential candidate, the War Democrat Tennessee politician who had been Tennessee's war-time governor, Andrew Johnson. Now president, Johnson employed Major James O'Beirne, a friend to Meagher, as his military aide and through O'Beirne, Meagher had access to the new president.

Always interested in the West and, like James Shields before him who had created Irish settlements in Minnesota, Meagher saw the region as a place the Irish could remake themselves following their service to the Union. Unsuccessfully petitioning for the vacant governorship of Idaho, Meagher accepted the appointment of the secretaryship of Montana territory, a political favour bestowed upon him by a grateful President Johnson. From Minneapolis, where he had been lecturing on the need to resettle the Irish in the West, Thomas Francis Meagher set off on his last quest for an American future in Montana, August 16, 1865. Aware that Governor Edgerton was eager to resign his post and return east, Meagher, no doubt, projected a great future for himself in Montana; from acting governor, to governor and, possibly, even greater preferment. His fellow exiles, emancipated from the tenements of eastern cities, would at last be grateful and forgiving to the old leader. As Meagher boarded a stagecoach, however, it would take him to further controversy and, finally, an untimely and mysterious death, July 1, 1867.⁷¹

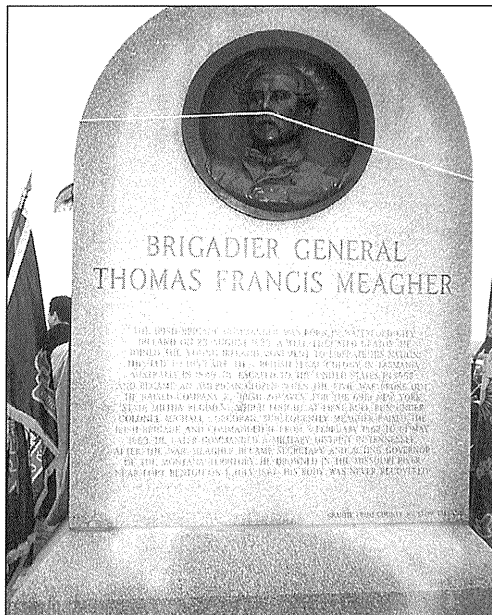
Meagher's career in the United States between 1852 to 1865 was marked by achievement, national attention as well as both failure and frustration. If he had never involved himself in revolutionary activity in Ireland in 1848, he may well have finished his law studies in Dublin and followed a prosperous career in Waterford like his brother Henry Meagher, who became a respected officer in the Waterford Artillery and was High Sheriff of Waterford. This, however, was not to be and his republican principles would not only lead to exile, they would also help propel his colourful, if mercurial, career in the United States. His life in this republic, only seventy years old when Meagher arrived in 1856, mirrored perfectly the dynamism of the United States in mid-century. If his career did not warrant the hyperbole many of his nineteenth century apologists employed to keep alive his memory, the odium that many modern historians have heaped upon him is equally underserved. As a prominent ethnic spokesman in the United States Meagher may well have believed in the ultimate goal of Irish independence, yet his career proved to be a watershed in Irish-American history. A symbol of Irish nationalism, Meagher transformed himself by his passionate support for the Union and, in doing so, helped lead the way, by example, to eventual Irish assimilation.

Meagher was far from being the only important European political exile who followed such a path; nor was he the only such exile who would volunteer to fight for the preservation of a united republic. Like most such figures, Meagher was not a brilliant general, but unlike some of the less successful German exiles who became generals, he was never responsible for a major Union defeat. His historical reputation has, however, clearly been kept alive by his association with the Irish

71 Athearn, *Thomas Francis Meagher*, pp. 143-149.

Brigade. While it is true that more Irishmen fought in non-ethnic Union regiments than ethnic units, the reputation of the Irish Brigade bred a proud *esprit de corps*. It was this factor, rather than some wish of Irish nationalists to foster assimilation, as suggested by Kelly O'Grady, that led to the outpouring of its veteran's memoirs as well as the record of post-war monument buildings.

Four years before the publication of Michael Cavanagh's *Memoirs* the first such monument to the Irish Brigade was consecrated on the Gettysburg battlefield, 1888. For a growing and increasingly multi-ethnic republic, this process of remembering its history continued well into the twentieth century. On October 25, 1997, a new monument to the bravery of the Irish Brigade commanded by Meagher was consecrated on the Antietam battlefield. While William L. Burton may be correct in suggesting that all such monuments throughout the United States celebrate just how American these soldiers were, there remains something quintessentially Irish to Meagher's own fine equestrian statue outside Helena, Montana, unveiled on July 4, 1905.⁷² Similarly, visitors to the Irish Parliament building, Dublin, can view the restored regimental colours of the New York 69th Regiment, presented to the citizens of the Irish Republic by President John F. Kennedy in June 1963. For the many American tourists who now come to Waterford to visit its famous crystal factory and possibly stay at the Granville Hotel, Meagher's birthplace, its connection with Meagher may escape them. The commemorative tablet outside the hotel was erected in 1948 to remember the illustrious patriot of 1848. Meagher, no doubt, would have liked to have been remembered by a more elaborate memorial in Waterford and one which also celebrated his service to the preservation of the American Republic.



Irish Brigade Monument, Antietam.

Source: J. Cullinane

⁷² Burton, *Melting Pot Soldiers*, p. 233.

T.F.Meagher and the Irish Brigade

By Jim Cullinane

THE Civil War in the United States began on 12 April 1861 and continued until April 1865. The war began when General Beauregard, commander of the Confederate forces at Charleston demanded the surrender of Fort Sumter under Major Anderson. This was done in the name of the government of 'The Confederate States of America' just recently formulated in Montgomery, Alabama. When Anderson refused and Fort Sumter was bombarded into eventual surrender, the civil war was begun.

Before the attack on Fort Sumter, many Irish in New York were enrolled in militia units with names like 'Erin Guard' and 'Irish National Grenadiers.' Though amateur they learned the basics of marching, arms and tactics. Most still looked to the liberation of Ireland as their primary goal. The strongest and most militant was the 69th Regiment commanded in 1860 by a man from Donegal, Michael Corcoran, who would distinguish himself in the coming war. He had emigrated to New York in 1849 and was leader of the Fenian movement. In 1860, when the Prince of Wales visited New York, Corcoran refused to parade the 69th. For this disobedience he was court-martial led in early 1861 but when the Confederates attacked Fort Sumter, Corcoran called for Irish Volunteers to fight on the Union side and his court-martial was quashed.

At that time in New York there were over 200,000 Irish born – 203,740 to be exact, according to the *Eighth Federal Census of the United States*. One of every four New Yorkers was Irish born. The Irish were generally reviled by the native-born – a large proportion which were of Protestant English ancestry – for their nationality and their Catholicism. During the years 1840 to 1860, 1.8 million Irish arrived in North America. They lived in shanties and tenements, breeding grounds for sickness and disease. Typhus and diarrhea ravaged the emigrant ships. Many died during the voyage on the tightly packed ships and in their weakened condition, many died on disembarking. So the Irish, though primarily Democratic and distrusting Lincoln and the Republicans, saw the Union cause as a way of proving their loyalty and improving their standing in their new country.

T.F.Meagher

By this time Thomas Francis Meagher had been in New York since disembarking on 26 May 1852. He had escaped from Van Diemens Land (Tasmania) on the ship, the Elizabeth Thompson under Captain Betts. They were bound for London via the Pacific Ocean and Cape Horn. When the ship docked at Pernambuco, Brazil, Captain Betts kindly arranged passage with the captain of the American Brig, Acorn to New York. After a tumultuous welcome and a constant stream of invitations to public receptions – all of which Meagher declined, 'because of his country remaining in sorrow and subjection' and 'so many of his companions being still in



Meaghers' Irish Brigade Flag of The 69th Regiment.

confinement.' He had studied law and had been admitted to the New York bar in 1855. His first wife, Catherine Bennett died of typhus at the age of twenty-two in Waterford, having given birth to a son, Thomas Francis, there. She was buried in the Meagher family vault in Faithlegg churchyard, eight miles outside Waterford. Meagher remarried in 1855 to Elizabeth Townsend; his wife, Elizabeth Townsend, was from one of New York's most wealthy and influential families.

69th Regiment and T.F. Meagher

In the two and a half weeks after the Fort Sumter shelling and eventual surrender, 3,000 Irishmen volunteered to fight with Corcoran's 69th N.Y. Militia. Corcoran could only accept 1,000, a total of 1,130 with officers and band. On 23 April, 1861 the 69th Regiment paraded past old St. Patrick's Cathedral its spiritual home on Mott and Prince Streets in Lower Manhattan and through New York to a tumultuous sendoff from the various Irish societies. They would be sent to Washington, to Georgetown College where they would train and then to the Virginia side of the Potomac River in defense of Washington. Before they left, Meagher had consulted with Corcoran and on 17 April 1861 advertised in *The New York Daily Tribune*: 'One hundred young Irishmen - healthy, intelligent and active - are wanted to form a company of Irish Zouaves - under the command of Thomas Francis Meagher to be attached to the 69th Regiment, NYSM.' In June, Meagher's company was ordered to join the 69th Regiment there. Thus began their distinguished and glorious battle history.

The Irish Brigade and the Civil War

It was the Confederate General, Robert E. Lee who gave it the colorful nickname it has carried proudly since. Learning, prior to a battle that that the 69th N.Y. was among the troops opposing them, he nodded and said, 'Ah, yes. That Fighting 69th.'

Bull Run

On 16 July, the 69th moved out in the direction of Fairfax, Virginia led by Colonel Corcoran, Lieutenant-Colonel James Haggerty and Captain (Acting Major) Tom Meagher as campaign aide to Corcoran. They were part of William Tecumseh Sherman's Brigade. Their first significant engagement - Bull Run was but three days away.

Colonel Beauregard of the Confederate Army had lined up his troops behind a creek called Bull Run. Behind them, the main body of Confederates with field guns, clustered around a white dwelling called the Henry House. At noon, Sherman and his brigade with the sixth-Ninth crossed Bull Run. Corcoran and Meagher watched as the 2nd Wisconsin and the 69th New York were ordered in and beaten back, carrying their dead and wounded and subjected to withering field gun fire. The 69th were now ordered in but was unable to advance. They attacked three times and three times were ordered back. Bull Run was an ignominious defeat for the Union but the 69th acquitted themselves well, continuing to engage

the enemy until ordered back. A Southern Correspondent quoted in *The Tribune* reported 'they fought like tigers.' They suffered heavy losses including thirty-nine killed. Meagher's horse was shot from under him but he made it back. Corcoran was captured and Sherman gave the order to retreat to Fort Corcoran and the defense of Washington. Meagher though inexperienced in war, showed a taste for combat. There were rumors of wild and reckless behavior, much of it emanating from London and its sympathizers. But his fellow officers angrily disagreed and wrote letters to the papers attesting to his bravery in the three charges on the enemy positions. Throughout Meagher's career, he had his detractors but the records show that he was never one to point the way to his troops but lead them. This he did in all the battles he participated in. He was unfailingly supportive and his oratorical powers – which he used time and again to rally his troops, were such that few could match.

The three month initial enlistment was now up for those who volunteered and many clamored to leave. Sherman put his regular Army soldiers to guard the camp. He reported the unrest to the War Department but stated 'I'll have the Irish 69th, which will fight.'

The Irish in New York under the leadership of Judge Charles P. Daly and his wife Maria had a large support network in place and relief committees were set up for the widows and orphans of the 69th. In late July, they again paraded through New York and what was described as the largest crowd ever seen in New York, greeted their return. They had lost nearly twenty percent of the 1,276 men that made up the original numbers. There was now substantial support for an Irish Brigade similar to that formed in other countries. With Corcoran in prison, attention focused on Meagher. He immediately set about winning community support. Businesses and community leaders formed Irish Brigade committees. Before the end of 1861, more than 2,000 volunteers had been organized into three regiments from New York City, the 63rd, 69th and the 88th. Meagher accepted the position of Acting Colonel in place of Corcoran, who was imprisoned in Richmond. Father William Corby, a chaplain to the brigade and one who wrote extensively of his experiences, noted the members of the brigade were 'healthy, intelligent men far above average' many with good educations including 'seven first class lawyers' He would also write of Meagher 'he was brave as a lion, but not above going to confession from time to time, especially before battles'¹

Fair Oaks

In late 1861, the brigade left New York for Virginia. They would be under the command of General George B. McClellan, part of General Edwin Vose Sumner's division. They would do little for six months. On 3 February 1862 the Senate ratified Meagher as a Brigadier General and President Lincoln signed it. In March, 1862 McClellan began the Peninsula Campaign. The first battle they would take part in would be at Fair Oaks, 1 June. Meagher in his own words describes the particulars of the battle:

1 Reverend William Corby (1893) *Memoirs of Chaplain Life* (Chicago).

In half an hour, the Brigade was on the march. It was a cold and gloomy afternoon. The tremendous rain of the previous night had flooded the low grounds on both sides of the Chickahominy, whilst it had swollen the river to such a volume that only one bridge was found available for the passage of the troops. French's brigade, which marched on a line parallel to ours, was compelled to wade, up to the middle, through the widespread waters and the deep mud over which they swept. After a little it was found impossible to bring the artillery along. Close on twelve o'clock, the head of the column reached the field where Sedgwick's Division, rapidly coming up an hour or so before sundown, had met and checked the enemy. The night was the blackest night ever known. Not a star was visible. One vast cloud filled the sky, producing so dense a darkness you would have thought it was through a coal-pit, in the bowels of the earth, that we were marching. Here and there, however, you could catch the yellow glimmering – or at times the broad and sudden flashed – of the lanterns of the surgeons, as they groped and stumbled over the field in search of the wounded. The saddest moans were heard on every side. A dull, heavy, woeful murmur deepened the tramp of the regiments passing on through the darkness, over the slain and dying. Now and then, a shot from the pickets struck the ear; and this was sometimes quickly followed by a burst of musketry in the woods to the right and front. Had the sky been clear – had the stars and moon been glistening over it – the scene, perhaps, might have been dismaying. As it was, the horrors of the battlefield were buried in the depths of that impenetrable night, and the wearied men of the Brigade lay down to rest, upon the drenched and torn ground, in the midst of the havoc of the day, hardly conscious of the ghastly companions who slept among them, bathed in blood.

But the dawn revealed it all. Here was a Georgian – a tall, stout-limbed, broad-shouldered fellow – lying on his face; his head half-buried in the mud; his long thick brown hair soaked and matted with the rain and mire; his long white fingers grasping a broken musket; his canteen and drab felt-hat flung a few feet from him; his haversack, with two or three biscuits breaking through it, tossed over his back; and a coarse hempen shirt, all clotted and starched with blood, sticking out from under his empty cartridge-box and gray jacket. Not far from him was a dead horse; his distended eyeballs glaring in the pale light; and a thick crust of blood and foam edging the open mouth that had grown stiff in the last writhings of the poor brute's agony. Nearer to us, close to a burned stump, lay one of our own artillerymen; his bold handsome face black with sweat and the smoke of battle; his right leg torn off by a shell below the knee; his black hair flattened back and streaming from his forehead, as though he had been shipwrecked and washed ashore; his brass-hilted short sword bent under

him; and as he lay there upturned, cold and rigid as though he were made of stone, he seemed to be gazing, with the wild, fixed gaze of an idiot, at the clouds floating through the watery sky.

The root of a withered and whitened oak was the Headquarters of the Irish Brigade this morning. Behind this root was a pile of muskets; some with bayonets fixed; others without lock or bayonet; many of them bent and twisted; two or three of them coiled into hoops, as though they were pliable as leaden water-pipes; all more or less befouled and damaged. Blankets, too, were strewn everywhere around. Knapsacks – some of them torn open – others as tidily packed as they would be on an inspection – lay all about. Further down the field, within a few hundred paces of the railroad, a gun-carriage was upset, and had the muzzle of its rifled piece sunk into a patch of black swamp, thickly set with short green grass. To the rear of the Headquarters – a musket shot from it – was an ambulance with one wheel only, and a blood-smearred stretcher slipping out of it behind, underneath the tarpaulin curtain.

I was quietly and mournfully noticing these and a hundred other evidences of the battle of the previous day – was, by the by, talking to a young Irishman from South Carolina, whom I found propped up against a mouldy old tree, disabled by a musket-shot in the side, and manfully suppressing the expression of his pain – when there broke from the lofty deep woods in our front a deafening volley. Again and again it was repeated. Then there was a like volley from the woods on our right – then from the woods on the left – and then a volley from the entire front, sharp and crackling as a thunder-crash in the sudden outburst of a thunderstorm, but far more prolonged.

Waking up from the profound silence and darkness of the night, to their utter astonishment the enemy found us within pistol-range of them; nor were we less astonished at finding them, without any intimation or warning whatever, so close at hand.

The Pamunkey and Richmond railroad ran within five hundred paces of the Brigade line, and almost parallel to it. Two miles to our rear was the Chickahominy. Richardson's division, of which mine was the 2nd Brigade, occupied in two lines a wide cornfield, the crop on which had been thoroughly trampled out of sight, nothing in the way of vegetation remaining above the soaked and trodden surface but the blackened stumps of the pines that formerly covered it. To the right were tall, beautiful, noble woods: to the extreme left, the same. Between the left of our line and the railroad was a smaller wood. On the other side of the railroad was a long thick belt of handsome trees – robust, straight, towering trees – full of glittering and rustling leaves – the beams of the dawning sun veiling them with transparent gold – not a breath of wind wakening them from their grand repose. This

superb belt, however, concealed an ugly swamp, and the perplexing and almost impervious undergrowth with which it was interwoven. Richmond was but four miles distant from the colors of the 69th New York Volunteers, the right of the Brigade. One of the pioneers of the regiment – formerly a sailor – an immense, shaggy, iron-built fellow, with a tanned skin and tempestuous eye, agile and daring as a tiger – darting up a towering pine close to the railroad, saw the dome of the Capitol flashing through the smoke of the city, the church-spires, and shining fragments of the bridges over the James river.

The object of the enemy was to drive us from the railroad back to the Chickahominy and into it if possible. They had surprised General Casey, the day before, on the other side of the railroad, and had nearly cut his Division to pieces. Sedgwick, however, coming up rapidly on the right, and Kearney on the left, the enemy were promptly checked, and fell back for the night. At daybreak he resumed the attack.

A few minutes after the volley I have mentioned, Howard's Brigade had crossed the railroad and were blazing away at a Brigade of Georgians in that magnificent forest in front of us, forcing and tearing their way through the under-brush, through the swamp, over fallen trees and mangled bodies, in the full blaze of a blinding fore. French's Brigade followed. Our turn came next.

The 69th swept down to the railroad, and reaching it, deployed into line of battle on the track. This they did under a hurricane of bullets. Once in line, however, they paid back the compliments of the morning with the characteristic alacrity and heartiness of a genuine Irish Acknowledgement. The exchange of fervent salutations was kept up for an hour. The chivalry of Virginia met its match in the chivalry of Tipperary.

In the meantime, the 88th New York, piercing the small wood which, as I have said, lay between the railroad and the left of then Brigade, debouched from it into a pretty deep cutting of the road, in which the regiment threw itself into line of battle, as the 69th had done a little higher up, and got to work with a dazzling celerity. In front of the cutting was an open space, some ten or twelve acres in extent, forming a half-circle. A rail-fence ran across it a hundred paces from the railroad. Here and there, behind the fence, were clumps of shrubbery and wild blackberry bushes. The whole was girt by a cincture of dark pines, closely set together, in the limbs of which, hidden by the leaves and shadows of the trees, were swarms of sharp-shooters; whilst the wood itself, and the clumps and bushes, were alive with Rebels. Climbing the embankment of the cutting, so as to enable them to rest their muskets and plant their colours on top of it, the 88th threw their first fire in one broad sheet of lightning into the fence and wood.

From both fence and wood came, an instant after, a scorching whirlwind, tearing and ploughing up the grass and cornstalks in the open space, and ripping the colours, as it made them flap and beat against the flag-staffs.

Close to where the colours were planted stood a log-built cottage – the property of a lethargic German with pink eyes and yellow hair – and two or three auxiliary structures devoted to pigs, chickens, and bees. These served as an excellent cover for a company of the 88th, detailed for special practice against the sharpshooters.

On the opposite embankment, there stood a very dingy and battered little barn, abounding in fleas and mice, and superabundantly carpeted with damp hay. This was appropriated as the hospital of the regiment. The red flag was displayed from the roof, and in a few minutes it was the scene of much suffering, tenderness, devotion, thought and love of home, heroic resignation, and calm bravery under the inexorable hand of death. There, indeed, were to be seen in many instances the sweetness, the cheerfulness, the strength, the grandeur of character which proved the fidelity of the private soldier to his cause, the disinterestedness with which he had pledged himself to it, the consciousness of his having done well in the face of danger, and leaving to his home and comrades a memory which would brighten the sadness of those who knew, loved, and honoured him. There was to be seen the good, kind, gentle priest of the old and eternal Faith, calming the fevered brain with words which at such moments express the divinest melody, and gladdening the drooping eye with visions that transform the bed of torture into one of flowers, and the cloud of death into a home of splendour.

Driven back on the right by Sedgwick – on the left by Kearney – baffled, broken, routed at all three points at the one and the same time – at noon that day the Rebel forces were pursued by Hooker. Had he been permitted, he would have followed them into Richmond. Kearney was mad for the pursuit – so was Sumner – so were French and Sedgwick – so was every one of our officers and soldiers. It was the instinct and passion of the entire army.

'Now that we've got them on the run' – as a Sergeant of the 88th knowingly observed – 'the thing is to keep them running.'

It would have been the telling game to play.²

I have included a large section – but by no means all – of Meagher's own telling of the battle of Fair Oaks. I do this primarily to demonstrate the thoroughness, the detail, the command of language that he brought to the telling. It also shows his fine character and sensitivity to the suffering of – not alone his men but others,

2 W.F.Lyons (1869) *Brigadier-General Thomas Francis Meagher. His Political and Military Career* (London, Burns Oates & Washbourne) pgs 73-77.

including the enemy. He conducted himself similarly throughout the war and keeping up a wealth of correspondence and such detail of the battles, that it is a valuable reference for Civil War research. Also it gives us such a picture of the essence of this proud son of Waterford that we get a glimpse, almost, inside his soul. This was no imperious general, sending his brigade into battle at the slightest whim and watching safely from the sideline. This was a man who went into battle with them, more often than not, leading them, urging them on through example, word and deed. Because Meagher was so prolific in his speeches and writings, we have a unique history of his life, motives, demons, ambitions, triumphs and failures.

The battle of Mechanicsburg followed on 26 June between 60,000 Confederate troops, under General Robert E. Lee, and 35,000 Union forces under General Fitz-John Porter and General McCall. This was the first of what came to be known as the Seven Days Battles. The conflict began in the afternoon and ended that night at nine. The Confederate Army with superior forces were poised for victory and late that night the order to withdraw and abandon the White House was given and the destruction of all stores that could not be removed. The Irish Brigade was in the thick of it, protecting the flank of the retreating army and in constant contact with the pursuing forces.

Gaines Mills

At Gaines Mills, the Union Army again made a stand against the three columns of the Confederate troops, 80,000 strong. The battle lines weaved back and forth. The Union lines were holding, but only just. McClellan ordered Sumner, who was at Fair Oaks to send up two brigades to reinforce Porter who was facing superior numbers. Sumner selected the brigades of French and Meagher. W.F.Lyons described the following events:

They started at double quick, making short time of the five miles that lay between them and the battle-field. The order was given at five o'clock in the afternoon. They reached the scene of action soon after to find General Porter's troops retiring stubbornly, though considerably broken and disordered. General French, being the senior officer, commanded the two brigades. Meagher led the Irish brigade. Forcing their way through the retreating masses of Porter's command, they gained the crest of a hill, formed into a line, and with one wild shout, swept down upon the enemy, then flushed with victory. Through a storm of shot and bullets they went – on, on, to the very faces of their foe. The shock was almost instantaneous. The enemy made a momentary stand. They were wholly unprepared for the impetuosity of the Irish troops, and after a fierce struggle, the whole force fell back, both infantry and artillery. The retreating forces of General Porter began to fall in the rear of the victorious re-inforcements, and Meagher's Brigade stood, panting and elated, between the army they had saved and the enemy they had vanquished...When the safety of Fitz-John

Porter's army was secured, French's and Meagher's brigades were withdrawn – just at the dawn of the day, but not before the whole of Porter's army, including all the wounded, were transported across the Chickahominy. General Meagher and his staff were the last to cross the river.³

Peach Orchard

As the army of The Potomac continued its retreat, the Confederates made a furious attack at what became known as the Battle of Peach Orchard. The enemy attacked and was repulsed three times. The retreat continued and Richardson's division, to which the Irish Brigade was attached, brought up the rear. They were under constant attack from the pursuing Confederate troops. W.F.Lyons continues:

The Brigade had been now five days in action: had during that time but little food and no rest. General Mc McClellan states that the whole army was at this time exhausted. How then must it have fared with the rearguard? Harassed by the foe by day and by night, hungry and weary, suffering from the scorching heat of the sun at noontide, and the heavy rains at night, the brigade still went cheerily on, sustained by the presence of its commander, who shared every discomfort and braved every danger with his men; sustained, too, by the consciousness of duty well performed, and not a little proud that, despite all the hard work and the fearful risks to which they were exposed, the post of honour and of danger was assigned to them.⁴

White Oak Swamp

A fierce battle again ensued at White Oak Swamp. The Brigade was again ordered to move up to Glendale where the enemy was quickly gaining ground. The battle lasted for ten hours into darkness but the enemy was routed. General Sumner commenting as the Irish Brigade took up position 'Boys, you go in to save another day.'

Malvern Hill

On the first of July the last – and most ferocious – of the Seven Days Battles began at Malvern Hill. The Irish Brigade acquitted themselves nobly again. Meagher himself was injured when a rifle ball grazed his hand, but the surgeon, Thomas Ellis, noted that Meagher rode at the head of his troops. Meagher had a favourite horse, Dolly, and with his distinctive uniform and Dolly's grey coloring, he was a conspicuous target. But he refused to ride any other. Lieutenant Temple Emmet, grand-nephew of the Robert Emmet was wounded and later died in Long Island, New York from typhoid fever. He was twenty-six years old. A Captain Field, serving with Pettit's Battery – the battery attached to the Irish Brigade – and who wrote extensively of the war, gave us a small but revealing window into the fighting that took place there.

3 Lyons, *Brigadier-General Thomas Francis Meagher*, pp. 83-85.

4 Lyons, *Brigadier-General Thomas Francis Meagher*, p. 86.

An interesting episode in the history of the Brigade was the encounter at Malvern Hill, in the dusk of the evening, between the 88th Regiment and the well-known 'Louisiana Tigers' – as a battalion from New Orleans, commanded by the famous Colonel Wheat, was called. They were the desperadoes of the Southern service, and, meeting the Irishmen unexpectedly at close quarters, fought with their knives and pistols. The Irishmen, ignoring their bayonets, which they had not time to fix, clubbed their muskets, and so in the dark and thick timber the savage grapple went on. In the thickest of the melee, a gigantic member of the 88th spied a mounted officer cheering on the Tigers. Striding up to him, he grasped him with his enormous hand, and with the exclamation, 'come out o' that, you spalpeen!' fairly dragged him from his horse and captured him.

An instant connected with this encounter fastened the brigade to General Sumner with hooks of steel. On the prolonged Seven Days' retreat, some muskets were of course lost and thrown away, but astonishingly few, all things considered. Every case that came to General Sumner's notice angered him beyond bounds. When one morning, an officer of the 88th came to him with a requisition for quite a number of muskets, Sumner broke out violently, denounced bitterly men who would lose or abandon their arms, and ended by saying 'You shall not have those muskets, sir, I'll take them all away from you and make your men dig trenches. Such men are not fit to carry arms.'

The officer listened calmly to this tirade and then said, 'You're mistaken there, General. We've not lost them or thrown them away.'

'Where are they, then?' said Sumner.

'Outside, sir. I thought maybe you'd be wanting to see them.'

The General went out, and found a pile of muskets with cracked and splintered stocks, bent barrels and twisted bayonets.

'How is this?' said he.'

'It's the Eighty-eighth, sir,' said the officer. 'The boys got in a scrimmage with the Tigers, and when the bloody villains took to their knives, the boys mostly forgot their bayonets, but went to work in the style they were used to, and licked them well, sir.'

As Sumner gazed on these speaking witnesses of desperate pluck his rugged face softened, and, generous as he was hasty, he said a few words which warmed the hearts of every Irishman in the army that heard of them. From that time we used to say that the General thought he could whip Lee's army with the Irish Brigade and Pettit's Battery.¹⁵

5 Michael Cavanagh (1892) *Memoirs of General Thomas Francis Meagher* (Worcester, Mass. The Messenger Press) p. 450.

Lee's losses at Malvern Hill, some 5,600 men, were so severe that many Union Generals called for a counter-attack, but Mc McClellan was committed to withdrawal and moving his headquarters to Harrison's Landing. This was accomplished but at a terrible cost to the Irish Brigade. The 69th had gone from 750 men at Fair Oaks to 295 at the end of Malvern Hill. The 88th and the 63rd had lost 500 between them.

In July, Meagher returned to New York to recruit for his regiments. But he found it difficult. The heavy losses of the Brigade in the Seven Days' war had dampened enthusiasm. Reports were circulated that Meagher sought personal glory and overworked the Brigade, that 'extra work was to be encountered in his command – it being notorious that the Irish Brigade was assigned more than the average share of the hard fighting.' Also, a few weeks previous, the 69th N.Y. S.M. under Colonel Matthew Murphy had signed up for another three-month service after an appeal from the President. This would have been those most likely to have answered Meagher's call.

By now, Lincoln, disappointed in McClellan's retreat, had replaced him with General John Pope. As they rested at Harrison's Landing, Thomas Stonewall Jackson moved north up the Shenandoah. Meagher returned from New York to supervise the evacuation and Lee and Jackson struck at Bull Run and Manassas and decisively beat Pope. When news came of Lee and Jackson's invasion of the North and in Western Maryland, McClellan was promptly reinstated by Lincoln – to the Brigade's great satisfaction – and sent to counter Lee and Jackson.

Sharpsburg (Antietam)

On the afternoon of 15 September in Western Maryland near the village of Sharpsburg, the Confederate Army was sighted, drawn up in a line of battle. The Union Forces numbered 87,000, the Confederate Army, 97,000. The bloodiest battle of the Civil War, which would last fourteen hours, would engage nearly 200,000 men and 500 pieces of Cavalry, was but two days away. The next day, both armies rested, though there were some skirmishes. At dawn the day after, the battle began. For the Irish brigade, it would be the bloodiest and most fatal of all the Civil War battles.

In General McClellan's official report he referred to the part taken by the Irish Brigade.

On the left of General French, General Richardson's Division was hotly engaged. Having crossed the Antietam about 9.30a.m., at the ford crossed by the other divisions of Sumner's corps, it moved on a line nearly parallel to the Antietam, and formed in a ravine behind the high grounds overlooking Boulette's house; the 2nd (Irish) Brigade, commanded by General Meagher on the right, the 3rd Brigade, commanded by General Caldwell, on his left and the brigade commanded by General Brooke, 53rd Pennsylvania Volunteers, in support. As the division moved forward to take its position on the field, the enemy directed a fire of artillery against it, but, owing to the irregularities of the ground, did but little damage.

Meagher's Brigade, advancing steadily, soon became engaged with the enemy, posted to the left and in front of Boulette's house. It continued to advance under a heavy fire, nearly to the crest of the hill overlooking piper's house, the enemy being posted in a continuation of the sunken road and corn-field before referred to. Here the brave Irish Brigade opened upon the enemy a terrific musketry fire.

All of General Sumner's corps was now engaged – General Sedgwick on the right, General French in the center, and General Richardson on the left. The Irish Brigade sustained its well-earned reputation. After suffering terribly in officers and men, and strewing the ground with their enemies as they drove them back, their ammunition nearly expended, and their commander, General Meagher, disabled by the fall of his horse, shot under him, this brigade was ordered to give place to General Caldwell's brigade, which advanced to a short distance in its rear. The lines were passed by the Irish Brigade, breaking by company to the rear, and General Caldwell's, by company to the front, as steadily as on drill.⁶

Captain Edward Field of Pettit's Battery – the artillery attached to the Irish brigade wrote:

At Antietam came The Crowning Glory of the Irish Brigade When French's division, containing many new troops, was so roughly handled, the brigade was sent in on the left of Dunker's Church, and slowly forced the enemy back beyond the famous sunken road, which had been filled with corpses by an enfilading fire from one of our batteries, and presented the most ghastly spectacle of the war. Using this lane as a breastwork, they held it to the close of the fight, losing not a prisoner, having not one straggler, but at a loss of life that was appalling. One regiment lost nearly fifty percent, another over thirty. The rebels seemed to have a special spite against the green flag, and five color-bearers were shot down in a short time. As the last man fell even these Irishmen hesitated a moment to assume a task synonymous with death. 'Big Gleason,' Captain of the 63rd, six feet seven, sprang forward and snatched it up. In a few minutes a bullet struck the staff, shattering it to pieces; Gleason tore the flag from the broken staff, wrapped it round his body, putting his sword-belt over it, and went through the rest of that fight untouched.⁷

Captain Patrick Clooney, twenty-three years old and a native of Waterford, a captain in the 88th N.Y. Regiment displayed conspicuous bravery at Antietam. He was one of the many in the Irish Brigade who had served in the armies of France, Austria, Italy and Spain. He had resigned his commission in the Papal Army's Saint Patrick's Battalion to join Meagher's Irish Brigade. He fought valiantly in the

6 Cavanagh *Memoirs* p. 459.

7 Cavanagh *Memoirs* p. 460.

Seven Days' battles in 1861 and his narrow escapes had convinced his men that he was under a special Papal blessing. He had already been injured in the knee and was urged to retreat to hospital. He refused and leading his men forward was struck by two bullets and killed. Meagher's horse was shot dead under him and a bullet passed through his clothes. Meagher lay on the ground concussed. He was carried off the battlefield and recovered.

The Irish Brigade suffered 560 casualties out of 1,000 troops. The battle caused Lee to withdraw across the Potomac river. The invasion of the North was over. It would be known forever as the bloodiest day in the Civil War. It was a strategic victory for the North. England and France, watching the outcome and weighing their support for the South, held off. If the South had won, and England and France had thrown their support behind them, supplying them through the Southern ports, the war might very well have had a different outcome.

Over the next two months, McClellan was again relieved of duty and General Ambrose Burnside was placed in command. The Irish Brigade was reinforced by the 116th Pennsylvania Volunteers, a new Irish regiment and by the 28th Massachusetts Volunteers, which had originally been recruited by Meagher, but prior to this, had not been assigned to the Irish Brigade. This brought the strength of the Brigade to approximately 1,300 men. The Irish officers protested McClellan's dismissal but Meagher counseled patience, that the Cause was still worthy, that finally, the tide was turning. Burnside, who replace McClellan would prove to be a disastrous choice.

Fredericksburg

By this time it was December. Lee's Army, consisting of some 70,000 was at Fredericksburg, a town of about 5,000 then, fifty-five miles from Washington. Sumner commanded the Second Corps in the Union Army and as always, the Irish brigade was in his command. They could see the Confederate Army in Fredericksburg, across the Rappahannock river. Burnside, on the northern side of the river, commanded over 116,000 men. Sumner demanded the town's surrender. They refused. Behind the town was a hill called Marye's Heights and the rebels began to dig in to reinforce it. Sumner pleaded with Burnside to attack before the rebels could complete fortifying it. Burnside refused. They assumed he wanted to wait until Spring but on 9 December he called his command together and declared he would assault Marye's Heights. None of his command sanctioned the project. On the night of 11 December, they began to cross the Rappahannock and the next day occupied Fredericksburg, the Confederates withdrawing to Marye's Heights. The Irish Brigade knew – as did Meagher – that it was a suicidal mission to try and take this hill. Guns were positioned on both sides, capable of laying down such withering fire that thousands would perish. The Irish went to confession and many wrote their names on pieces of paper to be pinned to their jackets. Their green flag, torn and shot through with musket fire had been sent back to New York. Its replacement had not arrived. Meagher had hundreds of boxwood, green and similar to shamrock, distributed by the officers to each man in the Brigade. All, including Meagher would wear it into battle. He rode before his men, addressing each regi-

ment separately and when he came to the 88th, which always had been known as Mrs. Meaghers – it was she who had presented their flag to them – his eyes filled with tears as he spoke.

Officers and soldiers of the 88th regiment – 'In a few moments you will engage the enemy in a most terrible battle, which will probably decide the fate of this glorious, great and good country – the home of your adoption.'

The General hesitated a moment, and then with eyes full to overflowing, and in accents trembling with emotion, said:

Soldiers – this is my wife's own regiment, her own dear 88th, she calls it, and I know, and have confidence, that with this dear woman's smile upon you, and for woman's sake, this day you will strike a deadly blow to those wicked traitors who are now but a few hundred yards from you, and bring back to this distracted country its former prestige and glory. This may be my last speech to you, but I will be with you when the battle is the fiercest; and, if I fall, I can say I did my duty, and fell fighting in the most glorious of causes.¹⁸

In a few moments, they would be in the thick of battle. The 2nd Brigade, under the command of Brigadier General T.F. Meagher would lose fifty-three officers and 488 men – of ninety two officers and 1323 men. The 69th N.Y Volunteers lost sixteen officers of nineteen and 112 of 219 enlisted men. The 88th N.Y. Volunteers under Colonel Patrick Kelly lost twelve of twenty-three officers and 115 of 229 men. The 116th Pennsylvania Volunteers under Colonel Dennis Heenan – severely wounded – lost twelve of seventeen officers and seventy-seven of 230 men. The 28th Massachusetts Volunteers under Colonel Richard Byrnes lost seven of sixteen officers and 149 of 400 men. The 63rd N.Y Volunteers under Major Joseph Neill lost seven of seventeen officers and thirty-seven of 145 men. These figures pertained to killed, wounded or missing. The Union lost 13,000 men and Lee lost 4,000.

The Confederate General Longstreet wrote:

From the moment of their appearance began the most fearful carnage; with our artillery from the front, right and rear, tearing through their ranks, the Federals pressing forward with almost invincible determination, maintaining their steady step and closing up their broken ranks. Thus resolutely they marched upon the stone fence, behind which quietly waited the Confederate brigade of Gen. Cobb. As they came within reach of this brigade, a storm of lead was poured into their advancing columns and they were swept from the field like chaff before the wind. A cloud of smoke shut out the scene for a moment, and rising revealed the scattered fragments recoiling from their gallant but hopeless charge. The artillery still plowed through their retreating

8 Cavanagh *Memoirs* p. 466.

ranks and searched out the places of concealment into which the retreating troops had plunged.

So the struggle went on. A fifth time the Federals formed, charged, and were repulsed. A sixth time they charged and were driven back, when night came to end the dreadful carnage and the Federals withdrew, leaving the battle-field literally heaped with the bodies of their dead. Before the well-directed fire of Cobb's brigade the Federals had fallen like the steady dripping of the rain from the eaves of a house. Our musketry alone killed and wounded at least 5,000, and these with the slaughter by artillery left over 7,000 killed and wounded before the foot of Marye's Hill. The dead were piled sometimes three deep, and when morning broke the spectacle we saw upon the battle-field was one of the most distressing I ever witnessed. I thought as I saw the Federals come again and again to their death that they deserved success, if courage and daring could entitle soldiers to victory.⁹

On 15 December, the Union Army evacuated Fredericksburg and recrossed the Rappahannock.

Chancellorsville

With his Brigade decimated, and during the four months that the Union Army lay inactive in winter quarters, Meagher wrote to Washington for permission to recruit. He received not even an acknowledgement of his request. On 3 May, back in command – he had gone to New York on sick leave to recover from a knee condition and to campaign for the Brigade's return there for rebuilding – the Brigade was again involved in heavy fighting at Chancellorsville. Stonewall Jackson had out-flanked Hooker, causing the Union Army to retreat. The Irish Brigade would again cover the rearguard. On 8 May, Meagher tendered his resignation in the following letter.

Headquarters Irish Brigade, Hancock's Division,
Couch's Corps, Army of the Potomac, May 8, 1863.

Major John Hancock, Assistant Adjutant-General :-

I beg most respectfully to tender you, and through you to the proper authorities, my resignation as Brigadier-General, commanding what was known as the Irish Brigade. That Brigade no longer exists. The assault on the enemy's works on the 13th of December last reduced it to something less than a minimum regiment of infantry. For several weeks, it remained in this exhausted condition. Brave fellows from the convalescent camp and from the sick beds at home gradually reinforced this handful of devoted men. Nevertheless it failed to reach the strength and proportions of anything like an effective regiment. These facts I represent as clearly and forcibly as it was in my power to do in a memorial to the Secretary of War; in which memorial I prayed that a

9 Cavanagh *Memoirs* p. 469.

Brigade which had rendered such service and incurred such distressing losses should be temporarily relieved from duty in the field, so as to give it time and opportunity in some measure to renew itself.

The memorial was in vain. It never was even acknowledged. The depression caused by this ungenerous and inconsiderate treatment of a gallant remnant of a Brigade that had never once failed to do its duty most liberally and heroically, almost unfitted me to remain in command. True, however, to those who had been true to me – true to a position which I had considered sacred under the circumstances – I remained with what was left of my Brigade, and, though feeling that it was to a sacrifice rather than a victory we were going, I accompanied them, and led them through all the operations required of them at Scott's Mills and Chancellorsville, beyond the Rappahannock.

A mere handful, my command did its duty at those positions with a fidelity and resolution, which won for it the admiration of the army. It would be my greatest happiness, as it would surely be my highest honor, to remain in the companionship and charge of such men; but to do so any longer would be to perpetuate a public deception, in which the hard-won honor of such soldiers, and in them the military reputation of a brave old race would inevitably be involved and compromised. I cannot be a party to this wrong. My heart, my conscience, my pride, all that is truthful, manful, sincere and just within me, forbid it.

In tendering my resignation, however, as the Brigadier-General in command of this poor vestige and relic of the Irish brigade, I beg sincerely to assure you that my services, in any capacity that can prove useful, are freely at the summons and disposition of the Government of the United States. That the Government, and the cause, and the liberty, the noble memories, and the future it represents, are entitled unquestionably and unequivocally to the life of every citizen who has sworn allegiance to it, and partaken of its grand protection.

But while I offer my own life to sustain this good Government, I feel it is my first duty to do nothing that will wantonly imperil the lives of others, or, what would still be more grievous and irreparable, inflict sorrow and humiliation upon a race who, having lost almost everything else, find in their character for courage and loyalty, an invaluable gift, which I, for one, will not be so vain or selfish as to endanger.

I have the honor to be most respectfully and faithfully yours,

Thomas Francis Meagher,
Brigadier-General Commanding.¹⁰

¹⁰ Cavanagh *Memoirs* Appendix p. 26.

His resignation was accepted a week later. He said goodbye to his beloved Brigade, now reduced to 400 men on 19 May 1863 and turned over command to Colonel Patrick Kelly. The Irish Brigade would fight under Grant at Gettysburg and take part in the surrender ceremony at Appomattox Courthouse in April 1865. Meagher's resignation was rescinded in December 1863 and he was appointed to the command of the Etowah district at Chattanooga, Tennessee. This command consisted of 12,000 infantry, two regiments of cavalry, several batteries of field artillery and heavy guns. His district was overrun with guerrillas and he had to furnish supplies to divisions of the army through often hostile areas.

In July, with the cessation of hostilities and the surrender of the Confederate forces, President Andrew Jackson offered Meagher the Secretaryship for the territory of Montana. He took up his duties in October, 1865 and also the position of Acting-Governor as no Governor had been appointed. On 1 July, 1867, he died at forty-four years of age.

At the close of the war, The Commanding-General of the Confederate Army, General Robert E. Lee gave an interview where he spoke of the character of the Irish as soldiers – saying that 'they played a prominent part in all the wars of the world for the last three centuries, now on the one side, now on the other. The Irish soldier,' he said, 'fights not so much for lucre as through the reckless love of adventure, and, moreover, with a chivalrous devotion to the cause he espouses for the time being. Clebourne, on our side, inherited the intrepidity of his race. On a field of battle he shone like a meteor in a clouded sky! As a dashing military man he was all virtue; a single vice did not stain him as a warrior. His generosity and benevolence had no limits. The care which he took of the fortunes of his officers and soldiers, from the greatest to the least, was incessant. His integrity was proverbial, and his modesty was an equally conspicuous trait in his character.

Meagher, on your side, though not Cleburne's equal in military genius, rivaled him in bravery and in the affections of his soldiers. The gallant stand which his bold brigade made on the heights of Fredericksburg is well known. Never were men so brave. They ennobled their race by their splendid gallantry on that desperate occasion. Though totally routed, they reaped harvests of glory. Their brilliant, though hopeless assaults on our lines excited the hearty applause of our officers and men.¹¹

In the Civil War memoirs – *My Life in the Irish Brigade* – by Private William Mc Carter, he wrote of his impression of Meagher:

In personal appearance, General Meagher was about thirty five years old, five feet eight or ten inches high, of a rather stout build, and had a clear high-colored complexion. He wore a heavy, dark brown mustache, closely trimmed. Except in battle, where he generally wore only the uniform of the private soldier, he nearly always appeared in the full dress of his rank. Meagher presented an exceeding neat and clean soldierly appearance, marked and admired by all. He was a gentleman of no ordinary ability. In thorough military skill and in courage

11 Cavanagh *Memoirs* pp. 470-471.

and bravery on the battlefield, he was second to none in the Army of the Potomac.

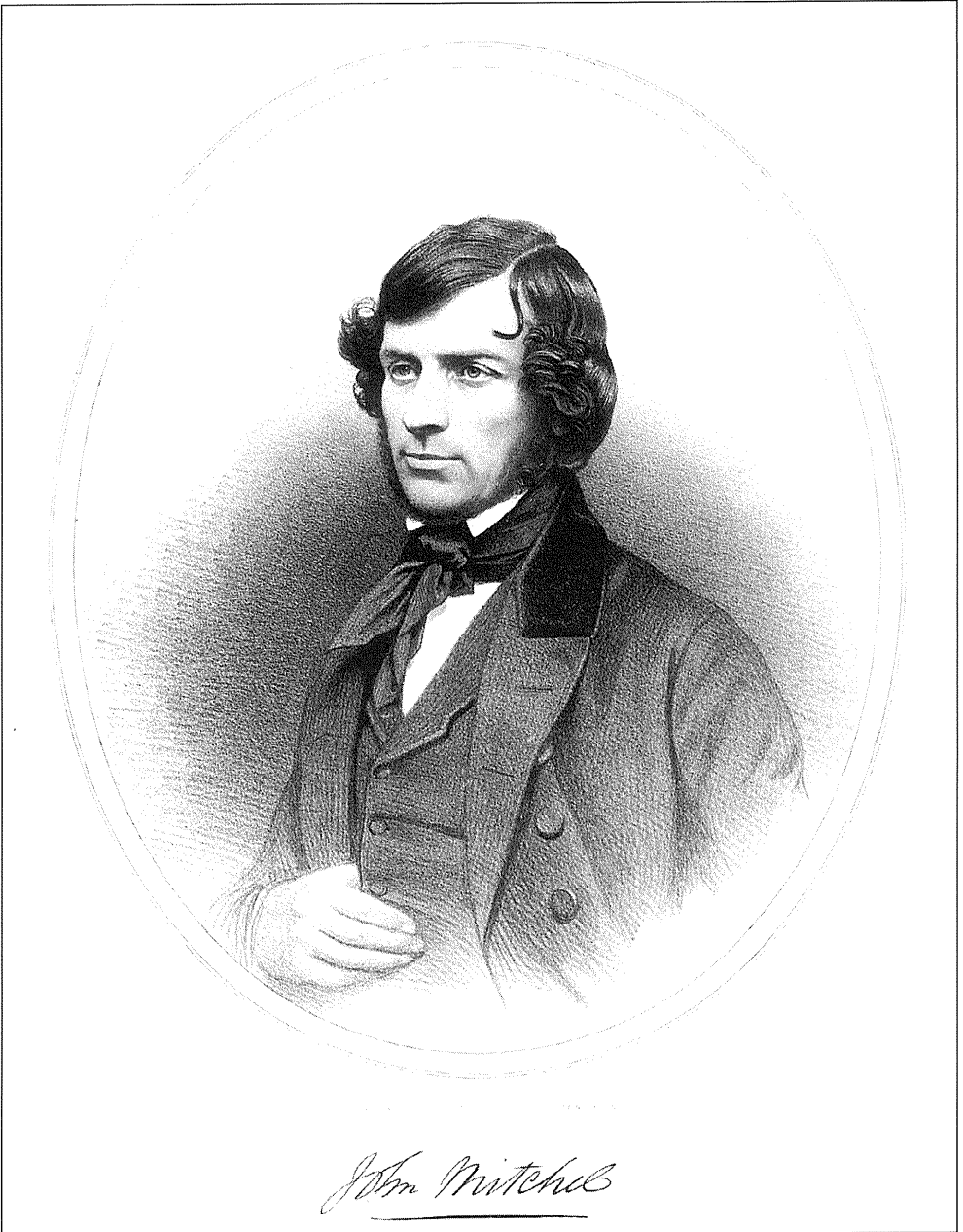
In polished gentlemanly manners and bearing, he was head and shoulders above any other man occupying a similar position in the army that I ever knew or heard of. His conversation was dignified. In point of education, his equal was hard to find. He spoke fluently not only English, but also Greek, Hebrew, French, German, Welsh and the native Irish language. The latter sounded like a mixture of all the others jumbled up together and was very seldom heard in the present day. Only a few of the natives of some of the wildest and most uncultivated parts of Ireland spoke it and even there that old, ancient language was fast going to decay.

In kindness and thoughtfulness for his men, he was the shining light and bright star of the whole Union Army. Meagher made unceasing efforts to have his soldiers all well provided for and made comfortable. He often brought some poor, sick or perhaps dying soldier into his own private tent in cold weather. Wrapping him up there in blankets, Meagher administered himself such remedies as he thought were needed. As a physician, Meagher had considerable judgment.

He was one of the very few military leaders who never required or would ask any of his command to go where he would not go himself. Meagher was first to lead the way. He was a soldier who not only prided in doing his own duty but encouraged and helped all under him to do theirs. Glory, honor and praise to his memory as a soldier, firm and true to his Government and his country.¹²

Thomas Francis Meagher, one of Waterford's most illustrious sons, a gifted orator and prolific writer, shaped the destiny of his adopted homeland and forever changed the perception of the Irish in the new world. He never forgot his native land and, time and time again, professed his love for it and the county that gave him birth. Curiously, being born and growing up in Waterford, I never heard of Meagher till I came to America. That the present generation of his people in Waterford – and in Ireland – know so little about him, speaks to a deficit in education there. It is their great loss. His speeches alone should be required reading in every Irish school. The only monuments to Meagher stand in Helena, Montana, and at Antietam.

12 William Mc Carter (1997) *My Life in the Irish Brigade: The Civil War Memories of Private William Mc Carter*, 116th Pennsylvania (Kevin O'Brien ed., Campbell, CA).



John Mitchel.

Source: National Library of Ireland (R16415)

Reluctant Fenian: Thomas Francis Meagher and militant Irish-American nationalism

By Pat McCarthy

FENIANISM¹ was the logical and lineal descendant of Young Ireland. It also created a transatlantic nexus between militant Irish nationalism in the United States and in Ireland, a link that has persisted to the present time. In both countries Irishmen dedicated to revolutionary action emerged to lead new organisations. Known initially as the Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB) in Ireland as the Fenian Brotherhood in the United States, the term 'fenian' soon came to be applied indiscriminately to members of both organisations and indeed to successor bodies such as *Clan na Gael*. The founding leaders of both bodies were men who had been 'out' in 1848 – in Ireland Stephens, Luby and Gray, in the United States Doheny and O'Mahony. But in the United States the names of two Young Ireland leaders were conspicuous by their absence – John Mitchel and Thomas Francis Meagher. For Mitchel his refusal to be associated with the new movement was the culmination of a growing disillusionment with Irish politics and his commitment to the U.S. Confederacy – a cause for which two of his sons died in the American Civil War. Thomas Francis Meagher's involvement with Fenianism was more complex, if ultimately similar and that relationship is explored in this essay.

The Emmet Monument Association

On 26 May 1852, Thomas Francis Meagher, aged twenty eight, stepped ashore in New York after his dramatic escape from Tasmania. There he was welcomed by many of the leaders of the Young Ireland movement now in exile – Michael Doheny, John Blake Dillon, Thomas D'Arcy Magee and John O'Mahony. They would soon be joined by other escapees such as Patrick O'Donoghue and Terence Bellew McManus. All had the new challenge of earning a living in their new homeland; some maintained the old challenge of revolution in Ireland. The latter group formed a secret Directory which maintained contact with some of their erstwhile colleagues in Ireland such as John O'Leary, Thomas Clarke Luby, Philip Grey and Joseph Brennan. They also had control over a substantial sum of money originally collected among the emigrant Irish in 1848.² It was this Directory that had financed Meagher's escape and he was soon a member. However he also had to earn his living and he started a series of lecture tours that took him away from New York. Consequently he was not a very active member of the Directory.

1 For the general history of fenianism see T.W. Moody (ed.), (1968), *The Fenian Movement*, (Cork) and R.V. Comerford, (1985), *The Fenians in Context*, (Dublin).

2 John Belchem, 'Irish-American Nationalism in 1848', *Irish Historical Studies*, Vol. XXIX, No. 113, 1994.

In 1854, Great Britain and her allies France, Turkey and Sardinia declared war on Russia and invaded the Crimea. The campaign soon became bogged down in a protracted siege of Sevastopol. To some it seemed that 'England's difficulty was Ireland's opportunity'. Doheny, O'Mahony and Michael Corcoran formed the 'Emmet Monument Association' – its name redolent of Robert Emmet's stirring speech from the dock. Its aim was to organise an armed expedition of not less than 5,000 trained volunteers to Ireland while the greater part of the British Army was in the Crimea. Doheny and O'Mahony entered into negotiations with the Russian Ambassador to the United States and convinced him of their ability to raise and lead such a force. In return the Ambassador was authorised by his government to pledge both arms and money. The movement spread rapidly and according to Michael Cavanagh

It numbered within its ranks the greater portion of the organised Irish nationalists throughout the chief cities of the Union, while in New York it numbered more armed and disciplined men, pledged to the cause of Ireland's freedom than there have been at any period since.³

Meagher did not join even though he must have been aware of the existence of this secret oath-bound society. The most that his loyal biographer Cavanagh can say is that Meagher's lecture tours helped to inspire others. Before anything could come of the drilling and plotting the Crimean War ended in March 1856. The Association was dissolved and the members released from their pledges. The leadership, however, formed a committee of thirteen to await that elusive opportunity. They did not have to wait long.

Meagher and fenianism – the first encounter

In 1857, the British Empire was shaken to the core by the Indian Mutiny. The repercussions extended beyond the sub-continent and when added to the growing French threat to British naval supremacy, it seemed to the Directory that the elusive opportunity had arrived. This time Irish-American efforts would be supplemented by a parallel movement in Ireland. On St. Patrick's Day, 17 March 1858, James Stephens, Thomas Clarke Luby and Peter Langan established the Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB) in Dublin as a secret oath-bound revolutionary society.⁴ A short time later O'Mahony and Doheny established the Fenian Brotherhood in America. Both societies expanded steadily after initial difficulties. In Ireland, Stephens undertook an extensive organising tour and by the Autumn he felt confident enough to visit America to ensure a steady flow of money to finance the operations in Ireland. In particular he had his eye on the money controlled by the Directory. To obtain that, he knew that he would have to gain the support of Meagher and Mitchel, still the most visible and influential of the Irish-American leadership.

3 Michael Cavanagh, (1892), *Memoirs of General Thomas Francis Meagher*, (Worcester, Mass.).

4 Moody, *Fenian Movement*, pp. 11-19; Comerford, *Fenians in Context*, p.47.

On Wednesday 13 October 1858, Stephens landed in New York, alone and unexpected. He immediately sought out Michael Doheny and their meeting was marred by a personality clash as Stephens sought to impose his personal control on all aspects of the movement on both sides of the Atlantic. In addition Doheny resented the emphasis that Stephens was putting on Meagher and Mitchel, both of whom were standing aloof from the new movement. Stephens persisted and Doheny agreed to write and to telegraph Mitchel to arrange a meeting. In the meantime Stephens focussed on Meagher and on 19 October set out with O'Mahony to meet Meagher at the Fifth Avenue residence of Meagher's in-laws, the Townshends, where he then lived. Stephens now takes up the story himself.

As Meagher had met me but once in Ireland, I was not surprised at his not being able to recognize me. On being presented he gave me a patronizing hand, inviting us up to his study. I had been told of his obesity; but, in spite of this, he appeared by no means imposing on this occasion. The intellectual and moral portion of his head is small, and his measured way of speaking would scarcely reconcile one to the genius of Shakespeare. Briefly stated our position at home. He seemed greatly struck; pronounced me the Tone of our generation, expressed not only sympathy but a desire to forward my views as far as he could. On hearing of the letter to Mitchel, and the telegram sent to him, was pleased, seeing the importance of his co-operation.

He would present me to the Directory (for he also deemed it better to see Mitchel before applying for the money in the hands of the Directory) on my return, and, as a member propose that it should be given to me. All this, though pleasant, had one drawback; he said nothing about *going heartily to work with us*. He said however that he would give the matter his most earnest consideration. On leaving, he asked me to meet him next day at the office of the *Irish News*.⁵

When they met the next day, Meagher said that he had considered Stephens's proposals and was ready to throw himself 'heart and soul' into the new movement. Buoyed up with Meagher's assurances, Stephens decided to travel to Tennessee to meet Mitchel. As he had business in Washington, Meagher, along with another former Young Irelander Thomas D'Arcy Magee, travelled with Stephens as far as Washington. As they parted Meagher gave Stephens a letter of introduction to Mitchel:

This will be handed to you by our gallant friend, Stephens – one of the truest of the true – and, I verily believe, the Wolfe Tone, of our generation.⁶

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- 5 James Stephens kept a detailed, if self-serving, diary of his American trip. Never published, the original is in the Public Record Office, Northern Ireland. A photostat is held in the manuscript section of the National Library of Ireland and is referred to as *Stephens' Diary 1859* – NLI, Ms. 6418.
- 6 *Stephen's Diary*.

The initial meeting was very successful. Mitchel was won over by Stephens's enthusiasm and tales of the organisation being built up in Ireland. Stephens was invited to stay at the Mitchel home and, for two days, they conversed eagerly together of their Young Ireland days and of the forthcoming struggle. Mitchel later recalled:

For two days he remained with us, telling me romantic tales of his armed, sworn, organised forces in Ireland. All he wanted was that I should publicly call on my fellow countrymen in America for money, and more money, and no end of money to be remitted to him for revolutionary purposes.⁷

For the moment at least all that Stephens wanted of Mitchel was his support in accessing the funds controlled by the Directory and this Mitchel promised to do, saying that he would write to each member. Buoyed up by this Stephens returned to New York. He was not long there when he had a further meeting with Mitchel who told him that he had changed his mind about writing to the Directory. Although he personally supported Stephens's efforts he would not do so publicly nor would he petition the Directory. Disappointed but not downhearted Stephens waited in New York for the return of Meagher consoling himself with the thought:

There are two gentlemen, however, members of this present Directory that are good and true, Robert Emmet and T.F. Meagher.⁸

This belief in Meagher's commitment did not last long. On 25 January 1859 O'Mahony mentioned that Meagher was back in New York but had made no mention of Stephens or of his support for fenianism. With a sense of foreboding Stephens decided to seek out Meagher. A few days later he called to him at his office. After a perfunctory greeting Meagher said to him 'I left in a letter for you in case you did not call'. Stephens opened the letter, as he said to himself, 'with a mis-giving'. It was brief and to the point:

New York,
26 January 1859

My Dear Stephens,

I have come to the conclusion, after some days of conscientious reflections, that, if it be not criminal, it is unworthy of me, in any way, however trivial or indirectly, to urge or authorize a revolutionary movement, in the hazards of which, from a conviction of their utter uselessness, I feel at present no disposition whatever to participate. You will, therefore, be so good as to erase my name from the paper you did me the honour to submit to me for my signature a few weeks ago, since by this letter it is virtually withdrawn. And with sincere regards – and friendship,

Believe me,
Very faithfully yours,
Thomas F. Meagher.⁹

7 William Dillon (1883) *Life of John Mitchell*, Vol. 2, (London) p.120.

8 *Stephen's Diary*.

9 *Stephen's Diary*.

Without comment Stephens concluded his American journal with that cold and dismissive letter.

With these words it must have seemed that *Meagher of the Sword* had turned his back forever on fenianism. Stephens, with all hope of immediate substantial American funding shattered, returned to Ireland to continue his indefatigable work in building up the IRB. For Mitchel it was indeed the end of his association with militant Nationalism, but for Meagher such a break was not as quick or as clean.

On the fringes of fenianism

Over the course of the next two years the Fenian Brotherhood developed slowly but steadily. Several 'Phoenix regiments' of armed Irishmen were formed and began drilling with arms while others joined the 69th New York Militia, 'The Fighting Irish', to gain military experience. Several times in that period it seemed that Meagher was about to join. According to Cavanagh, he went to the Fenian office to meet Doheny on 17 March 1861 but, Doheny being away, only Cavanagh himself was present – to whom Meagher expressed his 'admiration of the disciplined column of armed Irishmen that had paraded that morning' and of his determination to join them.¹⁰ However events overtook him.

On 15 April Confederate guns fired on Fort Sumter, precipitating the American Civil War. Though sympathetic to the South, Meagher now saw it as his duty to fight to defend the Union, the country that had given himself and so many other Irishmen a home. He immediately involved himself in raising a company, company H, for the 69th and later that summer was involved in raising the Irish Brigade. He was given command of the brigade with the rank of Brigadier General even though he had no military experience. Apart from the immediate prospect of military glory in the war between the States it seems as if he also thought of leading his men in a war of liberation in Ireland. As his brigade advanced from Yorktown in May 1862 for its first taste of action it became scattered in a violent rainstorm. An officer of the brigade recalled the general's reaction:

General Meagher could have been found pacing back and forth in an abandoned shanty, worrying about his command, "Great God" he said to one of his officers, the Irish Brigade will be brought into action at daybreak and the work of a brigade will be expected from them, while I have scarcely two hundred men. Are these the men I expect at some future time to free Ireland with?¹¹

Despite these sentiments Meagher did not join the Brotherhood. At this time it was estimated that most of the men and nearly all of the officers of the Brigade were sworn fenians.¹² One of the leading fenian organisers in the Union Army and in the Irish Brigade was Dr. Lawrence Reynolds – also a Young Ireland exile and,

10 Cavanagh, *Memoirs*, p.362.

11 Thomas Kenealy, (1998), *The Great Shame*, (London), p.351.

12 William L. Burton, (1998), *Melting Pot Soldiers – The Union's Ethnic Regiments*, (Fordham) pp. 159-161.

like Meagher, a native of Waterford city.¹³ Meetings of the soldier-fenians were held openly but Meagher held aloof. While the image of a victorious general leading a uniformed disciplined mass of Irishmen into the field may have appealed to his vanity, not for him the daily work of building up a secret revolutionary society.

His standing among the Irish-American community remained high and the fenian leadership was not slow to recognise and to use that standing. On 15 January 1861, Meagher's fellow Young Irelander and escapee from Tasmania, Terence Bellew McManus died in San Francisco.¹⁴ The following day he was buried in Calvary Cemetery but in death he was destined to perform one last service for the cause of Irish nationalism. The local fenian circle in San Francisco conceived the idea of exhuming the remains, carrying them in state to Ireland for reburial there. They thought that such an action would provide an ideal opportunity for a popular demonstration of militant nationalism. The idea was taken up enthusiastically by the fenian leadership in America but Stephens and Luby in Ireland took some convincing. Finally Stephens saw the potential advantages and took control of the organising committee in Ireland.¹⁵ In America Doheny and O'Mahony were the principal organisers of the project. All local committees were filled by sworn members of the brotherhood and all reported to the 'Obsequies Committee' of Doheny and O'Mahony. Though not a fenian, Meagher was immediately co-opted to the 'Obsequies Committee'. Apart from his Young Ireland connection, his social standing in New York and his friendship with Archbishop Hughes would be obvious advantages to the fenians who were frowned upon by the Church on both sides of the Atlantic.

On 21 August 1861 the body left San Francisco for New York. As it crossed the continent the funeral cortege was met by large demonstrations of Irish men and women. It arrived in New York on 15 September where Meagher led the official welcoming party. The next day he had a meeting with Archbishop Hughes who promptly agreed to the use of St. Patrick's Cathedral and to officiate at a requiem mass. In the meantime the coffin rested at Steven's Hotel where armed, uniformed fenians mounted a guard of honour. It was there that Meagher paid his formal respects and wept at the sight of the coffin and the memory of the days that he and McManus had spent together trying to raise the people in 1848. Mass was said on 18 September at which Archbishop Hughes gave a stirring sermon. The body lay in New York until 4 October when it was put on board ship. When it reached Ireland it had the same rousing effect on the people even though both the Bishop of Cork and Cardinal Cullen, Archbishop of Dublin refused permission for a lying in state in any church in their dioceses. Meanwhile Meagher, his temporary service to the Fenian Brotherhood over, returned to his army duties.

13 Joseph G. Bilby (1995) *The Irish Brigade in the Civil War* (Pennsylvania) p.74, Paul Jones (1969) *The Irish Brigade* (New York) p.121-122.

14 Thomas G. McAllister (1972) *Terence Bellew McManus, 1811-1861* (Maynooth) pp. 43-47.

15 Desmond Ryan (1967) *The Fenian Chief* (Dublin) pp. 170-180.

Meagher takes the oath

Meagher's Irish Brigade suffered appalling losses at the Battles of Antietam and Fredericksburg in 1862. Further losses at Chancellorsville in April 1863 reduced his Brigade to less than 400 men fit for duty, only about 10% of its original strength. Repeated applications to the War Department for a period of rest and recruitment for his small band of survivors had met with refusal. A despondent Meagher decided to resign his commission. On 8 May 1863 he wrote to the Secretary of War as follows:

I beg most respectfully to tender you my resignation as Brigadier General, commanding what was once known as the Irish Brigade. In tendering my resignation, however, as the Brigadier General in command of this poor vestige and relic of the Irish Brigade, I beg sincerely to assure you that my services in any capacity that can prove useful, are freely at the summons and disposition of the Government of the United States¹⁶

On 14 May the resignation was accepted and Meagher returned to New York.

That summer the Civil War moved towards its bloody climax. Vicksburg, the last confederate stronghold on the Mississippi was under siege while Lee led his legendary army northwards towards a little village called Gettysburg and the decisive battle of the war. It must have been galling for *Meagher of the Sword* to be a 'mere' civilian at this particular moment especially when he read in the newspapers of the heroic fight of 'his' brigade in the cornfield on 3 July, the second day of Gettysburg. Restless for some form of action or involvement he approached Doheny and a week later, on 11 July 1863 Thomas Francis Meagher was sworn into the Brotherhood.¹⁷ Throughout that summer he was a frequent visitor to the fenian headquarters in New York and it seemed that he was ready to play a major role again in militant Irish nationalism.

When news reached him that Meagher had taken the oath James Stephens was naturally elated. He at once saw an opportunity to help IRB recruitment in Ireland and specifically in Waterford. In a letter to Doheny dated October 14, 1863 he wrote:

Waterford City is the most backward spot in Munster – I mean of the towns, for a few urban districts are still backward enough, even in Munster. As General Meagher is so desirous of forwarding the work, it struck me that a spirited address to the manhood of his native city would have a good effect, and so being last week there I asked my friends if such were the case. They were quite of my way of thinking. That address, then, I am desirous of having at the General's convenience. It would be best in the form of a private letter, addressed to a third party, in which the General might express his wonder and regret at hearing how dull his townfolk are, at the very time there is such

16 Cavanagh *Memoirs* p. 485.

17 Michael Doheny (1886) *The United Irishman*; Cavanagh p.489; Kenealy p.400.

reason for faith and activity. The reasons for this faith and activity he could give with effect by stating the numbers willing and bound to come over here at the close of the war. There should be nothing about a war with England: the people should be taught to look to our own race and efforts solely. Of course, you will show this to the General. Mind, it would not do to publish an address from the General to his townsmen; that, while stirring up a fire would certainly neutralise the efforts of many more. Should the General make me the recipient of his address I shall look on it as a favour ...¹⁸

In the same letter he appealed to Doheny to ask Meagher to use his influence to raise £500 to cover the costs of launching the fenian newspaper – *The Irish People*.

There is no reply from Meagher to Stephens's suggestion extant nor was one likely since it seems that the General's new found enthusiasm was already beginning to wane.

That Autumn the Fenian Brotherhood decided to capitalise on their growing strength and to hold a national convention in Chicago in November.¹⁹ The purpose of the convention was to adopt a new constitution, elect an officer-board and to publicise their activities. Fenian circles in twelve States and in the Union armies of the Cumberland, the Tennessee and the Potomac selected delegates to meet in Chicago on 3 November 1863. One of the most powerful and influential circles was that of the Army of the Potomac, home of the Irish Brigade, of General Michael Corcoran's Irish Legion and numerous other units with a large fenian presence. Meagher was nominated to represent the Army of the Potomac and as the eighty-two delegates gathered it must have seemed that this would be an ideal stage for Meagher to play a leading role. He had made arrangements with John O'Mahony to be present for the opening of the convention but instead he headed for Washington on what he claimed was army business. On his return to New York he sent a telegram to the convention:

New York, Nov. 4, 1863.

John O'Mahony,
Fenian Hall,
Chicago.

Had to go to Washington on call of War Department. The call imperative. Have to go again on Saturday. Will proceed to the Army next week. I heartily concur in plan and regulations of reorganisation as proposed by you, with such modifications as the Convention adopts.

Fraternity and happiness and honor to all.

Thos. Francis Meagher.²⁰

18 Stephens to Doheny, *Fenian Papers*, NLI, p. 740.

19 Robert G. Athearne (1949) *Thomas Francis Meagher: An Irish Revolutionary in America*. (Colorado) p.132; William D'Arcy (1947) *The Fenian Movement in the United States, 1858-1886* (Washington) p.20.

20 Cavanagh, *Memoirs*, p. 486.

Although the convention continued for several days, Meagher made no effort to join it. Instead he went south again to visit his old comrades in the army and spent November there being royally entertained. Just before Christmas Meagher decided to return to New York. General Michael Corcoran accompanied him to Fairfax station to say goodbye but while riding back to camp was thrown from his horse and killed. Corcoran had been the leading soldier-fenian in America and his death was a major blow to the movement.

On Friday 22 January 1864, the fenian brotherhood held a memorial service for Corcoran in the Cooper Institute, New York. Meagher was the main speaker to a huge audience. Mindful that the occasion was sponsored by the fenian brotherhood, he paid stirring tribute to the dead general and concluded his speech with a detailed review of Corcoran's commitment to the cause of Ireland's freedom.

Thus with him did the glorious project of having Ireland established as a nation become the ultimate aim of his military life. Hence it was that, convinced they were upon the true road, he joined the Fenian Brotherhood under the auspices of which these words commemorative of their brother are this night spoken, and finding in that brotherhood men of his own high aim, he remained faithful and serviceable to it to the last. Brothers see to it that his wish, his prayer, his hope shall be fulfilled.²¹

Despite these stirring words, Meagher does not seem to have played any further role in fenianism. Instead he focussed his efforts on reviving his military career.

On 23 December 1863, the same day that he learned of Corcoran's death (his friend and one-time commanding officer), Meagher was informed by the War Department that his resignation was cancelled. He was once again a Brigadier-General in the Union Army. He was, however, a general without a command. Significantly he was not offered the vacancy created by Corcoran's death. How Meagher might have been influenced by the strongly fenian regiments of the Irish Legion we can only speculate. For nine months he badgered the War Department, using all his friends and contacts in Washington. Finally on 13 September 1864 he received orders to proceed to Nashville, Tennessee and there report to General Sherman. He was not however to be part of the latter's famous 'march to the sea'. In November he was finally given command of two brigades of convalescents from the Army of Tennessee with the role of guarding the railway line. The motley command of convalescents and recovering wounded was a far cry from the Irish Brigade! His command swelled until he had almost 6,500 men under his command and he was ordered to transport them to North Carolina. The journey by rail and ship was marred by indiscipline. But with the war winding to a close, on 12 May 1865 Meagher, for the second time, submitted his resignation which was accepted. His second term in the army had been less than glorious and Meagher's military career was over.

21 Cavanagh, *Memoirs*, p. 350-356.

As Meagher drifted away from fenianism so too did his position as a leader of the Irish-American community fade. Throughout the Summer of 1864, as the presidential election loomed, he became more and more vocal in his support of the Lincoln and the Republican administration – both anathema to the traditionally Democrat supporting Irish. This move was noted with sorrow and with anger by the *Irish American* – voice of the Irish Community. On 15 October 1864 it intoned

Between him and the people who loved and trusted him once, he has opened a gulf he can never bridge over.

A few weeks later Meagher called on the Irish to vote for Lincoln. The *Irish American* saw this as the final betrayal and responded on 12 November

In General Meagher's fall from the high position he once held in the esteem and affection of his countrymen, we see only a subject of regret. Our indignation at his unprovoked attack upon our people has long since subsided into contempt, and we have no desire to add a deeper tint to an act that has gone so far to darken the whole record of a life, of which the promise was once so fair.

Epilogue:

In August 1865 Meagher was appointed secretary and later Acting Governor of Montana Territory. He immediately proceeded west to take up his appointment. While there, the Irish American community was agog with preparation for a fenian rising with many former soldiers making their way to Ireland. Others prepared to strike at a more convenient target – Canada. The papers were filled with stories of fenian military preparations for the invasion of Canada and inevitably Meagher's name as linked to the movement. Appalled at the thought that his government contacts might think of him as an active fenian, Meagher wrote to Secretary of State Seward, his patron begging him to regard any such reports as 'absurd'.²²

Truely the wheel had turned full circle – the young Irish rebel had become the middle-aged American conservative. To the fenian movement in the States he was a lost leader, one whose ability, prestige, charisma and national record could have unified that fractious movement and fulfilled its potential. We can possibly get an intimation of Meagher's true thoughts on fenianism from his private correspondence. In a letter from Virginia City, Montana to a friend in San Francisco dated 27 October 1866, he expressed himself on fenian matters.

In the hands of thoroughly capable and reliable men it (fenianism) would have been and yet may be an organisation powerful enough to command for the Irish race on this continent the recognition they are entitled to, which, with such an opening as a war between England and France, or a war between England and the United States, it would be more than adequate to the liberation of Ireland and her triumph as

22 Meagher to Seward, February 20, 1866; *Territorial papers of Montana*, Vol. I. Quoted in Athearne, p. 151.

an independent nation permanently guaranteed. Vast resources have, however, in the mismanagement of this magnificent organisation been scandalously wasted.²³

Is that what Meagher had subconsciously sought but had shied away from? Was he that 'thoroughly capable and reliable man' the movement needed? – We shall never know.



*View of T. F. Meagher monument from inside
Capitol Building, Helena, MT.*

Courtesy J. M. Hearne

23 Letter quoted in unpublished memoir of 'Maj. Gen. Thomas Francis Meagher with Diary, Correspondence Speeches, etc. – compiled by Frederick Kearney', New York, 1869, NLI, Ms. 9728.

<i>T. F. Meagher.</i>		181
April 5	Whole bill de/ to till d & t	212.00
"	Paid on above bill	<u>150.00</u>
	Balance due	62.00
" 5	3 m 4 dr	8.00
" 6	3 m 1 pitcher beer, 1 sugar	9.25
" 7	3 m 2 bottles Claret	17.00
" "	1 bottle Champagne	8.00
" 8	1 meal	2.00
" 9	1 m 3 Cocktails	5.50
" 11	1 m	3.50
		<u>45.25</u>
" 12	2 m 1 1/2 Claret	10.00
" 13	1 m 1 bottle wine 1 dr	8.25
" "	Lunch & Cocktails	4.00
" 14	1 m	3.00
		<u>76.50</u>
" 14	1 m 1 bott wine	8.00
" 15	1 m 2 stews & drinks	5.25
		<u>139.75</u>
" 16	2 m	6.00
" 17	2 m 1 pitcher beer	7.00
" 18	3 m 2 dr	8.50
" 19	1 m	3.00
		<u>116.25</u>
" 19	2 m	6.00
" 20	2 m 1 bott wine	11.00
" "	4 dr	1.00
		<u>134.25</u>
" 21	3 meals	9.00
" "	1 pitcher beer	2.00
" 22	2 meals	6.00
" 23	4 meals 1 bott Champagne	22.00
" 24	3 meals & 1 pitcher milk punch	11.00
" 25	1 meal	3.00
		<u>187.25</u>
" "	2 m 1 bott wine	10.00
" 26	1 m	2.75
" "	2 m 1 bott milk punch	9.00
		<u>209.00</u>

MHS Archives

Thomas Francis Meagher's taste in refreshments shows up in his bar bill (probably April 1866), which appears in a ledger from an unidentified establishment in Virginia City.

Thomas Francis Meagher's Bar Bill*

by Elliott West

**Gallant soldier, slandered martyr, eloquent tribune of the people.
Prince of bombast, political rogue, drunken debauchee.**

THOMAS Francis Meagher was called all of these, and more. He lived in Montana only twenty-one months, and his influence on the state's history was barely perceptible. Yet, no one of his day inspired greater popular passion, and few figures since have kept a tighter grip on Montanans' interest than this flamboyant Irish immigrant whose bronze figure, astride a powerful charger, now guards the front lawn of the state Capitol.

Recently, a document has surfaced of the most unlikely sort from the time of Meagher's sojourn in the West. It is an intriguing find for the historical snoop; and it offers to throw a shaft of new light on Meagher, his controversial character, and his political career in Montana.

Most who are familiar with Montana history know something of Meagher's chequered career before he arrived in the Rockies.¹ The son of a wealthy Irish merchant, he emerged in 1847 as a brilliant orator and leader of Young Ireland, a revolutionary faction calling for violent resistance to British rule. For his firey rhetoric, his admirers named him 'Meagher of the Sword.' British authorities, not at all amused, first sentenced him to death, then banished him for life to Tasmania (later Van Diemen's Land).

After two excruciatingly dull years, he simply rowed away in an open boat from that 'raw, ill-formed colony.' Rescued from a desert isle, he arrived in New York in 1852 as a celebrity and martyr to freedom. At twenty-nine he cut a handsome figure with his erect bearing, square shoulders, and modestly intelligent face. In time, his slightly brooding eyes would turn troubled, but Meagher was riding high, and he soon became one of the most widely recognised Irish Americans of his day. During the next nine years, he founded and edited *The Irish News*, lectured from New Orleans to San Francisco, quarreled with the Catholic Church, opened a law office, dabbled in a Costa Rican railroad scheme, and horsewhipped an editor. After Tasmania he would not be bored again.

During the Civil War he rose to brigadier general and commander of the Irish Brigade that he had helped recruit. At Second Bull Run, Antietam, Fredericksburg, and Chancellorsville, Confederate rifles and artillery chewed at the ranks of the Brigade in some of the bloodiest fighting of the war; and though his horse was once shot from under him, Meagher went unscratched.

1 The standard work is Robert G. Athearn, *Thomas Francis Meagher: An Irish Revolutionary in America* (1949) (Boulder: University of Colorado Press). See also Michael Cavanagh (1892) *The Memoirs of Gen. Thomas Francis Meagher* (Worcester, Mass.: The Messenger Press), and W. F. Lyons (1870) *Thomas Francis Meagher; His Political and Military Career* (New York: D & J Sadlier and Co.).

* Permission to print this article kindly granted by *Montana The Magazine of Western History*. My thanks to Dr. W. Clark Whitehorn for his help in this matter.

But he was frustrated. Wealth and lasting accomplishments had alluded him, and some had questioned his competence (but never his courage) as a commander. When President Andrew Johnson offered him the post of secretary of Montana Territory, he quickly accepted. Then, in September 1865, barely a week after Meagher arrived in the territory, Governor Sidney Edgerton quit and took a stage back home to Ohio. Suddenly Meagher was in charge.

In 1865, territorial politics was a treacherous tangle. Meagher owed his job to Johnson, like himself a unionist Democrat, but he also had to deal with a Congress run by radical Republicans battling with the president while at home he ruled over an electorate swollen by Southern Democrats who fled to the gold fields as the war wound down.²

Meagher, quickly labeled the 'Acting One', had to choose sides. The Democratic majority wanted both a statehood convention and a legislative session, and after some hesitation Meagher called for both to meet in Virginia City, though so confused was the situation that it was uncertain whether he had the authority. In this, he earned the bitter opposition of three Republicans, some of whom feared that the *vox populi* would be spoken with a distinct Confederate drawl.³

Looking back, it is hard to understand the fuss. When the legislators met from 5 March to 13 April, 1866, they did not raise the stars and bars. They did define legislative and judicial districts, amend the licence law, specify the duties of several territorial and county officials, and ask Congress to oppose a bill to sell mineral lands. The Democratic majority was partisan, but not much more so than during calmer times.

Yet Meagher's calling of the session triggered a war of words unusual even for those angry years. Legislators were described as villains, traitors, and Missouri bushwhackers with only mischief and rebellion on their minds.

The opposition saved its bitterest assaults for the acting governor, and in Meagher they found an inviting target. Impetuous and short-tempered, 'truculent, noisy, brash, verbose, and belligerent,' as his biographer Robert G. Athearn put it, this would-be revolutionary had generated plenty of jealousy and ill feeling during his years in the East.⁴ Meagher brought his reputation with him, and his critics found in it ample ammunition.

Even his friends would have admitted that Meagher had an ego that barely fit under the Big Sky. One of his enemies later called it '...an excessive bump of vanity,' and now Republicans charged that he was irresponsibly usurping power for his personal glory and surrounding himself with toadies.⁵

2 Clark C. Spence (1975) *Territorial Politics and Government in Montana, 1864-89* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press), 4-34.

3 For a judicious account of the background of the legislative session, see James L. Thane, Jr., 'An Active Acting Governor: Thomas Francis Meagher's Administration in Montana Territory,' *Journal of the West* 9 (October 1970): 537-551.

4 Athearn, *Thomas Francis Meagher*, 170.

5 Vivian A. Paladin, ed., 'Henry N. Blake: Proper Bostonian, Purposeful Pioneer,' *Montana the Magazine of Western History* 14 (October 1964): 39.

Republicans were at their nastiest, however, when remarking on Meagher's personal habits. Throughout much of his career rumours had persisted of his excessive fondness for strong drink. His enemies now picked up the refrain. Since arriving in the territory, one critic charged, Meagher had been a 'drunken madman,' consorting with prostitutes and wallowing his days away in his room, 'polluting his bed and person in the most indecent and disgusting manner...'.⁶ In short, the man at the helm of government was a disgrace and a blight.

Meagher did not sit in silence. He was acting fully within his authority and responding to the public will, he said, as always the champion of democracy. As for his attackers, they hoped to keep power for themselves by ignoring the people's voice. Envenomed liars and ill-bred bigots, they were concealing their real motives by summoning up the old canard of the drunken Irishman. Thus, the history of the 'bogus legislature,' one of the strongest and most famous episodes of early Montana history, became interwoven with questions about the morality and personal behaviour of the man who called it into being

For those who assume that all sources about this controversy have been mined, there is good news. A new bit of evidence has come to light. In the vaults of the Montana Historical Society is a daybook of an unidentified saloon in the territorial capital of Virginia City. It covers those turbulent months of the Spring of 1866 when the legislature met. By a remarkable stroke of historian's luck it contains Thomas F. Meagher's bar bill.⁷

The legislature met for thirty-eight days. During that time, Meagher's charges for meals and 'wet goods' totalled \$434.75; of that, liquor in various forms accounted for \$274. It should be remembered that in 1866 refreshment was somewhat cheaper than it is today. For a pitcher of cocktails, a customer paid three or four dollars, and for a bottle of claret, five dollars. Considering the rate of exchange, Meagher's bill was heroic.

The acting governor's tastes were wide-ranging and expansive. Included on his tab were seventy-four meals, nineteen bottles of wine, seven tumblers of cocktails, a dozen pitchers of beer, forty-four individual drinks, forty-three cigars, a bottle of whiskey, and a bowl of punch. Eventually, he paid for it all in cash.

What are we to make of this? On its face, the record seems to confirm the wildest charges against Meagher. '...the Governor called the House to order,' Republican Neill Howie wrote in his diary on the first day of the session. '...Governor very drunk.'⁸ He might well have been. The day before he had charged eighty dollars in wine, and on that day, two bottles of claret and a couple of tumblers of cocktails. Considering the debts that followed, the Acting One must have viewed the next few weeks only dimly through an alcoholic haze, especially when it is recalled that the daybook covers only one saloon and shows no liquor he might have bought outright with cash. So there it is; Meagher was a simple rumpot.

Or was he? Paradoxically, the very enormity of Meagher's bill argues in his

6 Athearn, *Thomas Francis Meagher*, 153.

7 Virginia City, Montana, *Tavern Account Book*, pp. 166, 180-181. SC 143 Montana Historical Society Archives, Helena.

8 Quoted in Spence, *Territorial Politics*, 38.

favour. If in fact he drank everything he paid for, his would simply have been a horizontal administration. Certainly some of the cocktails and beers must have gone down the Irishman's throat. Just as surely, he could not have swallowed it all and remained functional.

Furthermore, in this saloon at least, Meagher did not drink with the doggedness and consistency of the dedicated drunk. On many days he charged only a meal or two, washed down perhaps with some beer or wine. On other days, his table groaned with food and a variety of potables. This ebb and flow suggests that Meagher was using this liquor for another purpose - to lubricate the machinery of government. If so, a closer look might reveal some correspondence between events in the legislature and the governor's bar bill.

During the first few days on the job, the legislators set up committees, introduced bills and established the ground rules, written and unwritten, for the session. There were all the manoeuvring and wary circling typical of political animals early in the scrap.⁹ Meanwhile, in our unnamed groggery, the governor was running up some of his largest debts. On March 6 and 7, Meagher called for 'mine host' to put \$42.50 in food and drink on his tab. Did those eight pitchers and four glasses of beer help decide a crucial committee appointment? Was the wording of some of the bills - eventually 138 in all - somewhat different because of the three pitchers of cocktails charged by the chief executive?

Adding an intriguing note to this speculation is a contemporary comment that the legislature was meeting in 'a couple of rooms over some whiskey shops...'¹⁰ Is the daybook from one of these taverns? It is easy to imagine Meagher putting his arm around the shoulders of a couple of overheated delegates at the end of a difficult day and inviting them downstairs to pull a cork. And perhaps the three bottles of claret and champagne charged on 7 April, for example, were sent upstairs to promote a bit of moderation on an exceptionally thorny point.

Any judgement on such tactics obviously depends on the view of the political process that each reader brings to this document. But without a doubt there is food for cynics here. On 19 March, for instance, it was party time. The Acting One bought supper for thirteen, plus three bottles of claret, two bottles of sherry, a score of drinks and cigars, and a bowl of punch - all of it on the cuff. Was there a special cause for celebration, perhaps a payoff?

In fact, earlier that day solons had given final approval to Council Bill # 17, one of the more hotly debated of the session. This measure divided Gallatin County in half. The Southern part continued to be called Gallatin. The new county to the north was given a new name - Meagher.¹¹ An 'excessive bump of vanity' indeed.

In his own defence, however, Meagher could have argued that his style of politics was hardly unique. From the republic's earliest years the drinking house and the politician had been bound in close alliance. John Adams wrote of pre-

9 (Virginia City) *Montana Post*, 10 March, 1866 and 17 March, 1866.

10 Athearn, *Thomas Francis Meagher*, 153.

11 (Virginia City) *Montana Post*, 24 March, 1866.

Revolutionary Boston that in its taverns 'diseases, vicious habits, bastards and legislators are frequently begotten,' and in New York City of the 1850s, where Meagher had earned his first political stripes, the saloon was the centre of political life.¹²

If anything, this bond was even stronger in Meagher's new home. Observers agreed that westerners drank more - much more - some said - than their eastern cousins. One literary tourist later would estimate one saloon for every eighty inhabitants of Montana, and in 1866 an editor in the northern Rockies suggested in his country a new definition for sobriety was needed. No one should be considered drunk in the mountains, he wrote, as long as he could make a noise.¹³ Politicians gravitated to bar-rooms in societies like these. The first constitutions of both the city of Denver and the short-lived Jefferson Territory were drafted in Denver's Apollo Hall, and that of Arizona Territory was conceived in a Tucson drinking house called Congress Hall.¹⁴ Seen in this context, Meagher could have been coping responsibly with a difficult situation by meeting his public in a traditional political forum and working with the accepted tools of his trade.

When we look at him from this angle, the drunken sot has evolved into a humble democrat and practical man of affairs. The different facets of the man have caught and refracted the light thrown upon him by this new evidence. The real Thomas Francis Meagher has eluded us again.

Perhaps it should be this way. Perhaps this 'true and loyal soldier' who 'risked all for the land of his adoption' to quote the inscription beneath his statue - was meant to make his most enduring contribution by giving Montanans something to argue about. Certainly Meagher's impact on their institutions was less than profound. After all the heat and energy, the political turmoil of 1866 ended not with a roar but a mew. Almost a year to the day after the legislature convened, Congress passed a law nullifying all the acts passed during the legislative session. The statehood convention had drafted a constitution, but it was never submitted to a vote, and later it was lost. Legally speaking, nothing whatsoever had happened.

As for Meagher, by the Summer of 1867 he had turned to other things. Probably hoping to blot out the political fiasco with a military adventure, he asked to raise an army to meet a threat of Indian war. Once more the Acting One would be Meagher of the Sword. But it was not to be. On 01 July he arrived in Fort Benton to await a ship of arms. Late that night, while wandering on the deck of a steamboat, he apparently tripped on a rope, stumbled overboard into the roiling Missouri, and drowned.

Meagher's sudden, slightly mysterious death somehow fit his improbable,

12 John Adams (1850) *The Works of John Adams*, ed., Charles Francis Adams, vol. 2 of 10 vols. (Boston: Charles C. Little and James Brown), 85.

13 Julian Ralph (1970) *Our Great West: A Study of the Present Conditions and Future Possibilities of the New Commonwealths and Capitals of the United States* (Freeport, N. Y.: Books for Libraries Press), 205: *Owyhee Avalanche* (1866) (Silver City, Idaho), 3 February.

14 Thomas J. Noel (1982) *The City and Saloon: Denver, 1858-1916* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press), 32-33; Elliott West (1979) *The Saloon on the Rocky Mountain Mining Frontier* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press), 80-82.

controversial life. Nearly a dozen decades after he tumbled into the Missouri, he remains a colourful enigma of minor historical moment, and if anything, his bar bill deepens his contradictions. In the end, this new find tells us more about the times than about the man. As we read through its columns, hearing the clattering of tumblers and smelling the cigar smoke and spilled beer, our clearest revelation is of the rough-hewn society and the unrestrained style of politics of Montana's squalling infancy.



Helena, MT., 1864. Typical Pioneer's Cabin during Montana's infancy.

Courtesy J. M. Hearne.

In a Fierce and Frightful Region: Thomas Francis Meagher's Montana Adventure, 1865 - 1867

By Jon Axeline

SINCE 1989, the Montana Historical Society has sponsored a popular session at its annual history conference entitled *Speaking Ill of the Dead: Jerks in Montana History*. Intended to be a celebration of the state's less-than-worthy citizens, the presenters have diligently avoided attacking Montana's better-known founding fathers for fear of angering their supporters or offending descendants. In 2001, Thomas Francis Meagher was skewered by one of the presenters. He was portrayed as an egotistical, two-fisted drunkard with a knack for charming prostitutes and abusing his limited political authority. Interestingly, the presenter repeated much of the anti-Meagher rhetoric that has characterized his tenure in Montana since 1865, and neglected to look at how he integrated into what was then a volatile political situation in the territory in the wake of the American Civil War. Most importantly, the presenter also failed to consider how the General's depiction as a 'jerk' would be interpreted by others, especially the Ancient Order of Hibernians, an influential fraternal organization in Montana that has done much to preserve Meagher's legacy. The unflattering portrayal of Thomas Francis Meagher once again ignited a debate that has simmered in Montana since his mysterious death at Fort Benton in 1867.

In August, 1862, prospectors discovered gold on Grasshopper Creek in southwestern Montana. A mining camp, called Bannack, appeared almost overnight as men (and some women) stampeded to the new placer mines from the nearly depleted diggings in Idaho. In the Spring of 1863, prospectors fanned out across the territory in search of richer gold deposits. At Alder Gulch, about 75 miles east of Bannack, a major gold strike was made by accident in May, 1863. Within a few months, as many as 10,000 miners worked the gravel along Alder Gulch in search of pay dirt. The following year, other rich strikes were made at gulches with evocative names, like Last Chance, Confederate and Ophir. Many of the miners were refugees from the Civil War, then raging in the East. Montana's population beginning in 1862 and continuing for many years was characterized by clearly defined Northern and Southern prejudices. Those prejudices played out along party lines: the Republicans supported the Union and the North, while the Democrats tended to support the South and the Confederacy. There was little middle ground between the two sides – even after the war was over.¹

1. Michael Malone, et al (1991) *Montana: A History of Two Centuries* (University of Washington), pp. 65, 67, 97-98; Merrill G. Burlingame (1942) *The Montana Frontier*, (State Publishing), pp. 86-91.

President Abraham Lincoln signed the Organic Act officially creating Montana Territory in May, 1864. The President appointed the territorial governor, secretary, and judges, while local officials were elected by the white male residents of the territory. This system of radical Republican federal appointees and locally elected Democratic officials created an explosive situation in remote Montana. The Republicans comprised the minority of the territory's population, while the Democrats, many of whom were Irish or of Irish descent, were in the majority. The territorial capital was originally located at Bannack, but moved to more populous Virginia City in early 1865. The Territorial Governor, Sidney Edgerton, retained his residence in Bannack.²

Nearly two years before Meagher arrived in the territory, miners, ranchers, and some businessmen banded together to form vigilance committees to impose some sort of order on the lawless mining camps. Through banishment and the noose, the vigilantes were able to enforce a level of law and order in the mining camps until federal judges arrived later in the year. When new Territorial Secretary Meagher arrived in Bannack in 1865, the vigilance committees still exercised a tremendous amount of influence in the territory through intimidation and fear. Although many Montanans are still proud of their vigilante heritage, they often ignore the fact that the vigilantes were lead by the anti-Southern, radical Republicans, while the high-waymen were often characterized as Southern sympathizers. For much of the next decade, constant and sometimes vicious battles between the Republican/vigilante minority and the Democratic majority characterized Montana's politics. It was into this volatile situation that Thomas Francis Meagher, a political opportunist, arrived. Ignorant of the capricious situation in the territory, Meagher intended to reinvigorate his sagging fortunes in Montana.³

When General Meagher climbed out of a stagecoach and onto the dusty street of Bannack in October, 1865, the territory had a population of around 8,000 whites concentrated mostly in the southwest and at Fort Benton, the head of navigation on the Missouri River. Eastern and northern Montana was still the realm of Blackfeet, Crow, Lakota, Northern Cheyenne and Assiniboiné Indians. In 1865, the Lakota and Northern Cheyenne besieged military forts on the Bozeman Trail, one of four routes that reached the territory from the 'States.' The Bozeman Trail cut through the heart of the last great buffalo hunting grounds used by the Indians. The Indian war would significantly influence Meagher's administration in Montana.⁴

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2. Malone et al, *Montana*, pp. 96-97; Burlingame, *The Montana Frontier*, (1942) p. 154.
 3. For general histories of the Montana vigilantes see Thomas Dimsdale (1977) *The Vigilantes of Montana* (University of Oklahoma) and Nathaniel P. Langford (1996 ed) *Vigilante Days and Ways* (Helena). Malone et al, *Montana*, pp. 80-81; Burlingame, *Montana Frontier*, pp. 98-100; Frederick Allen (2001) 'Montana Vigilantes and the Origins of 3-7-77,' *Montana The Magazine of Western History*, p. 6; Robert G. Athearn (1949) *Thomas Francis Meagher: An Irish Revolutionary in American* (University of Colorado), pp. 144-145.
 4. Poll Lists for the Election of October 24, 1864 to Establish Montana as a Territory, Montana Historical Society, Helena.

In mid-1865, General Meagher lobbied President Andrew Johnson, a Union Democrat, for a political appointment in the West. The President obligingly appointed the former commander of the Irish Brigade to the post of Territorial Secretary of Montana Territory on 4 July 1865. The General departed the 'States,' on 22 July, arriving in Salt Lake City in mid-September. Perhaps prophetically, before he left New York City, he pleaded with a friend to come visit him as it 'may be the last time ... you shall see me, for I go to a fierce and frightful region of gorillas!'⁵

Meagher arrived in Bannack in late September 1865. Territorial Governor Sidney Edgerton gave him a brief summary about the current state of the territory, introduced him to several prominent local citizens and then left for Ohio. Barely the Territorial Secretary, Meagher was already the acting governor. With the territorial papers in his pocket, Meagher left Bannack for Virginia City; the territory's \$500 treasury stowed securely in his saddlebags. In Virginia City, he was warmly greeted by the mining camp's citizens. He told the crowd he 'never [would] be yoked, coaxed or otherwise teamed to any party.' Although he eventually became associated with the Southern Democratic majority in Montana, he was his own man; his decisions were based on what he thought best for the territory and what would benefit his own political future. His decisions, however, were frequently impulsive, not always good or well thought out, and often caused more problems than they solved. Much of this would later be attributed to his tremendous ego and the sycophants who attached themselves to him.⁶

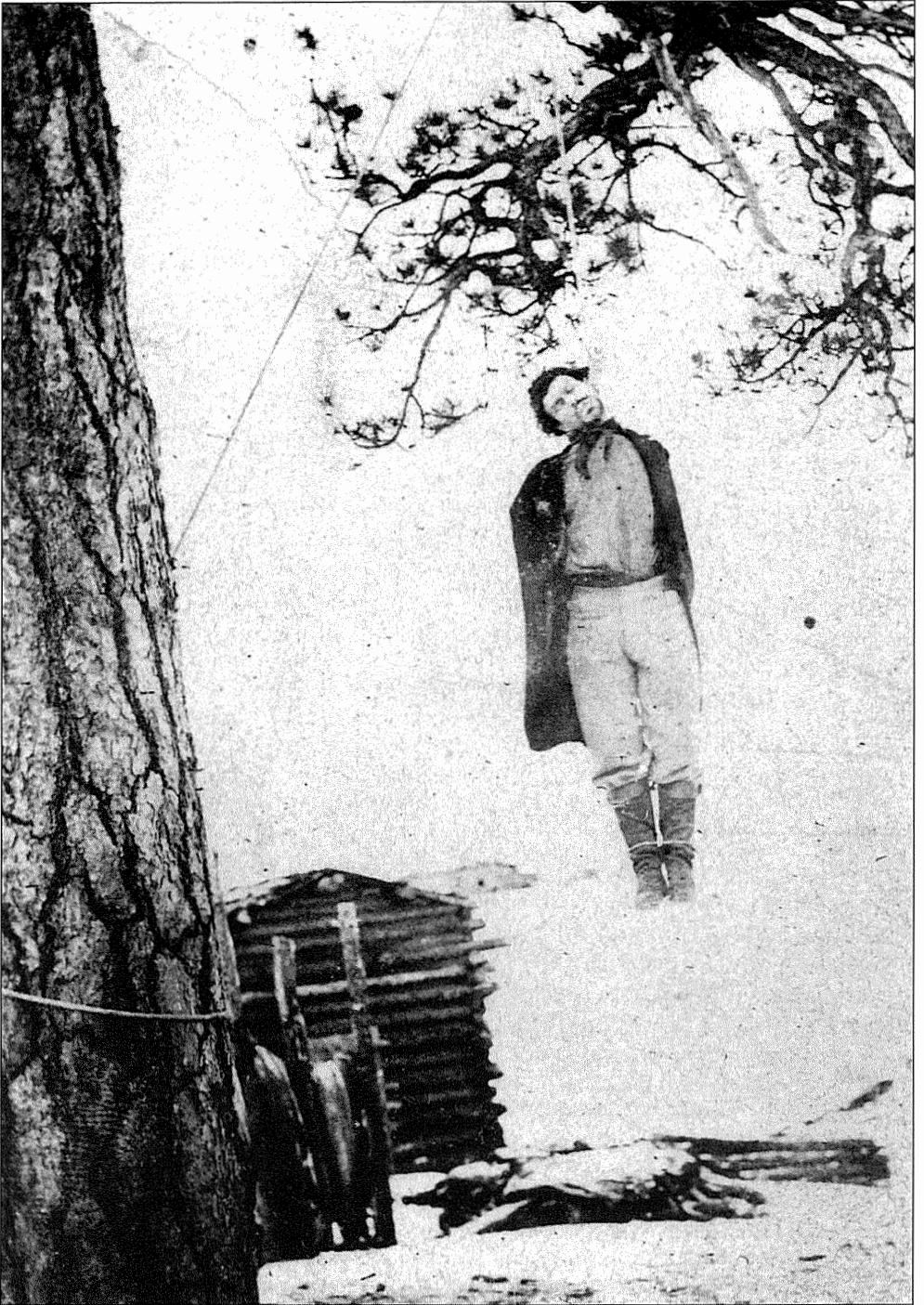
At first, Meagher was very much the Republican supporter. He mirrored the hostility they felt for the Southern sympathizers in Montana. He believed these 'turbulent men' were 'Favourers and abettors of treason' and 'not fitted to govern.' Initially, he refused to oppose the will of the Republican federal appointees, namely judges Hezekiah Hosmer and Lyman E. Munson. He enjoyed the support of the Republican minority in the territory headed by vigilante Wilbur Fisk Sanders, the son-in-law of departed Governor Edgerton. With the war hero on their side, the Republicans laid plans to use him to their advantage.⁷

Like any good politician, one of Meagher's first acts as acting governor was to make a fact-finding tour of the territory. It happened to coincide with an outbreak of hostilities between the Blackfeet nation in northern Montana and the old trading

5. Athearn, *Thomas Francis Meagher*, p. 145; W. F. Lyons (1870) *Brigadier-General Thomas Francis Meagher: His Political and Military Career*, (New York), pp. 192, 193; Martin Maginnis (1907) 'Thomas Francis Meagher' in *Contributions to the Historical Society of Montana Vol. VI* (State Historical Society), p. 102; 'Arrived' (Virginia City) *Montana Post*, 23 September 1865.

6. Athearn, *Thomas Francis Meagher*, pp. 146-147; Clark C. Spence (1975) *Territorial Politics and Government in Montana, 1864-1889* (University of Illinois), p. 35; James Callaghan (May 1978) 'Montana's Meagher of the Sword' in *Tombstone Epitaph*; Maginnis, 'Thomas Francis Meagher,' p. 103; Malone et al, *Montana*, p. 100.

7. Athearn, *Thomas Francis Meagher*, p. 147; Spence, *Territorial Politics*, pp. 36-37; Malone et al, *Montana*, p. 100.



*Helena, Mt. Hanging of James Daniels, March 1, 1866, for the murder of A. J. Gartley.
By kind permission of Montana Historical Society.*

post settlement of Fort Benton on the Missouri River. The Blackfeet were unhappy about the increasing number of white settlers in the region, but were mostly angry about the effects of the whiskey trade on the Tribe. Poor relations between the whites and the Indian tribes plagued Meagher's short career in Montana. On his trip north to Fort Benton, Meagher commented to a friend about how the residents of every little collection of log huts pretentiously called the settlement a 'city.'⁸

In early November, Meagher, Judge Munson, Indian Agent Gad Upson, an interpreter, and an armed escort met with representatives of the tribe near Fort Benton. Meagher, who had never really been exposed to North America's aboriginal inhabitants, was unaware how to negotiate with them. Fortunately, he left much of it to Munson and Upson. The judge later wrote of the meeting,

It was a panoramic scene of Tribal costume, interlaced with painted faces and fantastic paraphernalia of Tribal ornaments requiring the graphic touch of the painter's brush on canvas to convey a realistic impression.

Meagher, too, was impressed with the Blackfeet, but carried with him the pervasive white belief of the time that they were nothing more than ignorant savages who were an obstacle to civilization and progress. He eventually saw them as an opportunity to reclaim his lost military glory when his political hold on the territory weakened.⁹

After several days of negotiations, the Montana delegation concluded a treaty with the Blackfeet. In return for \$7,500 in annual annuities, the Tribe agreed to cease its attacks on the outlying settlers around Fort Benton and move to a reservation closer to the Canadian border. The peace lasted for only a few months before a Blackfeet war party killed the Chouteau County Clerk. Thereafter, Meagher regularly petitioned General William Tecumseh Sherman, commander of the military District of Missouri for the permanent posting of a cavalry unit in Montana. In March, 1866, the hero of the Civil War found himself unable to raise enough support from the federal government to rescue a stranded wagon train on the Missouri River from Indian attack. A man of action, his inability to shield his adopted territory from its enemies was irksome to him and resulted in frequent appeals to Sherman and General Ulysses S. Grant to provide Montana with a military force to defend itself from Indian depredations.¹⁰

8. *The Dillon Examiner*, (14 April 1919), 'How General Meagher Acquired Much of Northern Montana from the Indians for a Very Modest Sum'; 'A Journey to Benton,' (1951) *The Montana Magazine of History*, p. 47; Callaghan, 'Meagher of the Sword.'
9. *The Dillon Examiner*; Spence, *Territorial Politics*, p. 51; M. A. Leeson (1885) *History of Montana, 1739 – 1885*, (Warner, Beers), p. 103; Lectures of Gov. Thomas Francis Meagher in Montana (1867), compiled by John P. Bruce, (Bruce & Wright), p. 41; 'Journey to Benton,' pp. 48-49.
10. *The Dillon Examiner*; Spence, *Territorial Politics*, p. 51; W. T. Henderson, *Sheriff of Fort Benton, to Meagher*. (27 February 1866), Montana Historical Society, *Thomas Francis Meagher*, SC 309 (Helena); Meagher to Honorable Speaker of the House of Representatives, Montana Territory (12 March 1866), MHS SC 309; Athearn, *Thomas Francis Meagher*, pp. 149, 158; Leeson, *History of Montana*, p. 103; Lectures of Gov. Thomas Francis Meagher, p. 42.

On 29 November 1865, an incident occurred in Helena that would have severe political ramifications for Meagher. A drifter named Jim Daniels mortally wounded Andrew Gartley in a dispute over a poker game at a saloon in Helena. Daniels caught Gartley cheating at cards. When he confronted him about it, Gartley pulled a revolver on him. Daniels responded by stabbing him twice. Immediately after the incident, the Helena vigilantes turned Daniels over to Judge Munson for trial. A jury convicted Daniels of manslaughter and Munson sentenced him to three-years at hard labor at the Virginia City jail.¹¹

Meanwhile, in Virginia City and Helena, acting Governor Thomas Francis Meagher managed to make a bad situation even worse between the Democrats and Republicans. Prior to January, 1866, Meagher had managed to stand astride the gap separating the two political parties. While a supporter of the Republicans, he was also able to mollify the Democrats by not taking sides in any important issues concerning the governance of the Territory. Increasingly, however, he chafed at Republican control, believing they exercised too much influence in the territory and impeded his personal ambitions. More often than not, he found himself in agreement with the 'Turbulent Men' in the territory that he at first abhorred – many of whom were of Irish descent. More and more, Meagher saw himself as the leader of the majority Democratic party in Montana.¹²

At the urging of the territory's Democratic leaders, Meagher called for the convening of a territorial legislature to meet in Virginia City in March, 1866. He followed that by announcing a constitutional convention would be held in Helena the following month. Judges Hosmer and Munson immediately reminded Meagher that he did not have the authority to call for either assembly. They also claimed that because the first Territorial Legislature had not met the provisions of the 1864 Organic Act, a new legislature could not legally be called. Meagher, who had thoroughly studied the Act, chose to ignore the protests of the judges and claimed that he did indeed have the authority to call the assemblies together. The Republicans protested because both assemblies would be dominated by the Democrats and any laws or constitution drawn up would reflect their agenda. In protest, the Republicans did not participate in the legislature and threatened to take their grievances to the U.S. Congress.¹³

11. Jon Axline (1995) "Vigilante 'Justice'" in *More From the Quarries of Last Chance Gulch I* (Helena Independent Record), p. 12; Athearn, *Thomas Francis Meagher*, p. 151; Langford, *Vigilante Days and Ways*, p. 296; Allen, 'Montana Vigilantes,' pp. 8-9.
12. Spence, *Territorial Politics*, pp. 36-37; Lyon, *Brigadier-General Thomas Francis Meagher*, p. 200; Malone et al, *Montana*, p. 101.
13. Spence, *Territorial Politics*, pp. 36-38; Athearn, *Thomas Francis Meagher*, pp. 149-150; Harriett Fitzgerald Sanders (1913), *History of Montana I* (Lewis Publishing), pp. 332-333; Callaghan, 'Montana's Meagher of the Sword'; Maginnis, 'Thomas Francis Meagher,' p. 105; Lyons, *Brigadier-General Thomas Francis Meagher*, p. 199; Leeson, *History of Montana*, p. 249; Malone et al, *Montana*, p. 101; Lectures of Gov. Thomas Francis Meagher, pp. 43-45, 61.

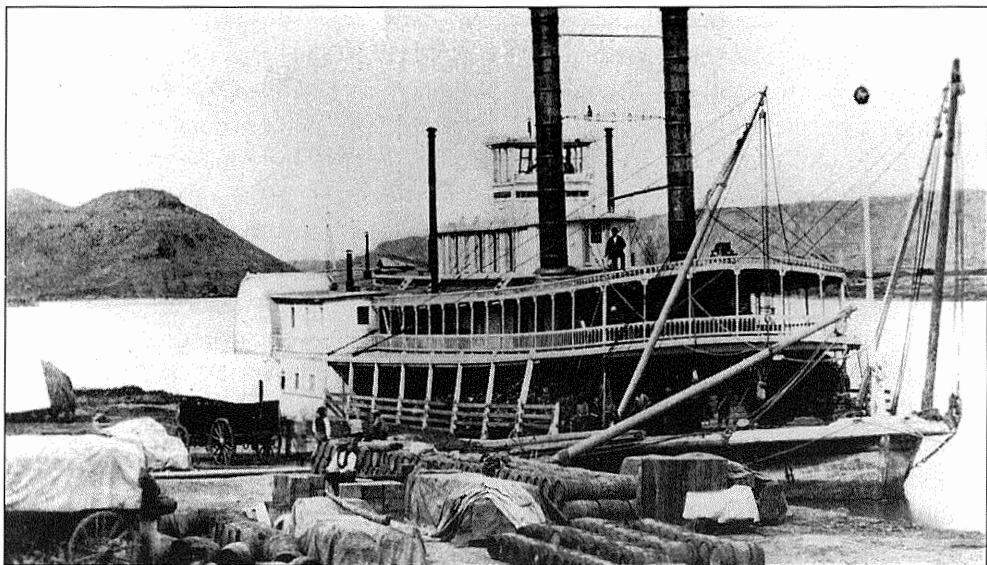
The fierce debate over the constitutional convention intensified the conflict between Meagher and the Republicans. Many Republicans (and a few Democrats) believed it was too early in the territory's history to consider statehood. Others were irked by the Democratically-controlled state legislature than the potential addition of more Democrats to Congress. Even after the convention convened, the Republicans questioned Meagher's authority to call the gathering. Wilbur Fisk Sanders later claimed that Meagher had surrounded himself with flatterers and toadies, who urged him to call the constitutional convention with the promise of a seat in the Senate if successful. Such a pledge would certainly have appealed to Meagher's ego and confirmed that the move to Montana was, indeed, a good decision. In December, 1865 he wrote Secretary of State William Seward that 'were Montana admitted as a State tomorrow, the Union would have to encounter in Congress equivocal friends, if not flagrant mischief makers from here.' For Meagher, his betrayal of the Republicans and his declaration for the Democrats effectively ended his career as a legitimate politician in Montana and earned the derisive sobriquet, The Acting One, by his enemies.¹⁴

Deputy Sheriff Neil Howie reported in his diary that General Meagher was 'very drunk' when he called the 2nd Territorial Legislature to order on 5 March 1866. While the legislators considered applications for toll road licenses, established county boundaries, granted divorces, and chartered ditch companies, the Republicans assassinated the General's character. Much was made of his fondness for alcohol and partying. Even before the legislature convened, federal tax collector and onetime vigilante Nathaniel Langford called Meagher a 'disgrace to our Territory.' His most vocal critic was Wilbur Fisk Sanders, a man Meagher had referred to as a the 'most vicious of my enemies ... an unrelenting and unscrupulous extremist.' Sanders, in return, called the Acting One a 'Missouri Bushwhacker' and a traitor who was 'dead beyond any hope of resurrection.' Sanders, however, did admit a grudging admiration for the General. In 1902 he wrote,

I can well appreciate the affection which General Meagher inspired among his race and countrymen. His form was manly, his manners cordial, his demeanor gracious, his conversation instructive, his wit kindly, his impulses generous and I agree with Horace Greeley, who once said to me that General Meagher was one of the finest conversationalists he had ever known.

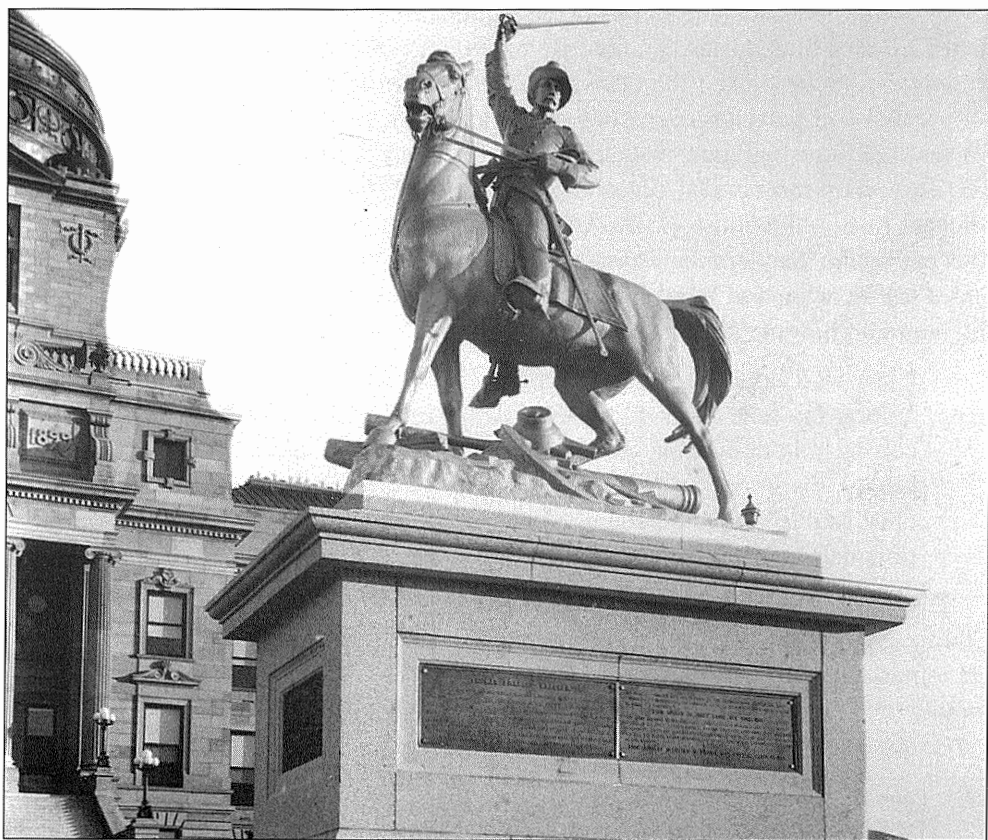
The most malicious attacks were by Republican Helena attorney William Chumasero. He crucified Meagher in letters to his friend and ally, Wilbur Sanders. He remarked about the frequent wakes Meagher held for his dead father and grandmother, commented on his rowdy behavior and went as far as to accuse the Acting Governor of making the Executive Office a 'place of rendezvous for the vilest pros-

14. Spence, *Territorial Politics*, pp. 37-38; Athearn, *Thomas Francis Meagher*, pp. 149-150; Sanders, *History of Montana I*, pp. 333, 354; Callaghan, 'Montana's Meagher of the Sword'; Malone et al, *Montana*, p. 102; Lectures of Gov. Thomas Francis Meagher, pp. 46-47, 61.



The Steamboat 'De Smet' at Fort Benton Levee, c. 1870.

By kind permission Montana Historical Society.



Thomas Meagher Statue in front of the Montana State Capitol Building, Helena, Mt..

By kind permission Montana Historical Society.

titutes.' According to Chumasero, Meagher 'wallow[ed] his days away in his room polluting his bed and person in the most indecent and disgusting manner . . . ' Originally a Meagher supporter, the *Montana Post* turned against him early in 1866. In a particularly nasty editorial, the newspaper blasted Meagher for his vanity, addiction to praise, and the 'gang of biblicious politicians and flatterers' he surrounded himself with. In response, Meagher challenged the editor to a duel!¹⁵

In letters to his superiors in Washington, he continually sought to head off any reports they might receive from his enemies. His letters were either justifications for his actions or pleas for military assistance to fight the Indians. In only a few public speeches did Meagher complain about his opponents and their conspiracies to discredit him. In one letter, he displayed his famous tenacity and will to succeed in his adopted territory. 'I am resolved not to turn my back on the Rocky Mountains until I have the means to whip my carriage and four through the New York Central Park, and sail my own yacht, with the Green Flag at the mizen-peak, within three miles of the Irish coast.'¹⁶

In the 1980s, a collection of business ledgers from the 1860s were discovered in Virginia City. One included charges made to saloons by Meagher for liquor, beer, and food. The amount of spirits was prodigious as was the money paid for it. At first glance, the ledger seemed to support the reports of Meagher's drunkenness and rowdy behavior during the 1866 territorial legislature. However, Historian Elliott West has proposed a different theory. Professor West claims that much of the alcohol may have, indeed, been consumed by the General. But, he suggested, much of it also may have been used in the negotiations for legislation; in essence, to 'buy' the support of key legislators for important bills. What is also interesting about the ledger book is that Meagher paid his bills in full, despite his refusal to accept a salary during the first months of his tenure in the Territory.¹⁷

Throughout the legislative session, Sanders and his political cronies were confident that their Republican allies in the judiciary would nullify the laws passed by the 'Bogus Legislature.' While judges Hosmer and Munson had hitherto kept relatively quiet about the proceedings in Virginia City, the reappearance of the Jim Daniels affair was the catalyst that caused the deterioration of Meagher's relations with them. Many Helena citizens believed Daniels' sentence too harsh and petitioned Acting Governor Meagher for a reprieve. They asserted, and he agreed, that

15. Spence, *Territorial Politics*, pp. 37-39; Athearn, *Thomas Francis Meagher*, pp. 150-151, 152-153; *Virginia City Montana Post*, January – April 1866 incl.; W. F. Sanders (15 March 1902), 'How General Meagher Met His Death,' Butte Inter Mountain; Callaghan, 'Montana's Meagher of the Sword;' Maginnis, 'Thomas Francis Meagher,' pp. 103-104; Lyons, *Brigadier-General Thomas Francis Meagher*, pp. 197-198, 200-202; Vivian A. Paladin (1954) 'Proper Bostonian, Purposeful Pioneer,' *Montana The Magazine of Western History*, pp. 38, 39-41; *Council Journal of the Second Session of the Legislative Assembly of the Territory of Montana* (1870) (Wilkinson & Ronan).

16. Athearn, *Thomas Francis Meagher*, p. 154.

17. Elliott West, (1985) 'Thomas Francis Meagher's Bar Bill,' *Montana The Magazine of Western History*, pp. 19-21.

Daniels had acted in self-defense when he killed Andrew Gartley. Langford later wrote that Meagher, allegedly 'under the influence of an unfortunate habit,' granted Daniels a reprieve on 22 February 1866. He was released from jail after serving only three weeks of his sentence.

Instead of prudently leaving the area, Daniels immediately set out for Helena where he intended to get revenge on those who testified against him at the trial.¹⁸

Meagher either did not understand his legal authority or chose to ignore the law when he granted the pardon. Under the terms of the Organic Act, the Territorial Governor had only the power to grant a stay of execution for prisoners convicted of capital crimes. The authority to grant reprieves or pardons rested solely with the President of the United States. Since Daniels had not been convicted of a capital crime, Meagher did not have the authority to grant the reprieve.¹⁹

An enraged Judge Munson wrote to Meagher on 1 March demanding that he revoke the order and return Daniels to jail. When Meagher declined, Munson ordered Deputy Marshal Neil Howie to apprehend Daniels. Unfortunately, by that time, Daniels was somewhere between Virginia City and Helena. He arrived in Helena about 9 p.m. on 2 March 1866. The vigilantes immediately surrounded him and hanged him within the hour; Meagher's reprieve was still in his pocket. The mob attached a note to the back of Daniels' coat threatening Meagher with a similar fate if he continued to grant clemency to miscreants. Daniels' body remained suspended from the hanging tree until the next day when he was finally cut down and buried in the local cemetery. The lesson apparently worked – Meagher never again granted a reprieve, pardon or directly confronted the territory's still powerful vigilance committees.²⁰

When the territorial legislature met on 5 March, Meagher denounced the federally-appointed judges, declaring that he would force them to recognize the validity of the assembly. Munson refuted the threat and became an implacable enemy of Meagher for the remainder of his career in Montana. The Democratically controlled legislature denied the judges permission to supplement their incomes by taking on extra work. In June, 1866, Munson declared all the laws of the second Territorial Legislature null and void. Accusations about the judges and Meagher's character swirled back and forth with no solution to the controversy in sight, with neither side willing to compromise.²¹

In mid-July, 1866, Meagher's ego and credibility suffered a blow when President Andrew Johnson appointed Green Clay Smith as the new Territorial Governor. Like Meagher, a Union Democrat, Smith was much more politically

18. Axline, "Vigilante 'Justice'," pp. 14-15; Athearn, *Thomas Francis Meagher*, pp. 151-152; *Copy of Reprieve, Montana Historical Society*, James B. Daniels Papers, Small Collections 1634 (1866), 'Montana Vigilantes,' p. 9; Langford, *Vigilante Days and Ways*, pp. 296-297.

19. Axline, "Vigilante 'Justice'," p. 15.

20. *Ibid*, pp. 14-15; Allen, 'Montana Vigilantes,' p. 9; Langford, *Vigilante Days and Ways*, pp. 296-297.

21. Spence, *Territorial Politics*, pp. 39-40; Athearn, *Thomas Francis Meagher*, p. 152.

astute than the Territorial Secretary and promised some resolution to Montana's miasmatic politics. Before Smith arrived in the Territory in October, 1866, however, Meagher issued a proclamation calling for the assembly of the third territorial legislature. Never one to pull any punches, Meagher declared that the delegates must not be 'weak in the legs [or] pliant in the backbone' in the dispute over the second session. He also accused the Republicans and their allies of being 'pimps and blackguards.'²²

Judges Munson and Hosmer again questioned the legality of the assembly (Smith had already taken a leave of absence and returned to Washington when it met). Later called the 'Jeff Davis Legislature,' it convened in Virginia City on 5 November 1866. The main goal of the assembly, however, was the punishment of the judges. The Democratically controlled legislature established new judicial district boundaries and exiled judges Munson and Hosmer to the eastern part of the territory where they could rule against Indians and buffalo. Munson, who was on leave in Washington DC when the legislators made the decision, lobbied Congress to nullify laws of both Montana legislative sessions. Momentum picked up in the campaign when Wilbur Sanders arrived in Washington and joined Munson in his crusade against the Acting One. In March, 1867, the U.S. Congress voided the laws passed by the second and third Montana legislatures. It also authorized the Governor to establish new legislative districts and call for a new election. That same month, President Johnson appointed James Tufts to replace Thomas Francis Meagher as Territorial Secretary. His stormy political career in Montana would be over as soon as the new Secretary reached the Territory.²³

As Meagher's influence on territorial politics weakened in the face of opposition from the Republicans, he began to look elsewhere to recapture his fading prospects in Montana. Fortunately for him, the war between the Lakota, their Northern Cheyenne allies and the U.S. Army on the Bozeman Trail in south central Montana escalated in 1866. Two of the three forts on the trail were under constant siege by the Indians. In December, Indians attacked and killed eighty-six men under the command of Captain William Fetterman near Fort Phil Kearney. The Indians closed the trail to emigrants and made re-supply of the isolated posts dangerous. The war continued into 1867 with neither side willing to make concessions to end the conflict.²⁴

22. Malone et al, *Montana*, p. 103; Spence, *Territorial Politics*, pp. 43-44; Sanders, *History of Montana I*, pp. 334-335; Lectures of Gov. Thomas Francis Meagher, p. 52.

23. Spence, *Territorial Politics*, pp. 43-45; Sanders, *History of Montana I*, p. 335; *Council Journal of the Third Session of the Legislative Assembly of the Territory of Montana* (1870)(Wilkinson & Ronan).

24. For excellent accounts of the conflict on the Bozeman Trail see Dorothy M. Johnson's *The Bloody Bozeman* (McGraw-Hill, 1971) and Susan Badger Doyle's *Journeys to the Land of Gold: Emigrant Diaries from the Bozeman Trail, 1863 – 1866* (Montana Historical Society, 2000). Malone et al, *Montana*, pp. 124, 126; Burlingame, *Montana Frontier*, p. 121.

Although the tribes did not directly threaten the settlements in southwestern Montana, Gallatin Valley settlers were nervous and sent frequent petitions to acting Governor Meagher for military protection. In turn, Meagher increased his pleas to General William Sherman for the stationing of cavalry units in the territory. Indeed, his appeals had become so frequent and insistent, that he became a nuisance to Sherman.

I have received your several letters ... on the subject of troops for Montana and routes leading thereto – untill [sic] Congress fixes the establishment it is idle for us to calculate what proportion of troops can be assigned to any part. Were I to grant one-tenth the part of the calls on me from Montana to Texas I would have to call for one hundred thousand men, whereas I doubt if I should expect to have ten thousand men in all.

It became increasingly clear to Meagher that Sherman would do nothing to protect Montana and it would be left to its own devices. To Meagher, the war on the Bozeman Trail was the perfect opportunity to reclaim glory on the battlefield.²⁵

While the Lakota had raided into the upper Yellowstone River Valley, their goal was more to capture horses rather than collect scalps. Their real objective was to evict the military from the Bozeman Trail. They wanted to be left alone to live the life they loved and to keep whites out of their hunting grounds. It was never their intention to force the abandonment of the gold mines in southwestern Montana. The Indians were not a threat to the majority of the population in the territory – as long as they stayed where they were.

Like many others in Montana, Meagher did not understand the real reasons for the Bozeman Trail war. To him it was an opportunity to restore his reputation on the battlefield by fighting Indians. Resolving the muddy political situation in the territory was impossible for him to accomplish. Abandoning his political career, Meagher believed his true destiny was as a soldier and the opportunities a successful career as an Indian fighter offered him. What he failed to take into account was that the Lakota and Northern Cheyenne were not Confederate regulars and that the pool of men available for a territorial militia did not possess the same motivations or *esprit d'corps* of those that served in the Union Army. The result was a fiasco.

Throughout his tenure in Montana, Meagher lobbied the U.S. military for troops to protect the settlements in the territory and occasionally issued calls for volunteers. General Sherman, who fielded most of the telegraphs from Meagher, learned to ignore them or reply in terms that were vague at best. Meagher's reputation as a 'stampeder' kept his requests from being taken seriously by Sherman and the Secretary of War, Edwin Stanton. Indeed, most of the depredations in northern Montana that generated the 'outrage' of local citizens, were nothing more than the

25. Spence, *Territorial Politics*, p. 51; Callaghan, 'Montana's Meagher of the Sword;' Meagher to Honorable Speaker of the House of Representatives (12 March 1866), MHS SC 309; Malone et al, *Montana*, p. 103; Athearn, ' p. 157; Leeson, *History of Montana, 1739 – 1885*, pp. 118-119.

usual activity of the Blackfeet – horse theft and an occasional robbery or murder. Meagher proceeded with his plans to create a territorial militia in 1866. He even went as far as to commission 'officers' before his preoccupation with politics kept him from recruiting volunteers. The sense of urgency also faded as the Blackfeet turned away from the harassment of whites and, instead, concentrated on the summer buffalo hunts.²⁶

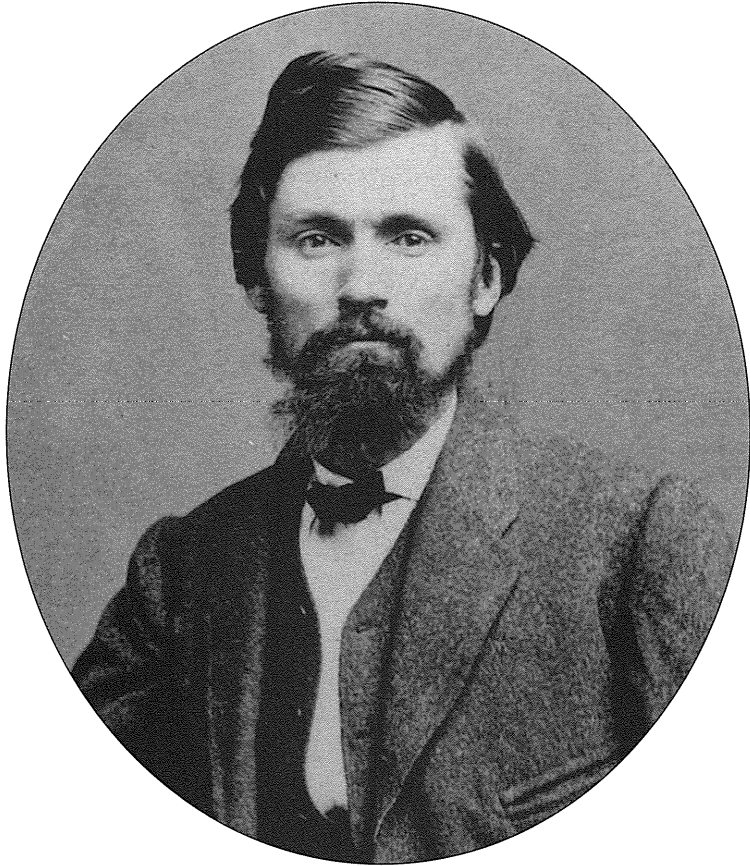
While hostilities on the upper Missouri River eased, they intensified along the Bozeman Trail in south central Montana. After the crushing blow suffered by the military at the Fetterman fight, the tribes increased their attacks on the military posts. Lakota war parties ranged far up the Yellowstone Valley and came into contact with the few white ranchers and prospectors living there. In March, 1867, Gallatin County entrepreneur Tom Cover wrote a letter to General Meagher on behalf of John Bozeman, who had blazed the contested trail in 1862. Among other things, the letter claimed that an Indian attack on the valley was imminent and a 'whole area of the Territory would emptied of its population' unless Meager did something to remedy the situation. Meagher believed the letters implications and remonstrated with Sherman that the entire Lakota nation was on the move toward the Gallatin Valley.²⁷

The following month, Bozeman was killed by either Blackfeet or Lakota Indians on the Yellowstone River about forty miles east of the Gallatin Valley. He and Tom Cover were traveling the Bozeman Trail to the besieged military posts to secure contracts for flour. Cover survived the attack and made his way back to the Gallatin Valley. Referred to as the 'Bozeman Massacre,' the incident further fueled the hysteria already pervading the valley's residents and prompted Cover to send another plea to Meagher for help. After making an inspection of the valley, the General declared that it was wide open to attack and increased the number of telegraphs he sent to Sherman in St. Louis. Part of Sherman's reluctance to accede to Meagher's demands was based on a letter he received from a Helena miner named William Nowland, who, rightfully, attributed Bozeman's death to carelessness on his part, but was particularly vehement in condemnation of Meagher's reasons for forming a militia,

I deem it my duty . . . to call your attention to the efforts that are being made to distract this Territory, and plunging us into debt, by a few persons, who unfortunately hold such positions under Government as to make the public lend a willing ear to their cry of danger from Indians.

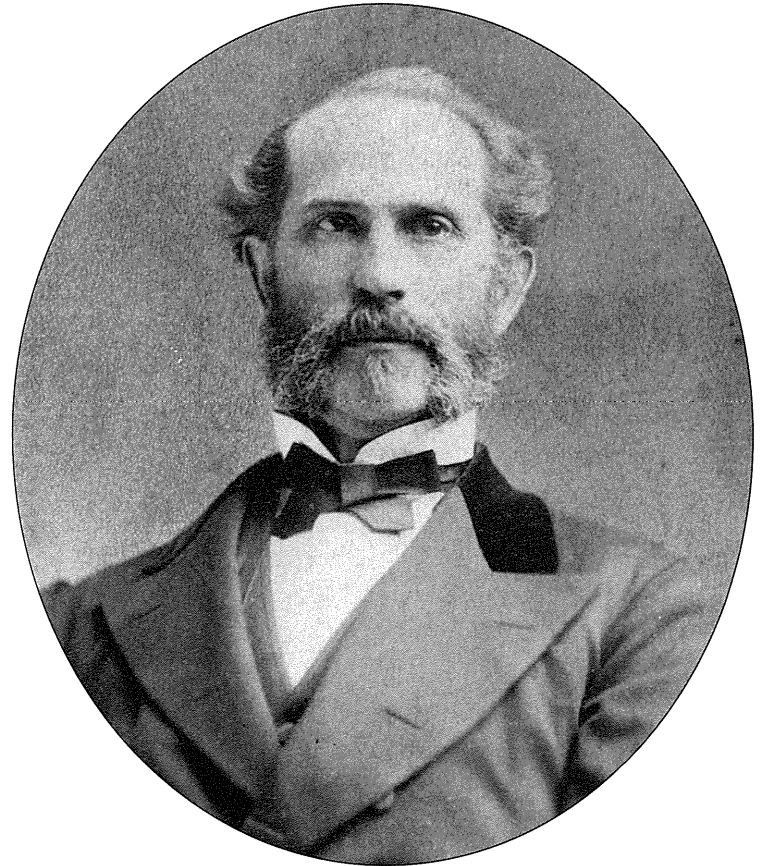
26. Spence, *Territorial Politics*, pp. 52-53; Callaghan, 'Montana's Meagher of the Sword;' Athearn, *Thomas Francis Meagher*, pp. 157-158, 160; Lyon, *Brigadier-General Thomas Francis Meagher*, pp. 199-200; Lectures of Gov. Thomas Francis Meagher, pp. 65-73; Robert G. Athearn (1950) 'The Montana Volunteers of 1867,' *The Pacific Historical Review*, pp. 127, 128-129.

27. Leeson, *History of Montana*, p. 119; Callaghan, 'Montana's Meagher of the Sword;' Athearn, *Thomas Francis Meagher*, pp. 157-158.



William Fisk Sanders

By kind permission of Montana Historical Society.



Judge Lyman E. Munson, 1865

By kind permission Montana Historical Society.

Sherman agreed, at least in part, with Nowland's assessment of the situation in Montana. He did, however, authorize the shipment of 2,500 rifles to Montana via the Missouri River steamer and began discussions with General Ulysses Grant and War Secretary Stanton on territorial frontier militia organizations. He also sent Major William Lewis to Montana to gather information about what was happening there.²⁸

In early May, 1867, Sherman conceded to Meagher that if he felt the situation was so serious, he 'might informally call out the citizens who could defend themselves as best they might.' Meagher then issued a call for 800 volunteers. A few men volunteered, but they were mostly 'bottom of the barrel' drifters more interested in prospecting for gold in Indian Country than protecting lives. They were also easily bored and soon many drifted away from the camp in the Gallatin Valley. Valley merchants knew the federal government was not sponsoring the militia and refused to honor vouchers for supplies presented to them by the militia's recruitment and supply officers – of which there were many. A correspondent for the *New York Herald* wrote that 'Meagher is as good at palaver as at a fight ... He will quiet [the Indians] by talking their heads off.'²⁹

Sherman, meanwhile, brokered a deal with General Grant and War Secretary Stanton that established a policy for territorial militias. The Territorial Governors would not be permitted to call out the militias. Instead, it would be Sherman's responsibility since it would ensure they would be provisioned and paid by the federal government and function as a paramilitary unit. Evidence suggests that Sherman established the policy specifically because of General Meagher's clamoring for troops. Referring to the situation in Montana and Meagher particularly, Sherman wrote General Christopher Augur at Omaha, Nebraska that he was authorized to call out volunteers if the situation demanded it, but Montana had suffered nothing more than a bad scare that did not warrant the enlistment of volunteers. He also told Augur that 'I have no faith in the parties who want to raise and command the volunteers.'³⁰

Shortly after Sherman's envoy, Major Lewis, reached Virginia City on 19 May, he received a telegram reluctantly authorizing him to muster in a battalion of 800 men for two months. The federal government would pay the men 40¢ a day, but the men would have to furnish their own horses and weapons. Lewis showed the telegram to merchants around Virginia City, who promptly opened up their stores

28. Leeson, *History of Montana*, p. 119; Spence, *Territorial Politics*, pp. 52-54; Callaghan, 'Montana's Meagher of the Sword'; Athearn, *Thomas Francis Meagher*, pp. 158-159; Malone et al, *Montana*, p. 103; Athearn, 'Montana Volunteers,' p. 129; Lectures of Gov. Thomas Francis Meagher, pp. 62-64; John Barsness and William Dickinson (1960) 'Minute Men of Montana,' *Montana The Magazine of Western History*, p. 3.

29. Athearn, *Thomas Francis Meagher*, pp. 160-161; Spence, *Territorial Politics*, pp. 53-54; Callaghan, 'Montana's Meagher of the Sword'; Athearn, 'Montana Volunteers,' pp. 129-130.

30. Athearn, *Thomas Francis Meagher*, p. 161; Athearn 'Montana Volunteers,' p. 131.

to the militia with the promise of a fat reimbursement by the government. Meagher, however, mistakenly believed Sherman had formally authorized him to raise volunteers at government expense. Sherman cautioned Lewis about causing the government 'any unnecessary expense,' but was more concerned that if Meagher got a hold of it, that it would cause a stampede to recruit volunteers and supply them.³¹

Sherman's fears were justified. Meagher was clearly more interested in taking the field against the Indians than watching the finances. He bought supplies wherever he could at whatever prices the merchants wanted to charge him. They charged him for supplies never delivered and horses that did not exist. The number of volunteers fluctuated between 150 and 250 men. The company, however, was top-heavy with officers – about half to three-quarters the total number of volunteers. Those who chose not to serve as an officer were told by the General that they could keep whatever property they captured from the Indians. Meagher divided the Montana Militia into two camps, one located in the Gallatin Valley and the other on the Yellowstone River near present day Livingston. When not involved in drills, the men frequently wandered off to pan for gold in likely-looking streams near the camps or to patronage the local drinking establishments.³²

By all accounts, the militia spent most of its time on patrol to keep the lines of communication open between the territory's major settlements. One pundit stated that they spent more time patrolling the local saloons than they did looking for Indians. Indeed, by the time the militia was disbanded in the late summer of 1867, they had had no contact with the Indians. Discipline in the camps was almost non-existent: stabbings, gunfights, and mutiny was common. There was also considerable friction between the officers of the organization over rank. All-in-all, it was a motley collection of businessmen, former vigilantes, lawmen, miners, bullwhackers, and frontier ne'er do-wells. The stampede Sherman feared had happened.³³

General Meagher did not take an active role in the day-to-day operation of the militia. He had been replaced as Territorial Secretary on 28 March 1867 by James Tufts and was awaiting his arrival in Montana. He still maintained an office in Virginia City, but is unclear how much time he spent there. By the first of June, he was absorbed in writing a series of articles about Montana for *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*. Called 'Rides Through Montana,' the first installment was posthumously published in the magazine in October, 1867 under the penname of a close friend Colonel Cornelius O'Keefe. Meagher never visited the region he wrote

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31. Athearn, *Thomas Francis Meagher*, pp. 161-162; Malone et al, *Montana*, p. 103; Spence, *Territorial Politics*, pp. 52-53; Callaghan, 'Montana's Meagher of the Sword;' Leeson, *History of Montana*, pp. 118-120; Athearn, 'Montana Volunteers,' pp. 131-132.
 32. Athearn, *Thomas Francis Meagher*, pp. 162-164; Spence, *Territorial Politics*, pp. 53-54; Callaghan, 'Montana's Meagher of the Sword;' Malone et al, *Montana*, p. 103; Athearn, 'Montana Volunteers,' p. 132; Barsness and Dickinson, 'Minute Men,' p. 4.
 33. Athearn, *Thomas Francis Meagher*, pp. 163-164; Spence, *Territorial Politics*, p. 53; Athearn, 'Montana Volunteers,' p. 132.

about in the magazine article. It is likely he gathered the information for it from his friend, Cornelius C. 'Baron' O'Keefe, who was a resident of the western Montana. The article reflected Meagher's love of the outdoors and confirms his statement in 1865 about the beauty of the territory. The military life offered him a release from the vindictiveness and ugliness of territorial politics, a livelihood for which he was not suited. The Harpers articles and the militia offered him a way out and allowed him to do what he wanted to do all along – enjoy the frontier adventure and perhaps reclaim lost glory.³⁴

Like every thing Meagher was involved in, the militia drew criticism from some Montanans. While the *Montana Post* was initially supportive of the militia, by June, 1867 it had become one of its loudest critics. One man later wrote that Meagher's Indian 'war' was the 'biggest humbug of the age, got up to advance his political interests and to enable a lot of bummers who surround and hang on to him to make a big raid on the United States treasury.' The accusations of drunkenness and rowdiness on duty continued to dog him. The militia never took to the field against the Indians and was more like a summer camp for the recalcitrant. Like Lieutenant Colonel George Custer, Meagher seemed more interested in the adventure and glory than in the drudgery of commanding the troops. It manifested itself in irresponsible behavior that his detractors were quick to point out. In the end, the militia ran up bills totaling over a million dollars and had done nothing to justify the expenditure. On 15 June 1867, Meagher closed his office in Virginia City and headed north to Fort Benton with eleven militia officers to pick up the rifles sent up to Fort Benton by General Sherman earlier that spring.³⁵

Late in the afternoon of 1 July, Meagher and his companions rode into Fort Benton. The trip had been a hard one for the General. The scorching early summer heat had caused him to suffer a recurring bout of dysentery at Sun River Crossing about thirty miles west of Fort Benton. The illness caused a six day delay in the party reaching the trading post. By the time the group reached the river port, Meagher was physically and mentally spent. He sought shelter in the backroom of I. G. Baker's log store next to the river levee. Although one report said that Meagher busied himself reading a newspaper and writing letters, another witness told an entirely different story. According to an unknown soldier, who was also the last man to see Meagher alive, the General arrived at Fort Benton dehydrated and weakened, still suffering from dysentery. He escaped the afternoon heat in the backroom of Baker's store, where he remained for several hours with his head resting on his hands. His misery was heightened by frequent trips into the brush behind the store 'where the violence of the disorder assailed him.' The storekeeper

34. Leeson, *History of Montana*, p. 259; Thomas Francis Meagher (1867), 'Rides Through Montana,' *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, pp. 568-585; Edith Toole Oberly (1973), 'The Baron C. C. O'Keefe,' *Montana The Magazine of Western History*, p. 24.

35. (Virginia City) *Montana Post* April – June 1867 inc.; Athearn, *Thomas Francis Meagher*, pp. 163-164; Malone et al, *Montana*, p. 103; Spence, *Territorial Politics*, pp. 53-54; Callaghan, 'Montana's Meagher of the Sword.'

offered Meagher a glass of blackberry wine to help him feel better. It was at Baker's store that he learned that the expected arms shipment had not arrived in Fort Benton. Instead, low water had forced a steamer to off-load it at Camp Cooke about 120 miles downstream. The prospect of continuing on downriver could not have pleased the ailing General.³⁶

Sick and disoriented with three glasses of the strong wine under his belt, Meagher left Baker's store in the early evening with Johnny Doran, the pilot of the steamer G. A. Thompson. Doran later described an almost surreal evening, where he and the General enjoyed a nice dinner together before they strolled through the settlement, turning down numerous invitations for drinks before arriving at the steamboat, where the men settled down to pleasant evening of cigars, tea, and conversation. Because of Meagher's weakened condition, Doran offered the General the use of his stateroom aboard the Thompson.³⁷

Coincidentally, Meagher's political archenemy, Wilbur Fisk Sanders, also happened to be in town that day. He later reported that while seated in front of Baker's store, his

attention was arrested by abnormally loud conversation, and as the party came nearer I saw that it came from General Meagher. As the party came to the place where I was, it was apparent that he was deranged. He was loudly demanding a revolver to defend himself against the citizens of Fort Benton, who, in his disturbed mental condition, he declared were hostile to him.

After attempting to calm him down, Meagher's companions, including Sanders, took him to his stateroom on board the steamer.³⁸

Although much of it can be discounted, there is some element of truth in Sanders' claim that Meagher was afraid that the people of Fort Benton wanted to kill him. When Meagher arrived in town earlier that day, he overheard a man say 'There he goes.' In his weakened state, he interpreted the comment as a threat. He later told Johnny Doran that his life had been threatened in the settlement. It was only after Doran showed Meagher two loaded revolvers that he would finally retire to the stateroom. Doran left him with a promise to return shortly. Although much of Doran's version can be also be discounted, he and Sanders both agreed that the General was not in his right mind the day he died.³⁹

36. Athearn, *Thomas Francis Meagher*, pp. 164-165; Lyons, *Brigadier-General Thomas Francis Meagher*, p. 204; Michael Cavanagh (1892) Appendix One in *Memoirs of Gen. Thomas Francis Meagher* (Messenger Press), p. 12; 'Accident or Suicide?' *Eureka (Montana) Journal*, 26 February 1928; Sanders, 'General Meagher,' Joseph I. C. Clarke, 'Death of "Meagher of the Sword" A Mystery of Fifty Years,' *New York Sun*, 8 June 1913; A. L. Stone, 'Baker Tells of Death of Gen. Meagher,' Unidentified newspaper on file at the Montana Historical Society, 20 June 1973.

37. Sanders, 'General Meagher;' Clarke, 'Death;' Cavanagh, *Memoirs* pp. 11 – 12.

38. Sanders, 'General Meagher;'

39. Clarke, 'Death;' Lyons, *Brigadier-General Thomas Francis Meagher*, pp. 353-357; Athearn, *Thomas Francis Meagher*, pp. 164 – 165.

A few minutes after the pilot left Meagher in his stateroom, a sentry patrolling the deck of the steamboat saw a figure clad in underclothes moving toward the stern. Believing that he was an officer who had come on deck to relieve himself, the soldier turned away to give the man some privacy. Then he heard a shout and a splash. The sentry immediately raised the alarm, which brought most of the crew on deck. The feeble light from the lanterns was directed toward the river, life buoys were thrown out and a boat launched in an unsuccessful effort to rescue the General before he drowned. Some men dropped into the water, while others ran downstream in a fruitless search to pull him from the river. The body was never recovered.⁴⁰

The death of General Thomas Francis Meagher is one of Montana history's most enduring mysteries. The simple truth is that Meagher more than likely came on deck that dark night because of another attack of dysentery. Missouri River steamboats were notoriously unsteady while anchored in a swift current. In his weakened condition on an unsteady deck, he probably lost his footing or tripped on a coil of rope, hit his head and fell unconscious into the river. The handrails that normally encircled the deck had been removed as a result of a collision downriver, so there was nothing for the General to grab on to if he could. Although a barber later claimed to have witnessed him purposely jumping from the boat, suicide is unlikely considering the General's religious convictions. While hotly debated by historians now, murder was not considered until forty years later when a man named Frank Diamond claimed to have killed him for an \$8,000 bounty offered by the Montana vigilance organization (he later recanted his confession).⁴¹

Sanders's presence in Fort Benton that day is suggestive, but does not prove murder. Others stated that Meagher died in a drunken accident. Eyewitnesses closest to him, including Sanders, state that he was not drunk, but delirious from his illness. Unfortunately, many recent Montana histories still claim that his death came about because he was intoxicated even though the evidence suggests otherwise. Historian Robert Athearn concluded in his biography of Thomas Francis Meagher that

The extreme bitterness of his enemies had spread the legend of his insobriety so far and wide in Montana that the story of a drunken demise fell on willing ears. During his entire lifetime Meagher had been obliged to defend his honor against tale-bearers who either exaggerated the particular circumstance or made up the entire story.

40. Cavanagh, *Memoirs*, p. 12; Malone et al, *Montana*, p. 103; Clarke, 'Death;' Sanders, 'General Meagher;' Athearn, *Thomas Francis Meagher*, p. 165; Lyons, *Brigadier-General Thomas Francis Meagher*, pp. 204-205, 353-354.

41. A conversation between Professor David Emmons of the University of Montana and the author revealed that a new argument has recently been made by an undergraduate student at the university that the General was, indeed, murdered by the Montana vigilantes. The student has indicated that Wilbur Fisk Sanders' presence in Fort Benton that day was no coincidence and that he had a hand in the murder of the Acting One. Cavanagh, *Memoirs*, pp. 12-13; Lyons, *Brigadier-General Thomas Francis Meagher*, pp. 353-354; Lewis W. Hunt (July 1962), 'Thomas Francis Meagher: The 1913 Hoax,' *Montana The Magazine of Western History*, pp. 24-25, 28-29.

Upon learning of General Meagher's death, territorial governor Green Clay Smith offered a \$1,000 reward for the body and ordered that the militia's headquarters and federal offices be draped in mourning for a period of thirty days. Judge Munson even went as far as to suspend judicial proceedings in his court for several days in honor of a man he detested.⁴²

On 4 July 1905, the Montana chapter of the Ancient Order of Hibernians unveiled to a 'cheering throng' a statue sculpted by Chicago artist Charles K. Mulligan of General Meagher. A powerful fraternal organization in Montana since the late nineteenth century, the Hibernians' core membership in the state rested with Irish emigrants in Butte and Anaconda. The statute portrays Meagher as the gallant Civil War hero that most Irish preferred to remember him as – in full uniform astride a magnificent horse with sword upraised – challenging those who would dare question his decisions and his courage. The statue rests on a high granite pedestal in front of the Montana State Capitol building overlooking the Helena Valley. He is still very much alive in Montana folklore and discussions about his career here still generate heated debate. During his brief, but colorful career in Montana, Meagher underestimated his political opponents, misunderstood his role as Territorial Secretary and alienated his fellow federal appointees. He was, however, tremendously popular with the territory's rank and file citizens. He had an almost negligible impact on the territory's politics, but in the process he became one of Montana's most colorful pioneers.⁴³

42. Athearn, *Thomas Francis Meagher*, p. 166; Sanders, *History of Montana*, pp. 336-337; Leeson, *History of Montana*, p. 248; *Eureka Journal*, 26 February 1928; Munson Proclamation (3 July 1867), MHS SC 309 Montana Historical Society; Lectures of Gov. Thomas Francis Meagher, p. 77; Sanders, 'General Meagher.'

43. Maginnis, 'Thomas Francis Meagher,' p. 118; Carroll Van West (1990), 'Montana's Monuments: History in the Making,' *Montana The Magazine of Western History*, p. 15; David M. Emmons (1992), 'The Orange and the Green in Montana: A Reconsideration of the Clark – Daly Feud' in *The Montana Heritage: An Anthology of Historical Essays*, edited by Robert R. Swartout, Jr. and Harry W. Fritz (Montana Historical Society, p. 170n.

Extract from President Kennedy's Address to the Oireachtas – June 1863

By Eddie Synnott

The following extract from President John Fitzgerald Kennedy's address to the Oireachtas shows the esteem which the Irish Brigade and Brigadier General Thomas F. Meagher are still held in modern day America:

Mr Speaker, Prime Minister, Members of the Parliament: I am grateful for your welcome and for that of your countrymen.

The 13th day of December, 1862, will be a day long remembered in American history. At Fredericksburg, thousands of men fought and died on one of the bloodiest battlefields of the American Civil War. One of the most brilliant stories of that day was written by a band of 1,200 men who went into battle wearing a green sprig in their hats. They bore a proud heritage and a special courage, given to those who had long fought for the cause of freedom. I am referring, of course, to the Irish Brigade. General Robert E. Lee, the great military leader of the Southern Confederate forces, said of this group of men after the battle, 'The gallant stand which this bold brigade made on the heights of Fredericksburg is well known. Never were men so brave. They ennobled their race by their splendid gallantry on that desperate occasion. Their brilliant though hopeless assaults on our lines excited the hearty applause of our officers and soldiers.'

Of the 1200 men who took part in that assault, 280 survived the battle. The Irish Brigade was led into battle on that occasion by Brigadier General Thomas F. Meagher, who had participated in the unsuccessful uprising of 1848, was captured by the British and sent in a prison ship to Australia, from whence he finally came to America. In the fall of 1862, after serving with distinction and gallantry in some of the toughest fighting of this most bloody struggle the Irish Brigade was presented with a new set of flags. In the city ceremony, the city chamberlain gave them the motto 'The Union, our Country, and Ireland Forever.' Their old ones having been torn to shreds by bullets in previous battles, Captain Richard McGee took possession of these flags on September 2nd in New York City and arrived with them at the Battle of Fredericksburg and carried them in the battle. Today in recognition of what these gallant Irishmen and what millions of other Irish have done for my country, and through the generosity of the Fighting 69th, I would like to present one of these flags to the people of Ireland.

As you can see, gentlemen, the battle honours of the Brigade include Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, Yorktown, Fair Oaks, Gaines Hill, Allen's Farm, Savage's Station, White Oak Bridge, Glendale, Malvern Hill, Gettysburg, and Bristoe's Station.



President Kennedy addressing both houses of the Oireachtas, 28 June 1963.

Lensmen Press and PR Photo Agency.

Beatha Donnchadha Ruadh Mac Conmara

*(Téacs de pháipéar a léigh Eibhlín Ní Chrotaigh do Connradh na Gaeluinn
i bPortláirge oichdhe Dé Luain an 19adh lá de Mhárta 1928)*

AR an gcéad dul síos caithfidh mé iarraidh oraibh gan a bheith ag tnúth le léigheacht an-spíonta mar is ró-bheag mo dhítheall, go mór-mhór nuair atáim i láthair daoine ag a bhfuil oileamhaint ársa oileadhanta. Ach tá an méid seo le rádh agam – agus caithfidh sibh go léir é a admháil – sé sin, nach bhfuil aon easbadh mhisnigh orm ós rud é go bhfuighim ionaim teacht ós bhúr gcomhair agus labhairt libh in aon chor.

'Sé an chúis is mó gur thoghas beatha agus saothar Dhonnchadha Ruaidh mar ádhbhar léigheachta anocht ná an bhaint a bhí aige le dúthaigh Déiseach agus le cathair Phortláirge anso. Cé nár rugadh i gCo. Phortláirge é, is ann a chaith sé an chuid is mó dá shaoghail. Mar gheall ar san, ba dhóigh liom gur ceart do mhuintear na nDéise níos mó suime a chur ann ná mar a dhéanann siad. Tá ís againn go léir agus is é dár náire é gur beag trácht a dhéantar air – nó ar aon des na sean-scríbhneoirí ach oiread – sa chathair seo. Ní mar sin do mhuintear na tuaithe, ámh. Tá a lán feasa agus an-chuid sgéulta acu mar gheall air agus is iad na sean daoine i Rinn Ó gCuanach agus as san siar go h-Eochaill a thug dom cuid mhaith deín eolas atá anso agam.

Tá daoine ann a dhéarfhaidh, bífhéidir, nár bhfiú spéis a chur san bhfear mbocht, gur bífharr gan bheith á dtarraingt a chnámha amach as an uaigh. In a choinne san, cuimhnighmís go ndéantar tagairt do dhaoine go bhfuil tréithe thar an gcoitcheantacht ortha i ngach tír san domhan. Is baoghal go mbeadh saoghal agus saothair Dhonnchadh Ruaidh marbh san uaigh muna mbeadh go raibh daoine ann a mhol a chuid scríbhinní agus a thug dúinn i bhfuirm leabhair é. Bíad siúd an Dochtúir Seoirse Sigerson, an Dochtúir Standish Ó Gráda agus Seán Pleámonn. Díairigh sibh go léir na h-ainmneacha sin agus ní gádh dom a innsint cé h-iad. Dá mba rud é nach raibh maitheas agus árd-mhaitheas i scríbhinní Dhonnchadha ní mholfaidís san é. Teasbáintear dúinn ar an gcuma seo gur fiú ainm an fhile a choimeád beo.

Mar a dubhairt mé, ní i ndúthaigh Déiseach a rugadh Donnchadh. Rugadh agus tógadh i gCo. an Chláir é. De réir gach deallramh, shíolraigh sé ó dhaoine maithe. Bhí ar intinn a athair agus a mháthair sagart a dhéanamh de agus chuige san chuireadar go dtí an Róimh é chun a chuid léighinn a chríochnú agus chun óird beannuighthe a ghlacadh. Bhí coinne acu go gcaisfadh sé agus é ina shagart naomhtha tar éis beagán de bhliantaibh. Ach, mo léan, bhí breall ortha! In áit san, is amhlaidh gur imthigh sé le fánaidh an tsaoghail. Chaitheadh amach as Coláiste na Róimhe é agus thríall sé thar nais go h-Éirinn gan aige ach an méid fhoghlama a bhailigh sé chuige ann. Is eol dúinn go raibh tréith na filidheachta air

fiú ag an am san mar tá giota amhráin anso agum a cheap sé tar éis teacht abhaile dó:

"Nuair a chuadh-sa dtí an Róimh.
Mar a deintear na sagairt díobh,
Dífhiosruigheadar-sa díom,
Raibh aon cailín sa bhaile agam,
Dubhairt mé, aís ba bhréag dom,
Imí shaoghal riamh nár bhacas leó,
Is gurab í Máire an Chúil Chnocánach
Bhí mo chrádhcaint go gcasfainn chúiche"

Ní fhaca mé riabh an píosa filidheachta san i gcló cé gur airigh mé ag na sean-daoine go mion minic é.

Ag an am a tháinig Donnchadh abhaile ó'n Róimh thárla go raibh scoil de mhór-chlú i gCo. Phortlárige ag Sliabh gCua, áit atá timcheall leath slighe idir Dún Garbhán agus Cluain Meala. Is ar an áit seo a thug Donnchadh a aghaidh in ionad casadh ar a thír dúthchais féin. Deallruigheann sé gur airigh sé trácht ar an scoil so agus é san Róimh mar rachadh ogánaigh as gach áird in Eirinn go Sliabh gCua chun teangacha a fhoghlaim roimh dhul anonn don bhFrainnc nó don Spáinn dóibh. Bhí fear an-léigheannta ag múineadh i Sliabh gCua – Tomás Ó Caoimh a bfaínm dó – fear ó limistéireacht Caisleáin Nuadha. Mac baintraighe boichte a bíeadh é ach ní raibh aon teora lena chuid léighinn. "Tomás Ó Caoimh na Laidne " a thugtaí air. Tá fear dá shliocht is dá chomh-ainm fós ag an mBaile Nuadh i ngior-racht ceithre mhíle ó Cheapach Cinn. Deirtí nach dtíochfadh tuirse air féin ná ar Donnachadh Ruadh ach iad ag síor réiteach duanta. Agus cé nach raibh buadh ceaptha filidheachta ag an gCaoimheach ba ghéire é ar cheisteanna agus cursaí eal-adhain.

Chímíd Donnchadh anois "ag riar lucht dúnta druadh agus cléireach i mBaile na nGiolcaighe i Sliabh Geal gCua", mar a chuireann sé féin é. Níorbh ró-fhada ann dó, ámh, nuair a thuit an mí-ádh air tré dán magamhail nó rud éigin den tsaghas a scríobh sé i dtaobh chailín óig sa cheantar. (Bhíodh nós ag na filí sa tsean-aimsear rann a scríobh i gcoinne aoinne nár chaith go maith dóibh. Dá bhrígh san, bhí scannradh croidhe ar dhaoine chur isteach ortha. "Satire" a ghlaodhtar air i mBéarla agus is dócha gur rud éigin mar sin a dhein Donnachadh.)

Níor leig an cailín a chuid magaidh leis, ámh, agus do dhíol sé as go géar. Deireann Pleámonn agus é ag tagairt don díoghaltas a thug an cailín air gur "cuireadh fód móna ar dhearg lasadh i ndíon Tigh na Scoile maidin Lae Bealtaine bliadhain an tseacha (1740) agus bíéigin do Dhonnchadh imtheacht ó Shliabh gCua." Ní ró fhada a chuaigh sé, ámh, mar, tamaillín ina dhiadh sin, geibhtear a thuirisc i gCarraig an Chodlata san gcomharsanacht.

San mbliadhain céadna, 1740, ruaigeadh as Baile na nGiolcaighe ar fad é mar gheall ar chleas éigin a dímír sé ar na sagartaibh agus ní gheibhtear tuairisc air ins an áit níos mó.

Tar éis imtheacht dó ó Bhaile na nGiollaigh geibhtear Donnchadh i bPortláirge ar a shlighe go Talamh an Éisc. Níor imthigh sé, ámh, go dtí an bhliadhain 1754. Idir an dá linn ní raibh sé díomhaoin acht is baoghal liom nach in aon deagh-obair a bhí sé sáithe. A mhalaire, faraoir!

Thuit sé amach go raibh crann-chur ag fearaibh óga na h-áite féachaint cia acu a mheallfadh chun éalódh leis Máire Ní h-Ógáin, an cailín ba dheise agus ba mhó scéimhe dá raibh san mbarúntacht. Ar Dhonnchadh a thuit an crann. Chuaidh sé go Ubh Mac Coille, láimh le Eochail, mar a raibh an cailín in a comhnuidhe. Díéalúigh Máire leis agus do phósadh iad. Do réir deallraimh, ní fada a bhíodar i mbun tighis nuair a chuimnigh Donnchadh ar imtheacht uaithe agus mar an gcéad-na fuair Máire amach ná bfearrde di Donnchadh aice ná uaithe.

Pé sgéal é, thug a muinntear congnamh di chun Donnchadh a chur thar sáile. Ach, nuair a fuair sé an t-airgead, ísé an rud a dhein sé ná fuireach i bPortláirge go dtí gur chaith sé gach a raibh aige.

Níor chas sé ar dhúthaigh Eochaille a thuilleadh agus chaith sé an chuid eile dá shaoghail i ndúthaigh Paorach, idir Sléibhte an Chomaraigh agus an tSiúir. Chuaidh sé go Talamh an Éisc agus chaith sé cúpla bliadhain ann. Thug sé uaird nó dhó ar an bhFrainnc agud ar cúpla ceann eile de thíortha na hEorpa. Tar éis chasadh abhaile ó Thalamh an Éisc do chómhnuigh sé ar feadh mórchuid na h-aimsire i gCill Mhic Thomáisín.

Tá sgéal ann a bhaineann leis an ama sin agus ní misde tagairt dó. Lá amháin, bhí Donnchadh ag gabháil ó Chill Mhic Thomáisín go dtí an Sráidbhaile chun freastal ar bhaisteadh leinbh. Dífhás an leanbh so suas chun bheith in a Shagairt Paróiste ar Chluain Meala. An tAthair Tomás Ó Flannabhra a bíeadh é. Deirtear nach raibh cuideachta níos fearr ná Donnchadh in aon áit ina mbeadh spórt ar siubhalgus dá bhrígh sin bhíodh fáilte roimhe ag gach cóisir agus bainis. Is cosamhail gur chun cabhrughadh leis an gcuideachta a bhí sé ag dul go dtí an Sráidbhaile ach ar a shlighe bhuaill sé isteach go tigh an tsagairt n an tAthair Seán Ó Cathasaigh – chun a scíth a leigint. D'iarr an sagairt ar mnaoi an tigh pionnta leanna a thabhairt dó agus tugadh. Ní raibh Donnchadh sásta leis an pionnta amháin agus d'iarr sé ceann eile, rud nach raibh an sagairt sásta a thabhairt.

Thug Donnchadh a aghaidh ar an mbóthar arís agus chuaidh go dtí an áit ina raibh an baisteadh. Thuit amach go raibh an tAthair Seán ag an mbaisteadh comh maith agus le linn dóibh a bheith ag caitheamh bídh agus dighe ann tháinig teachtaire á chur in iúl go raibh barraille an tsagairt á thaoschadh. Cheap Donnchadh dán ag innsint don saoghal connus mar a d'ól an sluagh sídhe leann an tsagairt.

Is ó Áth na Scoile, áit atá timcheall cúig míle soir ó Chill Mhic Thomáisín, a thug Donnchadh an "Pas" nó Cead Taistil do Risteárd Mac Gearailt, duine dá scoláiribh seachránacha. Is iongantach an dán é an "Pas", idir dheas-chainnt agus magadh. Is fiú go mór é a léigheamh ach tá sé rud beag fada chun é a thabhairt isteach san léigheacht so. Tá sé ar fághail i bhfochair "Eachtra Giolla an Amhráin" agus a lán de fhósaí eile i leabhar Sheáin Pleámonn.

Cúig bhliain eile agus faighimid Donnchadh i gCill Mhic Thomáisín fé mhí-áth agus fé mhí-rath arís. Bhí sé fé tharcuisne ag na comharsanaibh agus i bhfíor

íochtar na h-aindeise. De réir scéala, is ar Bhaile an Fhaoitigh a thug sé a aghaidh an uair san. Áit a b'eadh é in a mbíodh a lán d'uaislibh an Chonntae ina gcomh-nuidhe. 'Sé an chéad tuairisc a bhfaighimíd uaidh ins an áit san ná "caoineadh" á scríobh aige ar fhear ar a dtugtaí "Count Corbett", fánaighe nach raibh tigh ná talamh aige. Thárla gur thuit an fear seo féin mbórd – níl fhios agam céin fáth – agus d'iarradh ar Dhonnchadh é a chaoineadh, amhail is go raibh sé tar éis bás a fhagháil. Do dhein sé amhlaigh. Seo cuid deín chaoineadh:

"A Éigse Banba, ní feaseach díbh cúis mo bhróin,
 Sgéul do thug masla, thug screadeadh san Mumhain ís gleó,
 Thug Ciar gan laga ar bith ag agallamh as úird na Róimhí,
 A Cléireach calma marbh, gan lúth, fáin bhfód.
 Fáin bhfód glas, mo ghleó chreach, an tíollamh suairc,
 An t-óig-fhir "Sir Domhnall", ceann cogaidh na Ruaigh,
 Fear chómh sógha is Rígh Seirse, fear cosanta i gcruainn,
 Fear ólta na gCorónach sa mbromadh ar an sluagh."

Chíonn sibh go bhfuil an píosa seo thar bárr maidir le ceól agus gluaiseacht.

Ó'n méid de stair Dhonnchadh atá innste agam go dtí seo, is léir nárbh fear maith é. Pé áit a chuaigh sé, dhein sé aighneas agus clampar i measg na gcomharsan agus bhí air teicheadh ó áit go h-áit mar gheall ar a chuid cleasanna. Ach tá scéal níos measa le teacht.

Timcheall an ama a chuaigh sé go Baile an Fhaoitigh bhí an dlighe an-dhian ar fad i gcoinne na gCatoiliceach agus ní raibh cead acu scoil a riaradh ná a gclainn a chur ar scoil. Tá sé ráite gur dhearbhuigh Donnchadh ar bhríge a mhóide i gcoinne Catoilicigh éigin a bhí ag múineadh scoile i gCill Mhic Thomáisín. Níl fhios agam an fíor an scéal nó nach fíor. Ní dhéarfainn go raibh Donnchadh cionntach ann aí chuigint. Má bhí féin, is cosamhail gur le h-aghaidh mhagaidh agus caitheamh aimsire a dhein sé an gníomh.

De réir gach scéal, ámhach, do thréig sé an creideamh timcheall an ama san agus fuair sé post chléirigh i dteampuill protastúnach i gCill Mhic Thomáisín. Cé gur chaith sé tamall maith san teampuill, ísé tuairim na n-úghdar nár glac sé riamh leis an gcreideamh gallda. I "An Gearán" teasbáineann sé nárbh é de bhárr grádh dó a ghlac sé leis an protastúnachas. Mar a dubhairt mé cheana, bhí an fear bocht caithte ar an saoghal gan fiú d'fon tige ós a chionn. Níl mé ag déanamh leath-sgéal ar a shon ach ag teasbáint go raibh cúis, agus cúis cruaidh leis an rud a dhein sé. Le linn dó bheith san teampuill, scríobh sé cúpla dán i mbéarla, ach ba shuarach mar iarrachtaí iad agus ní déantear mórán tagartha dóibh. Tá tagairt go leor ar "An Gearán", ámhach. B'é sin a mhíll Donnchadh mar nuair a fuarthas amach nach raibh sé d'fílis don gcreideamh gallda, do chaitheadh amach as an dteampuill é agus bhí sé ar seachrán arís.

Tar éis fágtha Cill Mhic Thomáisín dó, éirigheann na tuairiscí féin a h-imtheachtaí cuíosach gann. De réir deallramh, lean sé leis an gceapadóireacht mar tá amhráin againn a chum sé i mBaile Breac, i mBaile na bhFaoiteach, san gCill agus ina lán áiteanna eile.

Bhí sé féin agus Tadhg Gaedhealach an-mhuinnteara leo chéile agus, de réir an sgéil, chaitheadar na laetheannta deireannacha i bhfochair a chéile. Ba mhínic dóibh ag caitheamh lá saoire i nDún Garbháin nó i bPortláirge. Lá dá rabhadar ag siubhal an bhóthair amach as an dtaobh so de Dhún Garbháin – an Rinn Bhán a tugtar an an áit – thárla go raibh cailín óg, agus í thimcheall ceithre bliadhain déag díaois, ag teacht in a dtreo agus í ag siubhal go mear. Bhí sí ag dul go Tráigh na Rinne Báine le dinnéir dos na fir a bhí ag bailiughadh turscáir le h-aghaidh leas-aighthe na talmhan. Chuireadar stró ar an gcailín óg agus dubhradar:

"A chailín bhig an tsodair,
Fan go sochair agus déanfaidh rann duit"

Do fhreagair an cailín ar an bpointe baise:

"Tá an taoide ag bogadh,
Na fir ina dtroschadh
Agus bífhéarr liom breall ort."

Cé déarfadh nach raibh féith na filidheachta go beo bríoghmhar ins na Déisibh céud bliadhain ó shoin.

Fuair Tadhg Gaedhealach bás i dtosach na bliana 1800 agus chuireadh i mBaile Úr Laithín é. Ba mhór an buille do Dhonnchadh Ruadh bás a charad agus deirtear gur ghol sé go fuigheach ina dhiaidh. Scríobh sé píosa i Laidin ina chuimhne; chuireadh Gaeluinn air agus seo dhíbh píosa den aistriughadh:

"Síos féin bhfód so tá Tadhg!
Ar an uaigh tabhair amharc, a thaistealaidh.
File ba mhór aís mhaith clú,
Beag an áit ina bhfuil sé ina luighe,
Truagh go ndeachaidh díon éag orainn,
Truagh do rug an bás buadh air.
Díeitill a spiorad in áird,
Ag iarraidh naomh-ríoghacht Dé bhí.
Cé sheinnfeas Éire 'na dhiaidh san dúinn,
Cé gheobhas gaisce a laochradh.
Faraoir! Ós traochta luigheas Tadhg,
'Nois tá ár gceolta gan bhrígh.
'Buimidh na mbárd! Déanaigí brón,
Óir do chaill sibh go deó deó bhúr ndalta.
Ar bheith do Thadhg insan gcré –
Cumhach anois Clanna Gaedhil!
Síothcháin ba mhian leis dá chroidhe
Agus síothcháin a fuair sé in áirde.
Ráinig sé flaitheamhnas Dé,
Flaitheamhnas Athair an tsaoghail."

Bhí Donnchadh timcheall céud bliadhain díaois nuair a chum sé an dán san

agus is é an píosa deireannach atá againn uaidh. Teasbáineann sé go raibh árd-eolas aige ar na h-ughdair laidne. Deir Pleámonn nach raibh fochal amuigh ó thús deireadh ann agus go raibh an Laidin go cruinn ceolmhar.

Táimid ag teacht anois to deireadh ré Dhonnchadh Ruadh. Chaith sé na deich mbliadhain a mhair sé i ndiaidh básThaidhg Gaedhealaigh i bparóiste na Cille ag múineadh laidne do chlainn Shéamuis Bháin de Paor. Tuigfear ó'n méid san go raibh an mheabhair go maith aige cé go raibh sé gan radharc na súl um an dtaca so. Bhíodh bata aige mar thaca chun siubhail. Fé dheireadh, chuaidh sé abhaile agus d'fan sé san mbothán ina raibh a mhuintear. Fuair sé bás timcheall ceithre bliadhain tar éis dó tigh an Phaoraigh a fhágaint.

Is cúis áthais dom a bheith i n-ann a rádh go bhfuair sé bás naomhtha i ndeireadh na scríbe. Tháinig sagart óg – an tAthair Rughraoi de Paor – go dtí an áit. (Bhí gaol éigin idir an sagart san agus an t-easbog Rughraoi de Paor a bhí anseo i bPortláirge go dtí tamall de bhliadhantaibh ó shoin.) Labhair Donnchadh leis an Athair Rughraoi agus chuaidh sé chun faoistine dó. Is cosamhail gurab é seo an chéad uair a chuaidh sé ar a ghlúnaibh do shagart ón am a dfág sé Coláiste na Róimhe. Deirtear go raibh sé ag sileadh deóra athrighe as san amach. Tá sé curtha i reilig Bhaile Nuadh, gar do Chill Mhic Thomáisín. Chuir an tAthair Pádraig de Paor leach leis an uaigh tamall de bhliadhanta ó shoin ach ní i nGaeluinn atá an scríobhneóireacht agus is truagh san. Bhí sé sínte ansúd ar feadh céud bliadhain gan líne scríobhtha ina thaobh ná fiú leach ós a chionn chun a thaisbáint don saoghal cé a bhí ina chodladh féin bhfód.

Sin mar a dhéanann muintear na h-Éireann faillighe ar na daoine a b'fhearr a dhein gníomh don tír. Dar ndóigh, is iomdha fear calma atá fé fód glas na hÉireann gan trácht ar bith ar a ainm ná ar na gaiscí a dhein sé. Agus cé déarfadh nár dhein Donnchadh Ruadh a chion féin, ina shlighe féin, don tír is don teanga. Dá mba rud é nár fhág sé dúinn acht an t-aon amhrán "Bánchnuic Éireann Óighe", ba leor é. D'innseófadh an dán san gurb fíor-fhile agus fíor-Ghaedheal é.

[Is baoghal gur dhein sé roinnt díobhála comh maith mar ní raibh an fhoidhne aige chun foirm mín blasta a chur ar a dhánta. De gnáth níor dhein sé ach iad a bhreachadh síos díreach mar a bhuaíl na smaointe é. Bhí an locht céadna ar fhilí eile na Mumhan ag an am.]

Déarfaidhe, leis, go raibh sé ró-thugtha don mhagadh agus don searbhas. Ach caithfidh cuimhneamh ar an mbuille mór a fuair sé i dtús a óige agus connus mar a bhí sé cráidhte ag an saoghal as san amach. Gan dabht, is é Donnchadh Ruadh a d'fhág síol léighinn na Gaedhilge i gConntae Phortláirge agus ins na dúthaigh mór-thimcheall. Is cosamhail gur ós na scoláirí a mhúin Donnchadh a fuair Séamus Ó Scuiridh, Liam Mach Uilliam agus Seán Ó Mathghamhna a gcuid léighin. Ní beag an méid sin; ba scríobhneóirí oilte iad, mar atá fhios agaibh. Agus tá daoine eile mar iad, dá bhféadfaimís cuimhneamh ortha. Mar gheall ar san agus na tréithe maithe a bhí ortha, ba cheart dúinn a bheith maithteach do Dhonnchadh as ucht a dhíth-chéile agus cuimhneamh gurbé féin agus a fhilí cómhaimsearaidh a choiméad teanga na hÉireann beo ins an ochtadh aois déag.

Donncha Rua Mac Conmara

Summary of paper in Irish read by Ellen (Nellie) Crotty at a Gaelic League meeting in Waterford on Monday 19th March 1928

I chose Donncha Rua for the subject of my talk to-night because of his deep connections with the this city of Waterford and the *Déise* country generally. He is well remembered in the rural areas but is little known or appreciated in the city. Although he had many faults and led a rather reckless life he made great contributions to Gaelic literature. His exceptional abilities are acknowledged by Gaelic scholars of more recent times and we cannot do better than follow their lead.

Donncha was born in 1715, not in Co. Waterford, but at Cratloe, Co. Clare. He seems to have come from a good class family. His parents wished that he should be a priest and, with this in mind, sent him to College in Rome. However, their hopes were to be dashed. He was expelled from the College and returned to Ireland. 'Expulsion' of one kind or another was, indeed, destined to become the pattern of his life.

Specific reasons for the expulsion are not given but Miss Crotty quotes a stanza from one of his poems in which he admits to having lied to the College authorities. He told them that he had no interest in girls while in fact he had a girl at home named Máire, who continually pestered him to return to her.

On returning to Ireland, Donncha did not go back to Co. Clare but to the Sliabh gCua area of Co. Waterford, where he established himself as a teacher in a clandestine school run by a Tomás O'Keeffe (known as Tomás of the Latin). The main function of the school was the imparting of some knowledge of European languages (and, presumably, elementary Latin as well) to students for the priesthood bound for the continent. When not engaged in teaching, Donncha and Tomás spent their time tirelessly turning out poetry. The speaker remarked that Donncha (like some other poets of the time) was often at fault in not taking time to revise and polish his poetry. For the most part, he left it in the state in which it was originally jotted down.

It was a poetic composition that was the source of Donncha's next misfortune. He wrote an *aoir* – a satirical poem – against a young local girl. Generally, people were afraid to act against poets who libelled them in this way but this particular girl was obviously made of stern stuff and had his school was burned down in retaliation. This occurred on May Day 1740. Initially, Donncha moved only a short distance but another incident involving a trick played on some priests caused him to leave for Waterford City.

He then determined to go to Newfoundland but did not actually sail until 1754. In the meantime, he became involved in a further extraordinary sequence of events. These involved (as a result of some form of lottery) his marriage with 'the best-looking girl of the barony', the break-up of the marriage and the provision of cash by the girl's relatives to pay his passage to Newfoundland in order to get him out of

the way. However, he did not use the money for the stipulated purpose. He stayed on in Waterford, spending the money provided.

Eventually, he did go to Newfoundland but remained only about two years. It appears that he also visited France and perhaps some other countries on the continent.

It was probably while in Newfoundland that he wrote his best-known poem 'Bánchnuic Éireann Óighe – The Fair Hills of Virgin Ireland', in which he lauded the natural beauty of Ireland and the qualities of its people while lamenting its oppression by foreigners. On his return, Donncha settled, if that can be said to be the word, in the vicinity of Kilmacthomas. It was at this time that there occurred another of those out-of-the-ordinary episodes that seemed to crop up wherever he went.

He was much sought after for weddings and christenings, 'there being no better company than he to be found at such events.' On one occasion he was invited to a christening in Stradbally. On his way to the ceremony, he called at the house of the parish priest, Father Sean Casey. The priest had the servant girl draw a pint from the beer-barrel for Donncha but when Donncha suggested a second pint the priest refused to humour him. Later, as the christening festivities were in full swing, word came to Father Casey, who was also present, that his beer barrel was leaking. Donncha later wrote a poem describing how the fairies had drunk the priest's beer! The baby of the christening, Thomas Flannery, grew up to become a priest, and in due course, parish priest of Clonmel.

It was at about this time that Donncha wrote the 'Pas' or 'Licence to Travel' in honour of Richard Fitzgerald, one of his wandering scholars. It is a remarkable piece of work, half serious and half in jest.

Five years later, he so angered the people of Kilmacthomas that they expelled him from the village. It seems that he then went to Ballyneety, which is where the incident of 'The Lament of Count Corbett' occurred. 'Count Corbett', far from being a Count, was a homeless wanderer who, one day collapsed under the table. (Was it due to an unaccustomed good meal?) The man recovered but those present asked Donncha to compose a lament as if he had really died. He met their request and the speaker quotes a stanza, praising its music and rhythm.

Donncha was to offend even more deeply in the period that followed. He apparently swore informations against a Catholic who was running a school in Kilmacthomas in defiance of the Penal Laws – although there are doubts about the facts of the case and uncertainty as to what his motives might have been. He then turned Protestant himself, and took up a clerical post in the Church at Kilmacthomas. He seems to have held this post for some time but lost it when he wrote his 'Gearán' or 'Complaint', which carried the message that his conversion was not one of conviction.

Reports of his activities now become few and far between. However, it is clear that he continued writing poetry as we have compositions of the time written in Ballybrack, Ballyneety, Kill and elsewhere.

At this time, he developed a strong friendship with the great Munster poet,

Tadhg Gaelach Ó Súilleabháin. When Tadhg died in 1800, Donncha wrote a lament in Latin. The speaker quotes an Irish translation of part of the lament.

Donncha lived ten years after the death of Tadhg Gaelach, during most of which period he lived at Kill and acted as Latin tutor to the family of Séamus Power. He became blind in his later years but continued to move about, using a stick. In the end, he died a holy death, having been converted by a young priest, Father Rory Power, who had come to see him. It is said that he shed tears of repentance from the time of his conversion to his death. (He wrote an 'athrí' – a poem of repentance – which is one of the finest such poems in the Irish language. Surprisingly, Miss Crotty does not mention it.)

He died on 6th October 1810 at the age of 95 and was interred in Newtown cemetery, near Kilmacthomas. His grave was unmarked for 100 years but a headstone was eventually erected (by Father Patrick Power). Inappropriately, the headstone inscription is in English.

Notwithstanding his faults, Donncha Rua deserves our gratitude. If he had left us nothing more than 'Bánchnuic Óireann Óighe' it would have been sufficient to secure his memory. But he did much more than this. He planted powerful seeds of Gaelic learning in Co. Waterford and the surrounding area. It seems certain that it was from Donncha's students that the present day Irish scholars of the area such as Séamus Ó Scuridh, Liam Mach Uilliám and Seán Ó Mathghamhna derived their Gaelic learning.



Eibhlín Ní Chrotaigh

By kind permission of Seamus O'Connor

Visiting the Vatican in the Early 19th Century: Some Irish Memories

By Anne E. O'Brien

IN THE nineteenth century many wealthy European visitors travelled to Rome in search of ecclesiastic grandeur, history and fashionable society. The Irish were no exception and five Irish writers have left us valuable travel accounts which depict the activities of these nineteenth-century tourists in the Eternal City. Of particular interest are the descriptions of the Vatican which show its importance as a centre of entertainment, as a site of Catholic power and as a catalyst for reflections on the Church and its position in Italian society. The views expressed by these authors on the Vatican convey the prevalent attitudes towards religion amongst the Irish travellers and while also revealing some of the subtleties of the Anglo-Irish relationship with Catholicism.

The Tourists

The five writers, all women, came from the upper echelons of Irish society. A journey to Europe was an expensive undertaking and thus most Irish tourists were members of the Ascendancy or travelling in their company. Catherine Wilmot, who visited Rome in 1803, travelled as part of the entourage of Lord Cashell (of Fermoy). Lady Morgan (Dublin) and Countess Blessington (Clonmel) were both successful writers who had achieved their titles through marriage, while Anna Jameson, daughter of the Dublin artist and United Irishman, D. Brownell Murphy, travelled as the governess of a wealthy English family.

These writers went to Italy in an era in which such journeys were an arduous experience. They faced a crossing of the Alps, a journey through malaria-infested countryside, attacks from bandits preying on wealthy tourists, and frequent passport controls and customs checks. On returning to Ireland after her travels Lady Morgan commented that 'the fatigue was killing, accommodation wretched, and expense tremendous.'¹ Of course, there were many other Irish present in Rome in the nineteenth century, including ecclesiastics and painters, guides and adventurers. Their reasons for being in the city were diverse but they were not, strictly speaking, tourists. Therefore we find that most Irish tourists in Rome were Anglo-Irish and were staying in the city as part of a lengthy European tour.²

1 Lady Morgan, (1863) *Lady Morgan's Memoirs*, (London, W. Allen) vol. 2, p. 139.

2 There are no specific books on Irish travel to Italy in the nineteenth century; the following, however, are useful indications of general trends in travel literature in this era: R.S Pine-Coffin, (1976) *Bibliography of British and American travel in Italy to 1860*, (Florence: Olschki); C.P.Brand, (1957) *Italy and the English Romantics*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press); H. Neville Maugham, (1903) *The book of Italian travel*, (London: Grant Richards) and William M. Johnston, (1987) *In search of Italy: foreign writers in Northern Italy since 1800*, (Pennsylvania: Penn State University Press).

The nineteenth century was, however, a period of transition in the world of travel. At the start of the century, people travelled by horse and carriage while sixty years later, trains were criss-crossing the continent. Furthermore, travel was becoming accessible to a much wider section of the population. With the growth of the middle classes, travel in Europe was no longer confined to the upper ranks of society. The fifth and final writer, Mrs. T. Mitchell, tells us of these changes in her book:

To France, Switzerland, and Germany, but above all to Italy, our youth must be sent, if they expect one day to take their proper place amongst the elite of their country, and even with the middle classes, travelling has now become an indispensable finale to what they term a genteel education: so that from the dignified peer, to the opulent merchant, or wealthy mechanic, all are equally ambitious that their young people should go forth and see the world.³

St. Peter's

Having undergone the difficult journey to Rome, the travellers delighted in their first glimpses of Rome. Countess Blessington, tells us that:

The first view of the Eternal City burst onto us, and notwithstanding a pre-determination not to indulge in the enthusiasm peculiar to female travellers, I confess it made my heart beat quicker.⁴

An integral part of this view of the Roman cityscape was, of course, the towering dome of St. Peter's. The power and the huge dimensions of the building impressed the writers. Countess Blessington, in particular, was struck by the vastness, grandeur and, above all, the exquisite beauty of the proportions of St Peter's. The writers, though in awe of St. Peter's, did not succumb to complete admiration. Catherine Wilmot, for example, was critical of the plundering of the monuments of antiquity for the purpose of decorating the Vatican. She said that until she saw St. Peter's, she never considered Christianity in the light of an intruder.⁵ Lady Morgan recommends that the first visit paid to Saint Peter's should not be made by carriage. The church should instead be approached by foot, thus forcing the tourist to walk through the slums of Rome. St. Peter's then bursts upon the eye, 'more striking from the contrast that its beauty and magnificence present to the images of poverty and disgust which have preceded it.'⁶

In their criticism, the Irish show themselves to be very much in tune with their English counterparts who regularly spoke in negative terms about Catholic churches. The highly ornamented appearance of the continental churches jarred with their

3 Mrs. T. Mitchell, (1830) *Gleanings from travels in England, Ireland and through Italy*, (Belfast: Joseph Smyth) p. 17.

4 Lady Blessington, (1839) *The Idler in Italy*, (London: Henry Colburn) vol. 2, p.163.

5 Catherine Wilmot, (1803; reprint 1920) *An Irish Peer on the Continent*, edited by Thomas Sadler (London: Williams and Norgate) p. 172.

6 Lady Morgan, (1821) *Italy*, (London: Henry Colburn) vol. 2, pp. 375-6.

more austere sensibilities. The Anglo-Irish appear to share these views; for Lady Morgan, St. Peter's, surpassed 'the works of Memphian kings' but she felt it looked like a gigantic toy covered with an incalculable profusion of gems and precious stones, bronzes and marbles. Consequently she did not think highly of it, as, in her words, it was 'too fresh and sparkly'.⁷

Many Protestants did not find the experience of visiting the church in any way religious but for the Catholic writer, Mrs. T. Mitchell, it was a time to acknowledge divine greatness and the fact that the mind of man could conceive nothing superior to St. Peter's. Not too carried away with the moment, Mitchell informs the reader of a more material attraction of St. Peter's, namely the lack of an admission fee. She contrasts this with England, where she feels that the price demanded for entry into Westminster Abbey and St. Paul's is a disgrace to the British Empire. On an even more earthly note, the writer points out that British and Irish travellers are impressed with the neatness and cleanliness of St. Peter's, which differs considerably from the dust and cobwebs of the British churches.⁸

Entertainment

In the nineteenth century, St. Peter's was more than a tourist destination; it was also the principal source of entertainment for travellers in Rome. The church was the focus of social activity, the place to mingle, to gossip and to show off the latest fashions. Tourists gathered in the aisles of the church sometimes chattering, sometimes observing the ceremonies. Anna Jameson tells of her disappointment on finding St. Peter's crowded with English who, she asserts, convert the church into a kind of Hyde Park every Sunday:

They promenade arm in arm, show off their finery, laugh and talk aloud: as if the size and splendour of the edifice detracted in any degree from its sacred character. I was struck with a feeling of disgust; and shocked to see this most glorious temple of the Deity metamorphosed into a mere theatre.⁹

Jameson notes that that efforts had been made to curb such activity, and that representations had been made by the Vatican to prominent members of the English community in Rome. Although the situation improved for a while, by the time Jameson visited, it had returned to being the place of fashionable rendezvous. She says that:

Nothing could be worse than the exhibition of gaiety and frivolity, gallantry and coquetterie at St. Peter's yesterday. [...] It is surely most ill judged and unfeeling (to say nothing of profanation, for such it is,) to show such open contempt for the Roman Catholic religion in its holiest, grandest Temple, and under the very eyes of the head of that Church. I blushed for my country-women.¹⁰

7 Lady Morgan, *Italy*, vol. 2, p. 379.

8 Mrs. T. Mitchell, *Gleanings from travels*, pp. 269-271.

9 Anna Jameson, (1826) *Diary of an Ennuyée*, (London: Henry Colburn) p. 155.

10 Anna Jameson, p. 156.

Interestingly Jameson, who on other occasions calls herself an Irishwoman, calls the British travellers her countrywomen and in this, she is at one with the other four writers. Although there may have been differences between the English and the Anglo-Irish, these differences paled on the Continent when the travellers were faced with greater European diversity.

Ceremonies

Tourists visiting Rome usually organized their travel to coincide with the high points of the Catholic calendar and therefore most arrived in Rome for Christmas, proceeded to Naples for Lent and returned to the Eternal City for Easter. For the visitors, the Church ceremonies were like theatrical displays, an interesting form of entertainment. Wilmot says: 'It really and truly wou'd be endless to describe these strange theatre pageants, sumptuous as they are and so frequently repeated.'¹¹ For Protestants, more used to more sober forms of worship, Church celebrations seemed melodramatic and amusing.

Catherine Wilmot reduced her socializing during Easter because, being a period of prayers and fasting, 'it wou'd be esteem'd an irreverence to infringe on the sanctity of the time.'¹² This attitude seems to have been the exception to the rule as many revelled in the company and the entertainment provided in the Vatican. An example of this behaviour is provided by Anna Jameson who tells us that, 'In the midst of one of the most overpowering strains of the *Miserere*, the cry of condemned souls pleading for mercy, a lady behind me whispered loudly, 'Do you see what lovely broderie Mrs. L. has on her white satin spencer!'¹³

Mrs. Mitchell also acknowledges that the visitors treated Holy Week as a time of entertainment and says that the visiting English find the ceremonies 'strange and new.' They enter Saint Peter's and take their seats as they would at Covent Garden, 'to witness some exhibition got up entirely for effect.' Mitchell however recommends that although the tourist may condemn the performance as far below the dignity of the sacred subject, 'his every movement and gesture should be regulated by that degree of decorum which would proclaim to the assembled multitude that though English, he is not an infidel.'¹⁴

Many did not heed this warning as is apparent in Lady Morgan's detailed account of the activities in the Vatican during Holy Week. Morgan was an acute social observer and critic, who provided readers with a variety of caustic descriptions of the proceedings. She claimed that there was nothing more unholy than the manner in which Holy Week was celebrated in the 'Holiest capital of Christendom.' On Thursday the entire foreign population of Rome went to the Vatican and as the crowds pressed forward, there was incredible confusion; Lady Morgan says that, 'English peers are overturned by Roman canons. Irish friars batter the old armour of the mailed halberdiers with fists more formidable than the iron they attack.'¹⁵

11 Catherine Wilmot, p. 183.

12 Wilmot, p. 182.

13 Jameson, p. 307.

14 Mitchell, p. 273.

15 Morgan, (1821) vol. 3, p. 110.

Throughout the day, with the volume of people present, everyone was so taken with looking after their bodies, that they had no time to give a thought to the care of the soul. Some avoided the crush, finding room in the aisles, which provided, in Morgan's words, 'safe asylum for retiring piety or clandestine love.' Such activities were not however confined to the periphery:

In the centre of the Church crowded the *beau monde* of London, Paris, Vienna and St. Petersburg, laughing, flirting, chattering and love – making, [...] There, vows were received that did not all belong to heaven and oaths were taken at the statue of St. Peter, at which Jove laughs, if Peter does not.¹⁶

On each day of Holy Week, the Vatican was thronged with such distracted sightseers, enjoying the opulence of Church ceremonies and the surrounding entertainment. Lest the reader get carried away with the magnificence of the celebration, Lady Morgan, always the social critic, reminds us that in the midst of this imposing display of Church grandeur, there existed a local population, which displayed the most squalid misery. Like Morgan, Anna Jameson was disappointed with the ceremonies and said that most left a ludicrous or painful impression on the mind. The singing of the *Miserere* in the Sistine Chapel beneath Michelangelo's Last Judgment was perhaps the most moving event, so much so that when Jameson was there, many ladies wept and one fainted.¹⁷

The Pope and his territory

Lady Morgan's critical description of the rituals of the Church was not an end in itself. She chose to use this criticism to point out the immediate problems of Papal misrule and to highlight the discrepancy of a Pope surrounded by wealth and opulence while presiding over one of the poorest states in Europe. In the early nineteenth century, the Pope was the ruler of a vast area of land through which travellers would have passed on their way to Rome. This in itself coloured their view of the Pope as they observed scenes of extreme poverty and misery. All of the writers commented on the sickly appearance of the people in the countryside around Rome and Catherine Wilmot said: 'we observ'd that the few residents had their legs swell'd, their faces pale, and their children ricketty.'¹⁸

Morgan visited Rome in the time of Pope Pius VII and, having viewed the extravagance of the Papacy and the ill-treatment of the inhabitants of the Papal States, she concluded that a reverence for the Pope was 'almost universally extinct in Italy' and that the papal throne was considered the primary instrument of the degradation of the land. Interestingly she says that Irish Catholics are perhaps single in their attachment to the See of Rome, to which they are bound by 'the noblest of feelings, by a point of honour, and a hatred' of oppression.¹⁹ In contrast, the

16 Morgan, (1821) vol. 3, p. 117.

17 Jameson, p. 303.

18 Wilmot, p. 138.

19 Morgan, (1821) vol. 3, p. 25.

Papacy was considered the instigator of oppression in Italy. The manner in which Morgan acerbically observes the Pope clearly shows her feelings:

Then comes personified Infallibility! Feeble as womanhood! Helpless as infancy! Withered by time, and bent by infirmity; but borne aloft, like some idol of Pagan worship, in the necks of men above all human contact. The conclave follows, each of its princes robed like an Eastern Sultan. Habits of silk and brocade glittering with gold and silver, succeeded by robes of velvet and vestments of point lace, the envy of reigning Empresses. The Pope is at last deposited on his golden throne: his ecclesiastical attendants fold round him his ample caftan, white and brilliant as the nuptial dress of bridal queens! They arrange his mitre, they blow his nose; they wipe his mouth and exhibit the representation of Divinity in all the disgusting helplessness of drizzling caducity.²⁰

In a deft touch she describes how 'the pope falls prostrate before the cross on cushions of down and velvet.' Anna Jameson witnessed a similar papal procession during which the Pope was presented in his full Pontifical robes of white and gold. The scene reminds Jameson of the triumphant approach of an Eastern despot and she describes how fans of peacocks' feathers were waved on each side of his throne, and boys flung clouds of incense around him. Having depicted the scene, she comments, 'It might be acting, but if so, it was the most admirable acting I ever saw.'²¹

An audience with the Pope

In the early nineteenth century, many visitors not only observed the Pope performing his various duties, they also had the opportunity of meeting him in person. Both Catholics and Protestants were able to secure an audience if representations were made to the right people. The Pope was an object of curiosity for travellers, the spiritual leader in charge of the vast territories of the Papal States, the human being reputed to be infallible.

Catherine Wilmot says that when she met the Pope, he was 'dress'd in a scarlet large flowing mantle trimmed with gold, scarlet beaver hat bound with gold, scarlet shoes with gold crosses embroidered on each.' He did not let Wilmot and her party kiss his feet and Wilmot says that she was 'sincerely disappointed' about this. They talked for an hour and at the end of their audience, he gave them 'bless'd beads made of Agate and Jasper encased in gold.'²² There were a number of Popes in the early nineteenth century and all appear to have welcomed visitors. The tourists in turn marvelled at the wealth of the Pope's attire and the attention he received from the multitudes. There is no indication that the Irish received any preferential treatment from the Pope, and his welcome for the English was

20 Morgan, (1821) vol. 2, pp. 400-401.

21 Jameson, p. 99.

22 Wilmot, pp. 185-186.

equivalent to that afforded to his flock. Lady Morgan, an ardent supporter of Catholic Emancipation, ruefully comments,

It is a fact that a word from Lord Castlereagh or even from Lady C. would have more influence at Rome than the whole five millions of Irish Catholics with their primate and Bishops at their head.²³

Socializing

When not visiting the sights and monuments of Rome, nineteenth-century tourists were often engaged in parties with the upper classes in Rome. The clergy were prominent guests at these events and the focus of curiosity for many travellers. Catherine Wilmot attended many dinner parties, which included Cardinals, Bishops and monks, and she tells us that, 'the blithesome gaiety of this pious conclave of Holy men was very pleasant and amusing.'²⁴ Visitors to Rome were often entertained by the Catholic establishment and, in an era before Catholic Emancipation in Britain, Morgan tells us that:

English country gentlemen and many a group from the banks of the Liffey, or the Shannon, call forth the 'Latin echoes' of their Roman lodgings in the *Piazza d'Espagna* with praises of the Pope and the cardinals who furnish Irish travellers with such amusements as even the castle of Dublin cannot afford to its elect.²⁵

Lady Morgan had little sympathy for those members of the Protestant Ascendancy in Ireland who were wined and dined in Rome and who courted the society of the Catholic Church while at the same time suppressing Catholics in Ireland. Morgan describes tourists who, 'in raptures with St. Peter's and the 'venerable Pontiff' never fail, when Ireland is recalled over their 'pure Falernian' to drink to the 'Protestant ascendancy' 'the glorious memory' and the 'resident gentry' of their native land.

Religion

Following the reduction of the Jacobite menace, the English felt less threatened by Catholicism and were more willing to encounter the Church in its seat of power. For many travellers from the British Isles nonetheless, the European Tour was their first real contact with the Catholic religion. It is quite understandable therefore, that in Rome they should find the Church an object of strange ceremony and amusement. The adoration of saints, the facility of absolution from sin and the intercession of angels caused particular bafflement and at times scorn from British tourists. The Anglo-Irish had greater exposure to Catholicism and thus it might be expected that they would show greater knowledge of the Church. This, however, was not the case, and in the descriptions of the Vatican, these writers show themselves to be in harmony with their British counterparts.

23 Morgan, (1821) vol. 3, p. 55.

24 Wilmot, p. 181.

25 Morgan, (1821) vol. 2, p. 428.

On the whole, all the writers are intrigued by the workings of the Church, attracted by the ceremonies and interested in the social life surrounding the Vatican. As the travel accounts prove, there was little difference between the English and the Irish aristocracy in their depiction of the Vatican and in the nature of their sojourn in Rome. Their narratives show their closeness to Britain and their activities show that when in Rome, they did as the English.

This is not to say that Ireland was completely ignored by the writers. Lady Morgan constantly points out inconsistencies in the British attitude towards Rome, while Mitchell used her comments on Italy to turn minds towards Ireland. She asks how it is possible for English lords to be appalled by Italian poverty and yet pay no attention to conditions in Ireland. Lady Morgan regularly speaks of the 'distresses' of the land of her birth and affections: a grape harvest in Parma serves as an excuse to mention absentee landlords in Ireland; the sight of the misery of Italian peasants prompts a discussion of Irish poverty, and an encounter with an Irish Benedictine monk in Cesena leads to some thoughts in favour of Catholic Emancipation. If desired, Italy could be a useful vehicle for the expression of concerns about the state of Ireland; it was an opportunity which some, but not all, writers embraced.

Conclusion

That Ireland benefited from the travels of many of the aristocracy is apparent from the changes to tastes in these years. Indeed, the fact that so many Irish travelled to the Continent in this period certainly altered styles of art and architecture. Mrs. Mitchell felt that the benefits of travel should be wide-ranging to the country of origin of the tourist and that furthermore, travel should eradicate prejudice and facilitate the progress of knowledge on other cultures.

However, any who held out the hope that a journey to Rome would radically change attitudes towards Catholicism in Ireland were to be disappointed. Absorbed within the British community in Rome, the travellers participated in the amusements that surrounded Church activity in the Vatican. Mitchell, the Catholic, tells of her disappointment that the experience of the Vatican does not evoke deeper feelings amongst travellers:

There is no inspiration associated with these entrancing sounds, with those soul-subliming strains, heard for the first time in all the witchery of scientific melody. Wonder, admiration, and selfish enjoyment are the only fruits produced. The magnificence of the sacred edifices, the pomp of worship, the imposing splendour of ceremony, the tide of divine harmony, excite [the tourist's] admiration; and in a transport of delight, he may explain, 'It is good for us to be here.' But all ends in this.²⁶

As the activities of the travellers show, the nineteenth-century touristic experience of the Vatican was based primarily on enjoyment. Some Irish may have been critical of the activities of the English in the Vatican but on the whole Irish tourists

26 Mitchell, p. 22.

did not show any greater empathy for Catholicism than their English counterparts. In common with many English writers, they point out its superstitions, its theatrical rites. Although Mitchell might describe Rome as 'the nursery of religion and piety, the land of saints and sages,' the Anglo-Irish traveller was likely to be baffled by the religion, to mock the piety and to revel in the entertainment of the Vatican experience in the nineteenth century.

Waterford's Minority Anglican Community during three crises – 1824-25; 1831-35; and 1848¹

By Eugene Broderick

IN 1828 the *Waterford Mail*, an organ of Protestant opinion, commented that many 'unfortunate Protestants' scattered here and there amidst a 'Papist' multitude felt intimidated.² Three years previous a witness before a parliamentary committee stated that 'Protestants have found themselves uncomfortably situated in the midst of a great Catholic population, with all the alarms now and then arising from their apprehension of being in danger of their lives'.³ These two observations encapsulated a central reality for Ireland's, and Waterford's Anglicans in the 1820s and subsequent decades-being forced to come to terms with what was for them the unpalatable fact of their paucity of numbers at a time when the Catholic majority was demanding its rights in a strident and determined fashion. Anglicans were forced to engage in what one contemporary styled 'political algebra'- the exigencies of reconciling their security and interests with Catholic demands.⁴ Numerical size, both in absolute terms and relative to the size of the majority, was an important determinant of Protestant attitudes and behaviour. This study looks at the plight of Waterford's Anglicans during three periods of crisis, at a time when it had been irrefutably established that there were a minority religious community. The crises were in 1824-25, when alarm was widespread due to the so-called prophecies of Pastorini; 1831-35, at the height of the Tithe War; and in 1848, during the rising of that year. Demographic circumstances - being a minority scattered amongst what was regarded as a hostile Catholic- population- were to be a significant factor in deciding Protestant reactions.

A DEFINITE MINORITY

Population and Controversy

During the first two decades of the nineteenth century Thomas Newenham and Edward Wakefield were responsible for promoting a realisation among the

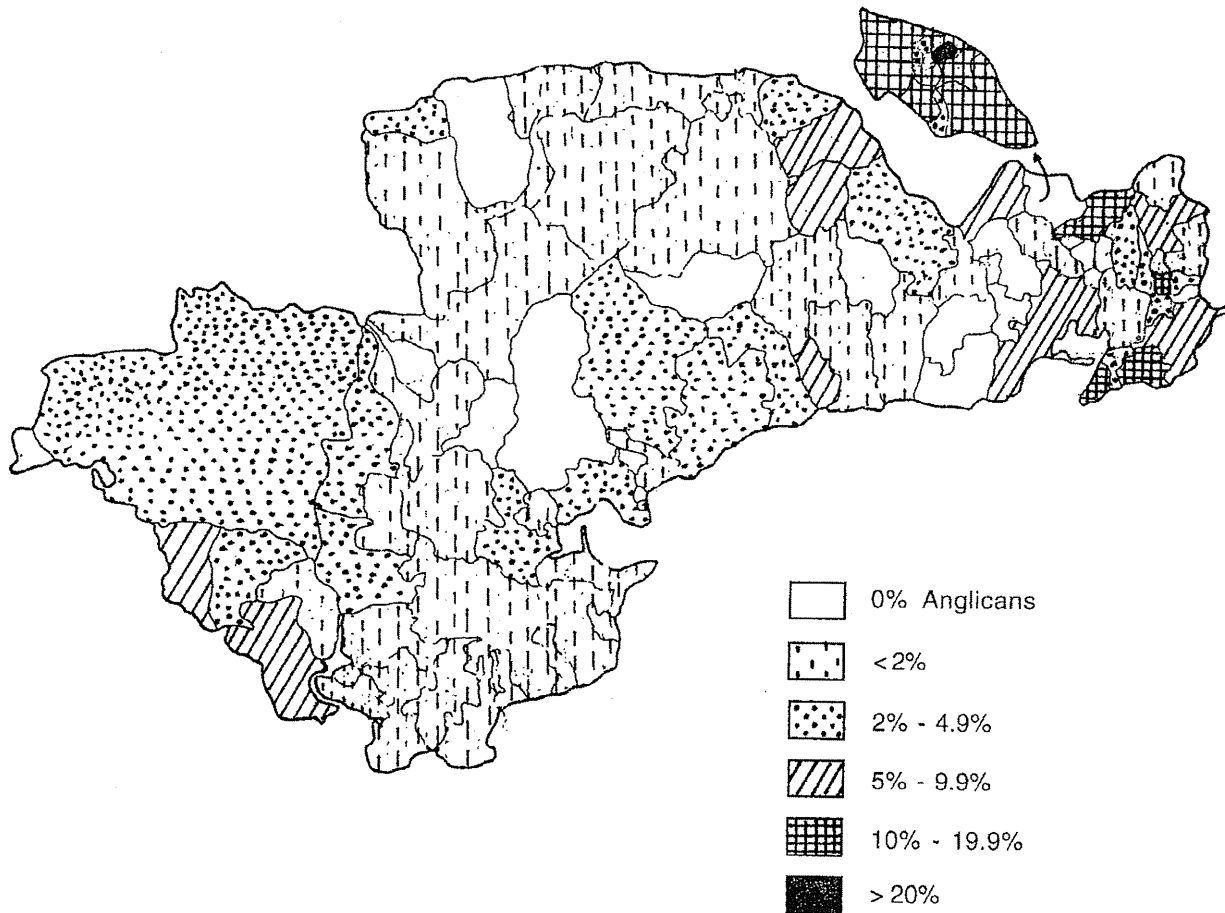
1 The word 'Protestant' when used in the text is generally a synonym for 'Anglican', unless the context suggests the inclusion of non-Anglican Protestants. It should be noted, however, that even when the usage implies the latter, Anglicans were by far the dominant Protestant denomination in Waterford, forming the overwhelming majority of those describing themselves as Protestants.

2 *Waterford Mail*, 28 Sept. 1828.

3 *Third Report of the Select Committee Appointed to Inquire into the State of Ireland*, H.C. 1825 (129), viii, p.440.

4 D.George Boyce (1991), *Nationalism in Ireland* (second edition, London, Routledge), p.123.

Anglican Population in County Waterford 1834.



Protestants of Munster that they were very much a religious and ethnic minority.⁵ However, in the absence of accurate statistical information the exact proportion of Protestants to Catholics was a subject of speculation in the 1820s. In evidence to a parliamentary committee in 1825 Daniel O'Connell expressed the view that the proportion of Catholics to Protestants was 'enormous';⁶ while Anthony Blake, one of the commissioners of education, ventured the opinion that the ratio was in the order of 5 to 1, in favour of Catholics.⁷ Sir John Newport, member of parliament for Waterford City, commenting on the rapid increase in the Catholic population, observed that the difference in numbers between Catholics and Protestants would have been 'infinitely greater' were it not for the fact that the population of the latter was kept up in some degree in the towns.⁸

In June 1825 Richard Lalor Sheil proposed that the Catholic Association take a census, which he believed would reveal the glaring numerical disparity between Catholics and Protestants.⁹ The census was never completed,¹⁰ but such figures as were produced made good propaganda. It was revealed that in many Irish parishes Anglicans constituted a tiny minority.¹¹ These population statistics became a potent weapon in the Catholic Association's political arsenal, and in the words of Thomas Wyse: 'Grievance became a matter not of loose invective, but of figures and calculations'.¹²

O'Connell had described Waterford as an 'extremely Catholic county'.¹³ The completed census of the Catholic Association confirmed this to the satisfaction of its supporters. Taken at the end of 1825 and the beginning of 1826, the enumeration by Catholic priests claimed the Protestant population of the city parishes was 4,221 as against 30,806 Catholics. This represented a ratio of over 7 Catholics for every Protestant. In the county the census put the number of Protestants at 1,896 and Catholics at 128,797, representing a ratio of 68 to 1.

5 Patrick O'Flanagan (1988), 'Urban Minorities and Majorities: Catholics and Protestants in Munster Towns c. 1659-1850', in William J. Smyth and Kevin Whelan (eds.), *Common Ground: Essays on the Historical Geography of Ireland* (Cork University Press), p. 137. Newenham's *A Statistical and Historical Inquiry into the Progress and Magnitude of the Population of Ireland* was published in 1805 and Wakefield's *An Account of Ireland, Statistical and Political* appeared in 1812.

6 *Report from the Select Committee appointed to Inquire into the State of Ireland*, H.C. 1825 (129), viii, p. 76.

7 *ibid.*, p. 38.

8 *Waterford Mail*, 30 Apr. 1825.

9 Fergus O'Ferrall (1985), *Catholic Emancipation: Daniel O'Connell and the Birth of Irish Democracy 1820-30*, (Dublin, Gill and Macmillan,), p. 109.

10 As late as June 1828 only a fifth of the total number of returns had been forwarded to the Catholic Association in Dublin. See James Reynolds (1954), *The Catholic Emancipation Crisis in Ireland, 1823-1829* (New Haven, Greenwood Press,), p. 70.

11 Reynolds, *Catholic Emancipation Crisis*, p. 71.

12 Thomas Wyse (1829), *Historical Sketch of the Late Catholic Association*, (London, H. Colborn), vol. 1, pp. 254-5.

13 *Report from the Select Committee into the State of Ireland*, p. 76.

Such population statistics played an important part in the struggle between the Catholic Association and the Protestant ascendancy. Wyse observed:

The statistics of Ireland, and especially that portion of them which regards its population, like everything else Irish, had been a subject of constant and very factious controversy. These inquiries were conducted not with a view to ascertain whether the gross population of the island had diminished or increased..., but which of the two armies had gained the greater number of recruits, which of the two nations had most augmented, the Catholic or Protestant, during the past year.¹⁴

Protestants were discomfited by statistical facts which highlighted their numerical inferiority and those among them opposed to Catholic demands for emancipation were alarmed. Even before the census undertaken by the Catholic Association, the *Waterford Mail*, a voice of Protestant conservatism and a vocal opponent of emancipation, had attacked the Catholic Association's 'manifest exaggerations in boasting of the number and power of the Catholic population',¹⁵ and accused its agitators of having 'excited a feeling of numerical consequence among Roman Catholics'.¹⁶ Sensitivity over the census was apparent when Fr. John Sheehan, a priest of St. Patrick's parish and a staunch supporter of O'Connell, produced figures for the number of Protestants in the 29th regiment stationed in the city. These were challenged by the *Mail*, which doubts cast on the accuracy of the exercise.¹⁷ The motives of the Catholic Association were questioned, it being charged with swelling the number of Catholics in this instance far beyond the truth.¹⁸ The whole exercise of the census was dismissed as a 'pious fraud',¹⁹ which minimised Protestant numbers. Conservative Protestants, however, understood its purpose all too well:

to exhilarate the spirit of their [Catholic Association's] own followers, by giving them a notion that their numbers were overwhelming, and on the other hand to depress the courage of the Protestants by contrary statements.²⁰

A Declining Minority

Not only were Protestants a minority, to make matters worse they were a declining one. They were leaving Waterford and Ireland. The *Mail* observed in 1826:

We have a personal knowledge which enables us to state that where emigration has taken place from certain districts it was largely made up by the emigration of Protestants; and from universal, concurrent

14 Wyse, *Historical Sketch of the Late Catholic Association*, vol. 1, pp. 249-51.

15 *Waterford Mail*, 11 Dec. 1824.

16 *ibid.*, 19 Jan. 1825.

17 *ibid.*, 25 Jan. 1826.

18 *ibid.*

19 *ibid.*, 22 Oct. 1828.

20 *ibid.*

testimony, we apprehend there can be no doubt generally that the disposition to quit the country exists more strongly among Protestants than among Roman Catholics.²¹

Economic factors were an important determinant in relation to Protestant emigration (as they were for Catholics).²² Agricultural prices fell sharply after 1815.²³ Many Protestants, seeing wartime prosperity and rising expectations giving way to recession, feared a decline in living standards. In the voluminous petitions to the government for free passage to the colonies in the years after Waterloo, concern regarding economic prosperity was the most frequently quoted reason. It is significant that petitioners were disproportionately Protestant.²⁴ The glaring contrast between wartime comforts and postwar deprivation proved too great for many Anglicans. Cultural restraints on emigration were less embedded in Protestant as compared to Catholic society in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries²⁵ and emigration was seen as a means of counteracting economic adversity.

A changed and changing political climate, in which it appeared that Catholics were making political advances at the expense of Protestants, was another stimulus to emigration. Reflecting on Protestant emigration the *Mail* commented in 1826: 'And whilst the chains of the hereditary bondsmen were rattled at all sides, numberless Protestant families were really suffering persecution, and in the course of banishment forever'.²⁶ The passage of the Emancipation Act eroded the confidence of many Protestants. Kerby Miller has observed that 'even when physical dangers seemed remote, the psychological impact of sustained, successful Catholic agitation was devastating for Protestants accustomed to unquestioned dominion and unlimited submission'.²⁷ The reality is that 'many Irish Protestants could scarcely contemplate living in an Ireland where they would no longer be masters'.²⁸ It was estimated by Protestant sources in 1832 that 60,000 of their co-religionists had emigrated since 1829, the year of emancipation.²⁹

Among Protestants the issue of emigration received considerable attention in the 1820s and 1830s. At a meeting on 6 June 1831 an auxiliary to the Protestant Colonisation Society of Ireland was formed at Lismore.³⁰ A meeting of the same

21 *Waterford Mail*, 9 Aug. 1826.

22 For a discussion of pre-Famine emigration see Kerby A. Miller (1985), *Emigrants and Exiles: Ireland and the Irish Exodus to North America* (Oxford University Press), pp. 193-279

23 L. M. Cullen (1972), *An Economic History of Ireland since 1660* (London, B. T. Batsford), p. 109.

24 Liam Kennedy (1996), *Colonialism, Religion and Nationalism in Ireland* (Antrim, Institute of Irish Studies), p. 16.

25 *ibid.*, p.18.

26 *Waterford Mail*, 9 Aug. 1826.

27 Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles*, p. 233.

28 *ibid.*, p. 234.

29 *Waterford Mail*, 15 Feb. 1832.

30 *ibid.*, 15 June 1832.

society was to be held at Waterford's city hall on 16 June.³¹ An auxiliary was formed at Dungarvan in the same month.³² The purpose of the society, as explained at the Dungarvan meeting, was to establish Protestant colonies throughout the country so as to prevent 'the dispersion of poor Protestants in regions beyond the reach of the means of grace'.³³ The religious privations of emigrants in foreign lands was a motivating concern.³⁴ Protestant colonies were regarded as a positive response to emigration. The subsequent fate of the society in Waterford is unclear, as its activities, if there were any, were not recorded in the local press. The unpalatable reality of Protestant emigration concerned the Protestant Conservative Society of Ireland throughout 1832.³⁵ An emotive issue for Protestant conservatives, it was used as a means of galvanising Protestant opinion into united action against further Catholic claims. However, the fact that emigration ceased to receive much attention and publicity from the mid 1830s onwards, at least in the pages of Waterford's press, suggests that it had come to be accepted as a fact of Protestant life.

1834 Enumeration

It was not until the census of 1861 that an inquiry was made into the denominational affiliations of the country's population.³⁶ However, a religious enumeration was taken in 1834 when a royal commission was set up to investigate 'the state of religious and other instruction in Ireland'.³⁷ This religious census did not always meet with enthusiastic Protestant support.³⁸ At a Protestant Conservative Society meeting in October 1834 the claims of Catholic numerical superiority were described as 'very erroneous'. The need for accurate census returns for each parish was emphasised, it being alleged that in some parts of the country Catholics were moving inhabitants from one house to another prior to the census being taken. It was also claimed that the number of Catholics was being exaggerated because some of them attended more than one mass and were therefore being counted more than once.³⁹ Notwithstanding these claims, the evidence suggests that the *First*

31 *ibid.*

32 *ibid.*, 18 June 1832.

33 *ibid.*

34 *ibid.*

35 See *Waterford Mail*, 28 Apr. 1832, 12 May 1832, 24 Nov. 1832. This society was formed in July 1832 in order to galvanise Protestant opposition to Catholic agitation against tithes and the Act of Union. It was a Dublin based organization and had no branches outside that city.

36 Malcolm R. Macourt (1978), 'The Religious Inquiry in the Irish Census of 1861', *I.H.S.*, vol. xxi, no. 82, pp. 168-87.

37 *ibid.*, p. 168.

38 Alexis de Tocqueville (1835), *Journey in Ireland: July-August, 1835*. (Translated and edited by Emmet Larkin (1990) Dublin, Wolfhound Press), p. 66. De Tocqueville quotes the Catholic Bishop of Ossory as stating: 'The Protestants maintained that the number of Protestants was much more considerable in Ireland than others thought and they were opposed to a census'.

39 *Waterford Mail*, 11 Oct. 1834.

Report of the Commissioners of Public Instruction, Ireland, issued in 1835, gave a fair representation of the membership of the various churches.⁴⁰

The report revealed that Waterford's Anglicans lived in a county divided into seventy-eight parishes. Seventy-four were wholly within the county. Four parishes – Kilsheelan, Killaloe, Inislounaght, and St. Mary's, Clonmel – straddled the county boundary into neighbouring Tipperary. The report showed that in the seventy-four parishes wholly in Waterford the number of Anglicans was 8,327.⁴¹ The total population of the parishes was 177,920, with the adherents of the Church of Ireland representing 4.7 per cent of this total.⁴² This was well below the national figure of 10.7 per cent.⁴³ It is more difficult to calculate the number of Anglicans in the four parishes straddling the county boundary, but it is unlikely that there were much more than 100. These speculative figures added to the total of 8,327 Anglicans for the parishes wholly in Waterford would not make a significant difference and would not substantially alter the proportion of Anglicans in the population as a whole. For the purposes of this study and in the interests of the accuracy of demographic information, however, only those parishes within county Waterford are examined.

The 1834 report revealed in a stark and demonstrable fashion the paucity of Anglicans (See Appendix 1). Only in the city did they record a considerable number relative to their presence in other parts of the county. Eight city parishes had a Church of Ireland population of 4,388, distributed as follows:⁴⁴

St. John's	1,002
Trinity }	2,300
St. Michael's }	
St. Olave's	356
St. Patrick's	102
St. Peter's	349
St. Stephen's	144
Kilculiheen	135

These parishes contained 52.7 per cent of the total Anglican population of Waterford. Excluding these eight parishes, however, only thirteen parishes had a population of 100 and over.

40 Macourt, 'Religious Inquiry', p.171.

41 Calculations based on the *First Report of the Commissioners of Public Instruction*, 13C-37C; 156b and 157b.

42 Calculations based on *ibid*.

43 See Donal H. Akenson (1971), *The Church of Ireland: Ecclesiastical Reform and Revolution, 1800-1885* (New Haven and London, Yale University Press), p. 165. Calculations in this paragraph are based on Akenson's figures.

44 *First Report of the Commissioners of Public Instruction*, 3C-11C.

Table 1
Population of thirteen parishes recording 100 Anglicans and over, 1834.

Parish	Population
Kilrossanty	100
Aglish	107
Stradbally	112
Kilmeaden	118
Ballylaneen	126
Kill St. Nicholas	161
Templemichael	178
Drumcannon	182
Clonegam	245
Killea	253
Dungarvan	335
Tallow	352
Lismore	494

Source: *First Report of the Commissioners of Public Instruction, 3C-11C; 13C-37C.*

The Church of Ireland's minority status is very apparent when one considers the Anglican population of these parishes expressed as a percentage of the parish's total population.

Table 2
Population of each Anglican parish recording 100 or more members of the Established Church expressed as percentage of parish's total population, 1834.

Parish	Anglican population as percentage of total parish population
Kilrossanty	3.1
Aglish	2.8
Stradbally	3.0
Kilmeaden	4.4
Ballylaneen	3.3
Kill St. Nicholas	9.7
Templemichael	6.7
Drumcannon	5.4
Clonegam	8.7
Killea	9.8
Dungarvan	2.5
Tallow	7.1
Lismore	3.1

Source: *First Report of the Commissioners of Public Instruction, 3C-11C; 13C-37C.*

Only the city parishes had significant percentages of Anglicans. The eight of them had a concentration which represented 15.5 percent of the total population of the parishes. In these the Established Church had a presence that was more than a token one, but was not sufficient to compensate for the fact that fourteen parishes recorded no presence at all. (See Appendix II)

Regarding its findings as they related to Anglicanism, the 1835 *Report of the Commissioners of Public Instruction* observed:

It will accordingly be found that there are some benefices in which there are no members of the Church of England; that there are others in which there are but a few; while, in others, more especially in the large towns, their number is considerable. It is also observable that in some instances, from the great extent of the benefice, the members of the Established Church are widely scattered amongst the other inhabitants.⁴⁵

These observations are an excellent summary of the distribution of Anglicans in Waterford. They belonged to a definite religious minority, and were overwhelmed numerically by the majority Roman Catholic denomination. This fact – of which they were becoming increasingly aware as the first three decade of the nineteenth century progressed – shaped the Anglican response to political events and crises that at times must have seemed to threaten their very existence as a distinct and separate religious group.

CRISIS: 1824-25 – ' THE PROPHECIES OF PASTORINI'

During the 1820s sectarianism was on the increase in Ireland.⁴⁶ The activities of evangelical proselytisers and the stridency of the campaign conducted by the Catholic Association for emancipation brought to the surface and sharpened religious tensions which had long existed at popular level. An important aspect of Catholic peasant culture and one which contributed significantly to the sectarian climate was the pronounced note of millenarianism. Millenarian beliefs, holding out the prospect of a divinely ordained overthrow of the existing social and political order, emerge in societies where peasants are excluded from the political apparatus of the state and flourish where repeated defeats are a feature of the historical experience.⁴⁷ A basic theme of deliverance endured in the popular political attitudes in the decades before the Famine. Religion was a prime element in the

45 *First Report of the Commissioners of Public Instruction*, p. 7.

46 For a discussion of the growth of sectarianism in the 1820s see S.J. Connolly (1989), 'Mass Politics and Sectarian Conflict', in W.E. Vaughan (ed.), *A New History of Ireland, V: Ireland under the Union 1: 1801-70* (Oxford University Press), pp.74-84. See also Connolly's (1985) excellent account in *Religion and Society in Nineteenth-Century Ireland* (Dundalk, Dundalgan Press), pp.18-30.

47 James S. Donnelly (1983), 'Pastorini and Captain Rock: Millenarianism and Sectarianism in the Rockite Movement of 1821-4', in Samuel Clark and James S. Donnelly (eds.), *Irish Peasants: Violence and Political Unrest 1780-1914* (Manchester University Press), p. 104.

conceptualisation of role-reversal,⁴⁸ the Catholic peasants believing, according to an observer in 1824, that 'they are oppressed by those who profess the religion of the Established Church and that there is likely to be soon a great change on that subject'.⁴⁹

The extent of the belief in millenarianism is evident in the credence given to the so-called prophecies of Pastorini. These were based on the book of an English bishop, Charles Walmesley, writing under the pseudonym 'Signor Pastorini', whose *General History of the Christian Church* (1771) was an elaborate interpretation of the Book of Revelation. This publication had a wide appeal and went through several editions in Ireland. Extracts purporting to prophesy the destruction of Protestantism were printed on broadside sheets, and circulated throughout the country. As a result of the propagation of these prophecies many peasants believed that the year 1825 would herald the destruction of the Protestant faith in Ireland.⁵⁰ The Ireland of millennial expectations was clearly Catholic, to be achieved at the expense of Protestants, who were to be extirpated from their position of ascendancy. In the popular consciousness there was no place for Protestants in the new political and social dispensation.

This expectation among Catholics engendered a real fear among Protestants. Many believed that Christmas Day 1824 was the day fixed for a massacre of all non-Catholics. There was a palpable sense of fear among many of Waterford's Anglicans in late 1824 and early 1825, due to the credence given to Pastorini's prophecies by the Catholic peasantry. John Palliser of Kilrossanty wrote to Dublin Castle:

The Protestants are in imminent danger and there is a systematic vilification of everything Protestant ... and if very decided steps are not taken for our safety, our blood will flow profusely in the approaching prophetic year of blood and it is from the Priest's altar (as I am informed) that the mandate for slaughter is to issue upon the Lord's days, by which the Protestants by this simultaneous movement will be cut off defenceless at their places of worship.

Palliser informed the Castle that he had in his possession a stiletto of Irish manufacture, the blade fixed in the handle of a dinner knife, describing it as a 'deadly weapon'.⁵¹ Another correspondent told the authorities that

the demand for anvils and sledges are everywhere high and purchased with the greatest avidity. What are these utensils for I would be very glad to know. I think if I were to give an opinion they are surely to make pikes.⁵²

48 Gearoid O Tuathaigh (1972), *Ireland before the Famine* (Dublin, Gill and Macmillan), p.66.

49 *ibid.*, p. 67.

50 For an excellent account of the impact of Pastorini's prophecies on the peasantry see Donal McCartney (1987), *The Dawning of Democracy: Ireland 1800-1870* (Dublin, Helicon), pp. 99-103.

51 National Archives, State of Country Papers, 2 Dec. 1824, 2620/18.

52 National Archives, State of Country Papers, 28 Dec. 1824, 2620/20.

Richard Large of Dungarvan expressed the view that the country was in 'a very deplorable state'. He cited local examples: a man's ears had been cut off; a policeman's wife, returning from market, had been struck with a large stone and was in 'a bad way'; and a sentry on guard at the bishop's palace had been the victim of an assault, and his arms robbed.⁵³

Protestants, conscious of their numerical inferiority, requested that soldiers be stationed in the county to safeguard them. Palliser was of the opinion that 'nothing but a formidable body of troops distributed all through the south and west of Ireland can save us from the intended bloody rush'.⁵⁴ Another alarmed correspondent urged the necessity of having a strong military force in the villages of Ardmore, Clashmore, Villierstown and Aglish, there being only a few policemen scattered about the county, and Waterford being so Catholic a place.⁵⁵ Large wanted a military force to be sent to Clashmore in particular, as he believed the Protestant inhabitants were 'in great need of them'.⁵⁶

Adding to Protestant fears was the presence of many Catholics in the police and magistracy. Palliser emphasised

the absolute necessity of doing away gradually with all the popish police constables, who would immediately cleave to their church the instant she shall take a decided hostile attitude and even at this moment such a spirit begins to manifest itself.⁵⁷

In the county around Dungarvan there were five magistrates, four of whom were Catholics. The Castle authorities were informed that these gentlemen would not exert themselves against their own flock. Instead, Protestant magistrates ought to be elected.⁵⁸ Large, commenting on crimes in Waterford, observed that 'no search in the world was made for the offenders on account of the magistrates being Catholics'.⁵⁹

Protestant fears were overstated. In a confidential report to Dublin Castle in December 1824 on the state of Waterford city and county, Lt. Col. Henry John wrote that there was every outward appearance of tranquillity. However, he added:

But those who have access to better sources of information than I can possibly have and with whom I occasionally converse seem to be rather alarmed and to think that a bad feeling, particularly among the lower class, does exist in this neighbourhood.⁶⁰

It was the apprehension of this 'bad feeling' which makes the fears of Anglicans, though exaggerated, understandable, especially as they were overwhelmed numerically by 'the lower class' of a hostile creed.

53 National Archives, State of Country Papers, 1 Jan. 1825, 2727/3.

54 National Archives, State of Country Papers, 2 Dec. 1824, 2620/18.

55 National Archives, State of Country Papers, 28 Dec. 1824, 2620/20.

56 National Archives, State of Country Papers, 1 Jan. 1825, 2727/3.

57 National Archives, State of Country Papers, 2 Dec. 1824, 2620/18.

58 National Archives, State of Country Papers, 28 Dec. 1824, 2620/20.

59 National Archives, State of Country Papers, 1 Jan. 1825, 2727/3.

60 National Archives, State of Country Papers, 26 Dec. 1824, 2620/21.

It has already been noted above that the granting of emancipation was a severe blow to the confidence and morale of Protestants. The Tithe War of the 1830s was another devastating blow to members of the Church of Ireland and those in Waterford were no exception.

CRISIS: 1831-35: THE TITHE WAR

Opposition to the payment of tithes – a tax levied on agricultural produce for the support of the clergy of the Established Church – was an amalgam of economic and religious objections.⁶¹ Economically, tithes were regarded effectively as an extension of rents.⁶² The basis of religious hostility was the fact that the majority of those liable for this impost – Catholics – derived no benefit from it. In fact, many of them loathed the institution they were compelled to support. The campaign for emancipation had heightened the sense of grievance felt by Catholics, who were determined to rid themselves of what they regarded as an outrageous imposition.

A campaign against Tithes began in the parish of Graiguenamanagh, county Kilkenny, in December 1830.⁶³ The resistance soon spread throughout the country. By 1833 more than half the tithe arrears of the previous two years were still outstanding. In 1834 only a third was paid; while the following year the amount was less than an eighth.⁶⁴ The agitation was more bitter than anything witnessed before – hence the appellation 'Tithe War'.⁶⁵ The encounters between the forces of the crown and the peasants during these years were some of the bloodiest of the entire nineteenth century.⁶⁶

During much of 1832 anti-tithe meetings were held throughout Waterford: at Butlerstown (two),⁶⁷ Ballylaneen (two),⁶⁸ Kilrossanty,⁶⁹ Tramore⁷⁰, Portlaw,⁷¹ and the city.⁷² Resolutions were adopted at these gatherings deploring the tithe system. Typical of such were those at the second Ballylaneen meeting in August 1832. Tithes were condemned as an impost 'unjust in principle, noxious in practice, and subversive of the peace and prosperity of the country'. Another resolution described tithes as 'a fertile source of bloodshed, feud, and religious discord'. A call was made for their total abolition.⁷³

61 See Patrick O'Donoghue (1965), 'Causes of the Opposition to Tithes', *Studia Hibernica*, No. 5, pp. 7-28; Akenson, *Church of Ireland*, pp. 87-8.

62 Donal McCartney, *The Dawning of Democracy*, p. 135.

63 For an account of events at Graiguenamanagh see Patrick O'Donoghue (1966) 'Opposition to Tithe Payments in 1830-31', *Studia Hibernica*, No. 6, pp. 69-72.

64 Ó Tuathaigh, *Ireland before the Famine*, p. 177.

65 For general accounts of the Tithe War, see *ibid.*, pp. 176-80; Akenson, *Church of Ireland*, pp. 180-2; and McCartney, *Dawning of Democracy*, pp. 134-43.

66 Galen Broeker (1970), *Rural Disorder and Police Reform in Ireland 1812-1836* (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul), pp. 205-6.

67 *Waterford Chronicle*, 17 Jan. 1832, 18 Sept. 1832.

68 *ibid.*, 2 Feb. 1832, 21 Aug 1832.

69 *ibid.*, 12 June 1832.

70 *ibid.*, 12 July 1832.

71 *ibid.*, 2 Aug. 1832.

72 *ibid.*, 4 Sept. 1832.

73 *ibid.*, 21 Aug. 1832.

The Tithe War ensured the cessation of payments to many clergy. By April 1833 substantial sums of money were outstanding (since 1829) to clergymen in Waterford.

Table 3
Arrears of tithes due to clergymen in Waterford, 1829-1833

Diocese of Waterford	£	Diocese of Lismore	£
Joseph Burke	470	George Bourke	471
Richard Ryland	406	Ambrose Power	954
Richard Hobson	280	Charles Minchin	169
Henry Archdall	278	William Mackesey	480
John Cooke, Sen.	668	George Gumbleton	296
John Cooke, Jr.	310	John Jackson	260
John Palliser	375	Daniel Sullivan	364
Henry Fleury	196	Francis Newport	333
Richard Fleury	455	William Hughes	160
William Frazer	172	Stephen Dickson	1,056
		James Hewetson	442
		John Devereux	982
		Henry Stewart	1,772
		Thomas Monck	800
		John Lymberry	208

Source: *A Return of the Arrears of Tithe due in the several Dioceses of Ireland from 1st May 1829*, H.C. 1833 (509), xxvii, p. 11.

Deprivation of income caused many clergy great hardship. Yet their plight during the years of the Tithe War has been virtually ignored by historians. Understandably, that of the peasantry engaged in a struggle against an iniquitous tax commands the greater attention and sympathy. Nevertheless, the sufferings of the parsons - albeit a tiny minority of the population - deserve acknowledgement.⁷⁴ Most experienced a measure of hardship; many - in particular the parochial clergy - were reduced to a state of near destitution, which was all the harder for them to accept because they regarded themselves, and were regarded, as gentlemen. One nineteenth-century historian described how 'a man of education --- accustomed to life in comfort, if not luxury, might be seen with his shoeless children around him digging in his garden, and thus endeavouring to provide a miserable subsistence';⁷⁵

74 An exception to this neglect of the sufferings of the Protestant clergy is Desmond Bowen (1978), *The Protestant Crusade in Ireland 1800-70* (Dublin, Gill and Macmillan), p. 171-2. Moreover, Professor Akenson has written that the plight of the Anglican parish clergy during the Tithe War 'demands understanding as well'. See Akenson, *Church of Ireland*, p. 181.

75 W. D. Killen (1875), *The Ecclesiastical History of Ireland from the Earliest Period to the Present Time* (London, Macmillan and Co.), p. 458.

while another wrote that 'but for the relief extended to them by sympathising friends, they [Anglican clergymen and their families] were liable to perish with hunger, to avert which many a precious library was sent to Dublin for sale'.⁷⁶ The chronically underpaid curates were particularly vulnerable during the years of agitation.⁷⁷ A petition to the king from the 'Suffering Clergy in the South of Ireland' declared that many of them were reduced to indigence.⁷⁸

A valuable insight into clerical suffering in the diocese of Waterford and Lismore may be obtained from some letters written in 1833 by clergymen to the duke of Devonshire's agent, Colonel W. S. Currey. Rev. Walter Giles, vicar of Rathronan in county Tipperary, informed Currey that he had not received any tithes in the past year, with the exception of a small sum from Protestant parishioners. As a consequence, he was 'at present in distress'. Giles was obliged to Currey for any assistance in securing 'even the smallest sum' from the relief fund established by the government.⁷⁹ A few days later Giles informed Currey of the fact that the dean of Waterford had given him a gift of £20 to relieve his plight.⁸⁰ The tithes of Rev. John Jackson, rector of Tallow and Kilwatermoy, having been almost entirely withheld, he was subjected to what he quaintly termed 'painful embarrassments'.⁸¹ Rev. Stephen Dickson, vicar of Dungarvan, reported on the circumstances of some of his colleagues. Rev. Robert Elliott, vicar of Ring, had not received any tithes for over a year and a half. The same Mr. Elliott had declined any assistance from the relief fund, believing that there was a greater need to bestow it on clergymen with families. Rev. Mr. Hewetson of Rossmire, described as 'perfectly blind', was reported to be in 'great distress'. Rev. Robert Carey, prebendary of Donoghmore and Kiltegan, was, in Dickson's words, 'a length of time in great distress' and was contemplating going to America. Rev. William Frazer, vicar of Kill St. Lawrence, a man with a family of eight children, was unable to secure any income at all from his preferment. Dickson believed that there might have been others in equally difficult circumstances, though he was of the opinion that the clergy of Waterford and Lismore were not as destitute as those in other dioceses.⁸²

Fears for their own safety and that of their families would also have been a feature of life for Waterford's Anglican clergymen. Though the county was spared the violent excesses of other parts of the country, particularly those of neighbouring Tipperary⁸³ and Kilkenny,⁸⁴ nevertheless there were instances of intimidation and

76 James Godkin (1873), *The Religious History of Ireland*, (London, Henry S. King and Co.) p. 251.

77 Professor Roy Foster (1988) has commented on this fact. See *Modern Ireland, 1600-1972*, (London, Allen Lane), p. 305.

78 *Waterford Mirror*, 27 Feb. 1833.

79 Rev. Walter Giles to Colonel W. S. Currey, 14 Mar. 1833, Lismore Castle Papers, C/1/40.

80 Rev. Walter Giles to Colonel W. S. Currey, 22 Mar. 1833, Lismore Castle Papers, C/1/40.

81 Rev. John Jackson to Colonel W. S. Currey, 13 Mar. 1833, Lismore Castle Papers, C/1/40.

82 Rev. Stephen Dickson to Colonel W. S. Currey, 15 Mar. 1833, Lismore Castle Papers, C/1/40.

violence directed against the operation of the tithe system. In August 1831 eight armed men visited the home of the tithe valuator for the Fourmilewater district, to force him to stop doing his duty.⁸⁵ In January 1832 a notice was posted on the door of Killea Roman Catholic chapel warning the parishioners against paying tithes and threatening the clerk with death if he did not publish it in Irish and English.⁸⁶ Shortly afterwards, collectors acting on behalf of the lessees of the tithes of Waterford corporation were ordered to return all the money they had received. They complied with this instruction out of fear.⁸⁷ In September of the same year two tithe valutors received death threats in Ballinacourty.⁸⁸ Violent acts occurred when in October 1830 horses and cattle were cropped in the parish of Modeligo in protest against an agreement on tithe payment between the local incumbent and parishioners.⁸⁹ In June 1832 the horse of the clerk of the Anglican church at Kilrossanty was cropped,⁹⁰ and in October 1834 a process server was beaten and thrown off a cliff into the sea at Ballinacourty.⁹¹

The petition of the southern clergy to the king, mentioned above, stated that 'if a clergyman be successful in obtaining any part of his pecuniary rights, it is at the hazard of losing his life under the threat of the assassin'. The petitioners made reference to clergy being 'compelled to either leave their parishes or to confine themselves within the precinct of their glebe houses'.⁹² The violence and threats against clergymen in the neighbouring counties of Tipperary and Kilkenny probably accentuated the alarm of Waterford's churchmen, as would the occasional acts of intimidation directed at clerical colleagues in the diocese. According to Rev. Stephen Dickson, Rev. Robert Carey was driven out of his small preferment near Clonmel and was 'obliged to remove with his family into the town for safety'.⁹³ In

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- 83 See Thomas G. McGrath (1985) , 'Interdenominational Relations in Pre-Famine Tipperary', in William Nolan (ed.), *Tipperary: History and Society* (Dublin, Geography Publications), pp. 268-72.
- 84 See Michael O'Hanrahan (1990), 'The Tithe War in County Kilkenny, 1830-1834', in William Nolan and Kevin Whelan (eds.), *Kilkenny: History and Society* (Dublin, Geography Publications), *passim*.
- 85 Michael Kiely and William Nolan (1992), 'Politics, Land and Rural Conflict in County Waterford, c. 1830-1845', in William Nolan, Thomas P. Power and Des Cowman (eds.), *Waterford: History and Society* (Dublin, Geography Publications), p. 469.
- 86 *Waterford Mail*, 7 Jan. 1832.
- 87 *Waterford Chronicle*, 2 Feb. 1832.
- 88 *Waterford Mail*, 15 Sept. 1832.
- 89 Kiely and Nolan, 'Politics, Land and Rural Conflict', p. 468.
- 90 *ibid*.
- 91 *Waterford Chronicle*, 14 Jan. 1834.
- 92 *Waterford Mirror*, 27 Feb. 1833. Godkin, in his account of the Tithe War, wrote of how 'the clergy and their families, shut up in their glebe houses, trembled for their lives'. See *Religious History of Ireland*, p. 251.
- 93 Rev. Stephen Dickson to Colonel W. S. Currey, 15 Mar. 1833, Lismore Castle Papers, C/1/40.

1835, while Rev. John Lymberry was performing service at Kilrossanty, two men with blackened faces broke into the glebe house and took two guns and a brace of pistols.⁹⁴ The rural clergy must have been acutely aware of their isolation amidst a hostile Catholic populace. Incumbents were easy victims - readily identified and located by anti-tithe agitators.

Many lay Anglicans also felt a sense of alarm at events. The extent of violence in the country prompted the *Mail* to observe ruefully in April 1832 that 'the government of William IV is really at this moment a merely nominal matter in extensive districts of Ireland'.⁹⁵ Sir John Newport, in a letter to Thomas Spring Rice earlier in the same year, wrote:

Of the state of this country I can tell you nothing pleasant, but much the contrary and I augur far worse approaching. The irritation of the subject of tithes is greater than could be well conceived The peasantry of even the higher rank are far more confident than ever in their powers of resistance and I fear quite disposed to exert those powers even at the peril of life. I have reason to know that the highest and most respectable of Roman Catholic prelates and clergy consider their influence in restraining the ebullition of the popular feeling from acts of violence to be reduced to a nullity..... My thoughts as to Ireland are now very gloomy.⁹⁶

In February 1833 Newport was writing to Rice of the need for drastic action by all who were 'really attached to this unhappy Ireland' to preserve it from 'hopeless anarchy'.⁹⁷ Two years later Waterford's Anglicans could still point to events which would have alarmed them, as is evident from even a cursory examination of the outrage papers for 1835. A man died of a beating in Dungarvan;⁹⁸ while another received a fractured skull during a similar incident at Modeligo.⁹⁹ Shots were fired at Kilgobinet¹⁰⁰ and Lismore;¹⁰¹ and there was a malicious fire at Grange.¹⁰² Not all incidents were necessarily related to the tithe agitation, but they did contribute to a sense of lawlessness, even in a relatively peaceful county such as Waterford.

Waterford's Anglicans also felt sympathy for the plight of their clergy. The *Mail* quoted a contemporary observer:

Your heart would bleed if you knew the condition to which these good and learned men are reduced by this outrageous system [of anti-tithe agitation]. Many are.....with large nominal preferments from which

94 National Archives, Outrage Papers, 29/1 (Jan. 1835).

95 *Waterford Mail*, 18 Apr. 1832.

96 Sir John Newport to Thomas Spring Rice, 3 Jan.1832, Monteagle Papers, National Library of Ireland, Ms., 13,372 (Folder 3).

97 *ibid.*, 20 Feb. 1833.

98 National Archives, Outrage Papers, 29/2 (19 Jan. 1835).

99 National Archives, Outrage Papers, 29/11 (21 Mar. 1835).

100 National Archives, Outrage Papers, 29/14 (16 Mar. 1835).

101 National Archives, Outrage Papers, 29/41 (17 June 1835).

102 National Archives, Outrage Papers, 29/9 (6 Mar. 1835).

they cannot obtain a single sixpence; and yet with families to support, with children to educate, and with an appearance to maintain in the world. Some of them have sold their stock, some their libraries; and some of them alas! educated, Christian gentlemen are driven to solicit pecuniary contributions.¹⁰³

It should also be remembered that many Protestant families had clerical relatives, which transformed the consequences of the agitation against tithes into something personal. Ian d'Alton's comment on the attitude of Cork's Anglicans to the circumstances of the clergy applies equally to Waterford: 'In their eyes it was not an abstract, impersonal and remote Church that came under attack - it was a relative, a fellow landlord, a brother magistrate'.¹⁰⁴

The eventual resolution of the Tithe War in 1838 – the replacement of the tax by a rent charge- is beyond the scope of this article. While Waterford did not suffer the violence endured by other parts of the country, nevertheless it is clear that the episode was a deeply traumatic one for the county's Anglicans. The sense of insecurity felt during the emancipation campaign and the suspicion of Catholic actions and motives fuelled by it were intensified during the struggle against tithes. Events in 1848 were destined to reinforce such feelings.

CRISIS: 1848 - REBELLION

The complex events surrounding the rising of 1848 need not concern us. Suffice it to say that Waterford's Anglicans were alarmed by the drift towards rebellion by the Young Irelanders, against the backdrop of revolution across Europe. In April they were among the signatories of a petition to the lord lieutenant requesting the appointment of a stipendiary magistrate for the city and the stationing of a gunboat in the harbour, in view of the 'alarming state of the country and the general excitement at present'.¹⁰⁵ The 'loyal inhabitants' of the city also sent a memorial to the lord lieutenant:

In the present state of excitement and well grounded alarm, the city of Waterford is so menaced by the torrent of revolution that the well affected portion of it are (sic) so assailed on all sides by threats, appearances and expressions of disaffection, that they dread the consequence to their lives and properties. The state of alarm is great and naturally so, from the pending perils and cruelties to which the loyal portion are (sic) exposed and liable from the infuriated rabble urged on to acts of murder and plunder.¹⁰⁶

103 *Waterford Mail*, 7 Dec. 1831, quoting *Frazier's Magazine*.

104 Ian d'Alton (1980), *Protestant Society and Politics in Cork 1812-1844* (Cork University Press) p. 79.

105 Quoted in Dermot Power (1995), 'The Politicisation of the People? – Strange Episodes in 1848-9', in Des Cowman and Donald Brady (eds.), *The Famine in Waterford* (Dublin, Geography Publications in association with Waterford County Council), p. 294.

106 Memorial of Some Loyal Inhabitants of Waterford, 6 Apr. 1848, National Archives, Outrage Papers, 29/116.

The *Mail* carried two letters from loyal Protestants in May: one urging action 'before the tide of rebellion runs much further'; the other denouncing any Protestant who was to be found 'in the ranks of treason'.¹⁰⁷ On 26 July a meeting was held at the city hall for the purpose of appointing special constables to deal with possible violence. The attendance was mainly Protestant, prompting the mayor to express his disappointment at this apparently 'exclusive' gathering. One of the Protestants who was present denied any sectarian intent. Two hundred special constables were eventually sworn in, including many Catholics.¹⁰⁸

Protestant fears were also evident in the county. The housekeeper at Curraghmore, Mary Smith, wrote to the marchioness of Waterford on 31 July 1848:

The report was that, if the outbreak took place, neither men, women, nor children were to be spared; now I believe they [Irish rebels] have condescended to say that women and children will be permitted to live.

Referring to the Young Ireland leader, William Smith O'Brien, the housekeeper told her mistress that 'he would himself decapitate millions if he could, not forgetting the Queen'.¹⁰⁹ A few days earlier, Rev. David Alfred Doudney, curate of Monksland (Bunmahon) had informed the readers of an evangelical journal that rumours were circulating as to the date of a rebellion. He continued: 'Some said one day, and some another, for a general massacre of Protestants'.¹¹⁰ Doudney commented that in Bunmahon and in other towns 'it is said that but few Protestant families retired to rest on several nights'.¹¹¹ A friend of the Bunmahon curate, who was visiting him, took Doudney aside from other members of his family to emphasise the importance of devising a plan of escape in the event of rebellion. Escape by sea was considered, but rejected on account of high waves. Eventually it was decided that a deep pit, formerly dug for mining purposes, would make a suitable hiding place.¹¹² Rev. John Medlicott of Portlaw advised his congregation to stay at home, rather than risk going to church.¹¹³

Some Protestants went to England during the crisis. The marquis of Waterford insisted on taking his wife there.¹¹⁴ Her housekeeper informed her that 'a great many people' were leaving Waterford.¹¹⁵ She reported that Rev. Medlicott intended

107 *Waterford Mail*, 3 May 1848.

108 *ibid.*, 29 July 1848, 2 Aug. 1848.

109 Augustus Hare (1893), *The Story of Two Noble Lives, being Memorials of Charlotte, Countess Canning and Louisa, Marchioness of Waterford* (London, George Allen), p. 308.

110 David Alfred Doudney (n.d.), *The Credentials, Calls, and Claims of the Christian Ministry* (London, W. Mack), p. 281.

111 *ibid.*, p. 284.

112 *ibid.*, p. 283.

113 Hare, *Story of Two Noble Lives*, p. 306.

114 *ibid.*, p. 305.

115 *ibid.*, p. 306.

sending his family away.¹¹⁶ On 25 July Doudney wrote that 'for days the Protestants had been flying to England, and again this day the steamer was crowded'.¹¹⁷

In response to what was regarded as a very serious situation, a Portlaw Protective Association was formed on 27 July. Lord Waterford and Rev. Medlicott played a prominent role at the inaugural meeting.¹¹⁸ Four days later the marquis and over one hundred and forty of his tenants met at Curraghmore to provide for the defence of the estate in the event of violence.¹¹⁹ Beresford barricaded his house against attack, with stout oak beams securing the lower windows and small brass cannon the upper ones. He sought the advice of an architect, William Tinsley of Clonmel, on the fortification of his residence.¹²⁰

The fears of many Protestants were compounded by a deep suspicion of Catholic intentions and loyalties. Mary Smith wished that all the stablemen at Curraghmore were Protestants. She lamented, however, that

in this establishment, the men and women both inside and out are Catholics; that is what makes one feel so insecure.¹²¹

A correspondent in the *Mail*, styling himself 'Loyalist', expressed his regret that so few Catholics had come forward to offer their services in defence of law and order.¹²² In a report in the same journal on the attack on Portlaw police barracks, it was suggested that the rebels entertained hopes of easily obtaining arms because five of the constables were Catholics. The same report commented that only one Catholic had attended the meeting to establish the Portlaw Protective Association.¹²³

The year of 1848 was one of real anxiety for Waterford's Anglicans. Their fears were palpable. In terms of their concerns for their safety, the events of that year had distinct echoes of 1825, when the spectre of Pastorini's prophecies haunted them. The crisis passed, however, with only a few isolated incidents of violence. The depths of sectarian divisions had once again revealed themselves, serving as a reminder of the confessional divide which characterised the county's, and the country's politics.

CONCLUSION

A simple fact shaped, to a very significant degree, the Anglican responses to the three crises considered in this study – the remorselessness of unfavourable and declining demographics. A once powerful group had to come to terms with the implications of their minority status in an age when members of the majority

116 *ibid.*, p. 307.

117 Doudney, *Credentials*, p. 284.

118 *Waterford Mail*, 29 July 1848.

119 *ibid.*, 2 Aug. 1848.

120 Patrick C. Power (1990), *History of Waterford* (Cork, Mercier Press), p. 168.

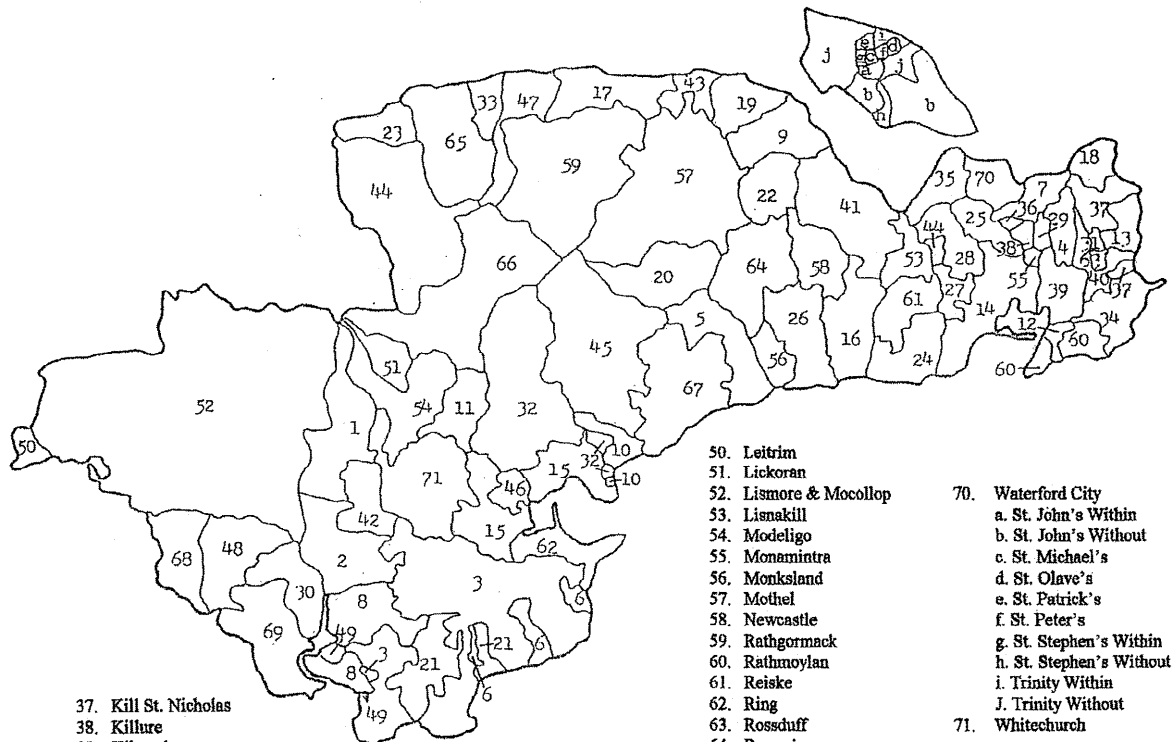
121 Hare, *Story of Two Noble Lives*, p. 307.

122 *Waterford Mail*, 5 Aug. 1848.

123 *ibid.*, 27 Sept. 1848.

Catholic persuasion were asserting themselves in a strident, and often violent fashion. The 'prophecies' of Pastorini inspired terror precisely because Anglicans realized that they constituted a minority among what they regarded as a hostile Catholic population. A perceived threat engendered panic because of a sense of isolation. This same consideration added greatly to Anglican concerns during the Tithe War and the events of 1848, though in these instances actual incidents of violence directed against Protestants compounded their fears. Thus in the nineteenth century there hung over Waterford's – and indeed Ireland's – Anglicans, a sword of Damocles in the form of vanishing numbers, and was for them an unpalatable circumstance which contributed, perhaps more than any other factor, to their eventual political demise.

1. Affane
2. Aglish
3. Ardmore
4. Ballygunner
5. Ballylaneen
6. Ballymacart
7. Ballinakill
8. Clashmore
9. Clonegam
10. Clonea
11. Colligan
12. Corbally
13. Crooke
14. Druncannon
15. Dungarvan
16. Dunhill
17. Dysert
18. Faithlegg
19. Fenough
20. Fews
21. Grange
22. Guileagh
23. Inislounaght
24. Islandkane
25. Kilbary
26. Kilbarrymaiden
27. Kilbride
28. Kilburne
29. Kilcaragh
30. Kilcockan
31. Kilcoop
32. Kilgobnet
33. Killalaoan
34. Killea
35. Killotteran
36. Kill St. Lawrence



37. Kill St. Nicholas
38. Killure
39. Kilmaeleage
40. Kilmacomb
41. Kilmeaden
42. Kilmolash
43. Kilmoieran
44. Kilronan

45. Kilrossanty
46. Kilrush
47. Kilsheelan
48. Kilwatermoy
49. Kinsalebeg

50. Leitrim
51. Lickoran
52. Lismore & Mocollop
53. Lisnakil
54. Modeligo
55. Monamintra
56. Monksland
57. Mothel
58. Newcastle
59. Rathgormack
60. Rathmoylan
61. Reiske
62. Ring
63. Rossduff
64. Rossmire
65. St. Mary's, Clonmel
66. Seskinane
67. Stradbally
68. Tallow
70. Waterford City
 - a. St. John's Within
 - b. St. John's Without
 - c. St. Michael's
 - d. St. Olave's
 - e. St. Patrick's
 - f. St. Peter's
 - g. St. Stephen's Within
 - h. St. Stephen's Without
 - i. Trinity Within
 - j. Trinity Without
71. Whitechurch

Source: Genealogical Atlas of Ireland (1986).

PARISHES OF COUNTY WATERFORD

APPENDIX 1

Population of Anglicans in Waterford's seventy-four parishes, 1834.

Parish	Population	Parish	Population
Affane	49	Kilmacomb	37
Aglish	107	Kilmeaden	118
Ardmore	55	Kilmolash	12
Ballygunner	17	Kilmoleran	18
Ballylaneen	126	Kilronan (diocese of Lismore)	28
Ballymacart	8	Kilronan (diocese of Waterford)	0
Ballinakill	90	Kilrossanty	100
Clashmore	42	Kilrush	6
Clonea	4	Kilwatermoy	96
Clonegam	245	Kinsalebeg	27
Colligan	0	Lickoran	0
Corbally	8	Lismore	494
Crooke	14	Mocollop	56
Drumcannon	182	Lisnakill	5
Dungarvan	335	Modeligo	4
Dunhill	27	Monamintra	0
Dysert	19	Monksland	89
Faithlegg	14	Mothel	39
Fenough	19	Newcastle	0
Fews	0	Rathgormack	34
Grange	34	Rathmoylan	84
Guilcagh	67	Reiske	0
Islandkane	0	Ring	32
Kilbarry	10	Rossduff	11
Kilbarrymaiden	12	Rossmire	11
Kilbride	0	Seskinane	3
Kilburne	0	St. John's	1,002
Kilcaragh	0	St. Michael's	[2,300]
Kilcockan	22	St. Olave's	356
Kilculiheen*	135	St. Patrick's	102
Kilgobinet	0	St. Peter's	349
Killea	253	St. Stephen's	144
Killotteran	29	Stradbally	112
Kill St. Lawrence	0	Tallow	352
Kill St. Nicholas	161	Templemichael	178
Killure	0	Trinity**	[2,300]
Kilmacleage	15	Whitechurch	29

* Kilculiheen parish was in the city of Waterford, though part of the diocese of Ossory.

** No separate figure available. Both parishes were counted together in the *First Report of the Commissioners of Public Instruction, Ireland, H.C. 1835* (45, 46), xxxiii.

Source: *First Report*, 3C-11C; 13C-37C; 156b-157b.

APPENDIX 11

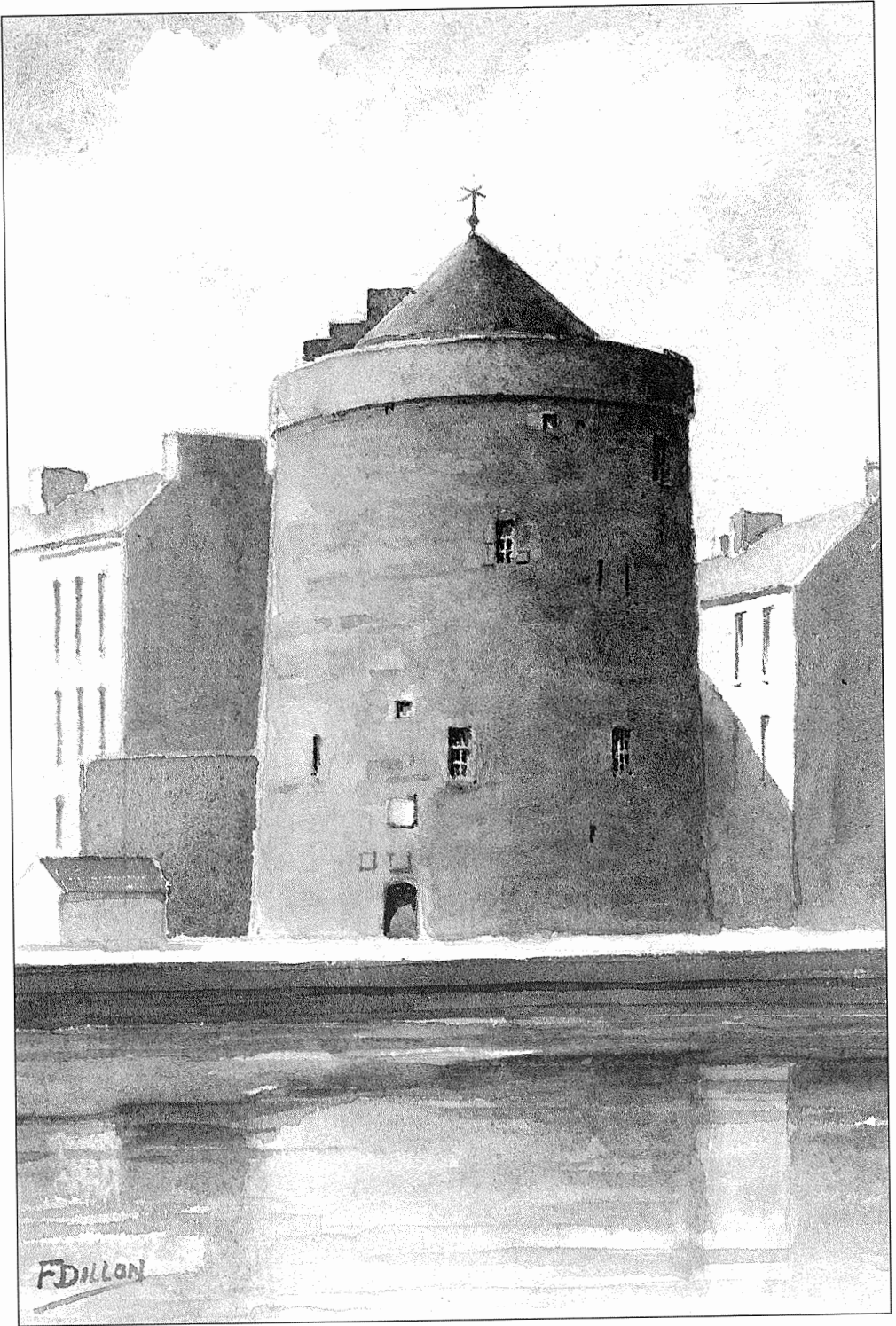
Anglican population as percentage of parish's total population, 1834.

Parish	Percentage	Parish	Percentage
Affane	2.5	Kilmacomb	4.6
Aglish	2.8	Kilmeaden	4.4
Ardmore	0.7	Kilmolash	0.8
Ballygunner	2.3	Kilmoleran	0.6
Ballylaneen	3.3	Kilronan (diocese of Lismore)	0.7
Ballymacart	0.8	Kilronan (diocese of Waterford)	0
Ballinakill	14.5	Kilrossanty	3.1
Clashmore	1.1	Kilrush	0.8
Clonea	0.5	Kilwatermoy	3.7
Clonegam	8.7	Kinsalebeg	0.9
Colligan	0	Lickoran	0
Corbally	2.7	Lismore	3.1
Crooke	1.4	Mocollop	1.5
Drumcannon	5.4	Lisnakill	0.7
Dungarvan	2.5	Modeligo	0.2
Dunhill	1.2	Monamintra	0
Dysert	1.3	Monksland	8.0
Faithlegg	1.9	Mothel	1.0
Fenough	2.1	Newcastle	0
Fews	0	Rathgormack	1.5
Grange	1.5	Rathmoylan	10.4
Guilcagh	7.0	Reiske	0
Islandkane	0	Ring	1.3
Kilbarry	1.7	Rossduff	12.1
Kilbarrymaiden	0.5	Rossmire	0.4
Kilbride	0	Seskinane	0.1
Killburne	0	St. John's	18.2
Kilcaragh	0	St. Michael's**	[15.0]
Kilcockan	1.5	St. Olave's	40.7
Kilculiheen*	9.8	St. Patrick's	3.9
Killgobinet	0	St. Peter's	38.1
Killea	9.8	St. Stephen's	8.6
Killotteran	5.9	Stradbally	3.0
Kill St. Lawrence	0	Tallow	7.1
Kill St. Nicholas	9.7	Templemichael	6.7
Killure	0	Trinity**	[15.0]
Kilmacleage	1.4	Whitechurch	0.9

* Kilculiheen parish was in the city of Waterford, though part of the diocese of Ossory.

** No separate figure available. Both parishes were counted together in the *First Report of the Commissioners of Public Instruction, Ireland, H.C. 1835 (45, 46), xxxiii.*

Source: *First Report*, 3C-11C; 13C-37C; 156b-157b.



Reginald's Tower, built c. 1003.

Source: Painting by Fergus Dillon.

The Last Will and Testament of Patrick Power of Tinhalla Esq.

by
Anthony McCan.

Introduction

Researching Power genealogy is somewhat akin to hacking one's way through virgin rainforest with a machete. There are so many of them with the same name that I shall content myself with a brief account of Patrick's forbears, which I hope will help the reader to understand where he came from and how his character was formed.

The Poers first came to Ireland with Henry II and were granted land near Waterford in what later became the Barony of Middlethird, expelling the native owners, the O'Flanagans, as they themselves were to be dispossessed by new conquerors three hundred years later. In 1348, John Poer was granted the title of Baron of Donoyle in return for a promise that he would keep the Powers in line, something that his descendants did with more or less success. By the sixteenth century, however, the last head of the senior branch in Donoyle had died in battle and the junior branch of Kilmeaden amalgamated both the title and lands of Donoyle. Thus, we find in the Civil Survey of 1654 that the seventh and last Baron of Donoyle, John Power, was owner in fee simple of lands in the barony of Middlethird amounting to over 5,000 acres, mainly in the parishes of Donoyle (Dunhill) and Kilmeaden. He was also the owner of two castles, one in each of these parishes.

Now we come to the family legend. In October 1887 Jane Power, grand-daughter of Patrick, visited the churchyard where Patrick was buried with his father and grandfather. Having noted down the tombstone inscriptions, she continues:

Tradition says the grandfather of the first mentioned Mr Patrick Power of Knockaderry, the owner of Kilmeaden Castle, was hung on a tree by Cromwell's orders and the castle destroyed. All of the family were killed with the exception of one child who was saved by an attendant.

It's a great story and one hates to be a spoilsport, but the name of John Power of Kilmedan appears on a list of dispossessed landowners in Ireland given to the Duke of Ormonde in 1664 for his consideration for restoration, so he was obviously alive then. According to the *History of Waterford City and County* by Patrick C. Power, Kilmeaden Castle was garrisoned by John Power but held out for a short time only. There is no mention of any hanging, but it is quite probable that the castle was burned since the Cromwellians would not have left it to be re-occupied. According to Charles Smith in *The Antient and present state of the County and City of Waterford* (1745) the new owners, the St. Legers, had built Kilmeaden

House upon its foundations. The other Power castle at Donoyale was also garrisoned but it too capitulated quickly. It is said to have been blown up by the Cromwellians, although its remains still crown a rocky outcrop.

As to the story of the one child saved it is impossible to be certain. All that can be said for sure is that the Piers Power who lived at Knockaderry and who died in 1715 was a son of John Power. According to Charles Smith, writing in 1745, John Power of Donhill Esq. was restored to his estates by the Act of Settlement, but this cannot be correct. The Kilmeaden lands went to the St. Legers and the Donoyale lands to the St. George Cole family. However, Knockaderry, where Piers Power lived, may have been saved from the wreckage possibly because it had not been held in fee simple as the rest of John Power's estates were, but on a lease.

The *Civil Survey* refers to the 'lands of Knockederry, which land was enjoyed by John Power of Dunhill Esq. Irish Papist in the year 1640 in mortgage of £1000 as we are informed'. After that, the story becomes much clearer. Piers of Knockaderry was succeeded by his son, Patrick, also of Knockaderry, and he in turn was succeeded by his son Piers of Darrigle, another old Power estate of 704 acres, having been owned in fee simple by Piers Power of Coolefin in 1640. The family fortunes had been restored by clever use of leasing and a strategic marriage with big-farm families (Kennedy, Butler, Hayden) in each generation, the classic pattern outlined by Kevin Whelan in his chapter on the 'Underground Gentry' in *The Tree of Liberty*.

Piers of Darrigle was rich enough to give his daughters large fortunes and to buy silver from the Dublin silversmiths with the well-known Power crest of the stag's head with a cross between the antlers engraved. It was at Darrigle that Patrick, whose will we are considering, was born in 1751.

The large leaseholdings he inherited made him a wealthy man. His reputation as a duellist, not afraid to stand up to the ascendancy, made him a figure of folklore, the Irish Hero who overcomes the Saxon by means of cunning and bravado, his hospitality and generosity were renowned. He had been made a Freeman of Waterford in 1802. According to the Power article in Burke's *Irish Family Records*, he was known as *Paorach na Deargaile* in the still largely Irish-speaking countryside. One can imagine him in the evening of his days at Tinhalla, quietly enjoying his library and well-stocked wine cellar, his companion Mary Fennell to soothe his brow. He had never married, so not far away in Ballindad his three Ronayne nephews looked on approvingly at Uncle Patrick, no doubt wishing him longevity in public, but they would not have been human if, in the silent watches of the night, the thought of all those thousands of Power acres dropping into their laps like a ripe plum when Uncle Patrick should pass to his reward would not have provoked a smile of quiet satisfaction.

But then a succession of events put paid to this pleasant dream. Patrick Power became a father at the age of 74 when Mary Fennell presented him with a son on 16 October 1826, baptised Piers by the Rev. Michael Power P.P. at Carrigbeg on 17 October. On 5 November 1826 Patrick was married to Mary Fennell and

suddenly, out of nowhere, a son and heir had appeared to inherit all those lovely acres. And then, to crown it all, on the 6 April 1827 Patrick made a new will. On the 16 April 1827, Easter Monday, at 7 o'clock in the morning, he died.¹

1 *Waterford Mirror*, Wed. April 18 1827. At his seat Tinalla Co. Waterford on the 16th inst. in the 76th year of his age Patrick Power Esq. This gentleman was one of the delegation who waited upon his late majesty in 1793. He maintained through life a high and independent spirit. His private character was marked by the most rigid integrity and was particularly distinguished for benevolence towards the poor with whose sufferings he sympathised and upon whose behalf an appeal was never made to him in vain.

The Will

IN THE NAME OF GOD AMEN

I, PATRICK POWER, of Tinhalla in the County of Waterford being of sound mind memory and understanding do make this my Last Will and Testament hereby revoking and annulling all former Will or Wills by me heretofore made that is to say I order and direct that all my just debts and funeral expences be paid by my Executors hereafter named as soon after my decease as possible

I leave devise and bequeath unto my wife, MARY POWER, alias FENNELL,² one annuity or sum of two hundred and fifty pounds sterling to be paid to her yearly and every year by my Executors during the term of her natural life but no longer said annuity or jointure to be paid by two equal or even gales or payments on every twenty fifth day of March and every twenty ninth day of September during her life the first payment thereof to become due and payable to her on whichever of these two aforesaid days that shall first happen next after my decease. I also devise and bequeath to my said wife my dwelling house offices garden and demesne at Tinhalla in as large and ample a manner as the same is occupied by myself containing about fifty plantation acres³ be the same more or less during the term of her widowhood but no longer. I also bequeath to her all my house furniture beds bedding and house linen, all the cattle stock furniture and farming utensils in the said offices and on said premises to have hold and enjoy the said premises free of any rent or incumbrance during her life but no longer. I also bequeath unto my said wife all my printed books together with the whole of my stock of wines and other liquors contained in my cellar and dwelling house at Tinhalla also the sum of one hundred pounds sterling to be paid her by my Executors as soon as may be convenient immediately after my decease. It is also further declared as my will that the bequests herein made and devised to my said wife shall be in bar and considered as in lieu and full discharge of dower and of all and any claim or claims whatsoever which she might or may have against my property.

2 According to family oral tradition, Mary Fennell had come to Tinhalla as a dairy-maid. She had already borne him two daughters in 1816 and 1818 when a son arrived in 1826. She was nicknamed Mary of the Mountain which suggests she came from Walsh's Mountain, a nearby area in South Kilkenny noted for its prosperous dairy and pig farmers. It remained an almost exclusively Irish-speaking area until well into the nineteenth century.

3 About eighty statute acres.

I give and bequeath unto my nephew, MAURICE RONAYNE, ESQ.,⁴ my family plate marked with the initials P.M.P. and the remainder of my plate unto my aforesaid wife.

I devise and bequeath unto my son, PIERSE POWER, (now aged about four months) by my said wife, MARY POWER, alias FENNEL, all that and those the town and lands of Dunbrattin, Kilmurrin and Knockane-Corbally⁵ in as large and ample a manner and subject to the same reservations as the same are held by myself situate in the Barony of Upperthird and County of Waterford to be held and possessed by him and his heirs forever upon his attaining the age of twenty one years. The issues and profits from said lands to be collected for him during his minority by my Executors who after reserving out of the annual produce of these lands a sum adequate for his maintenance education and clothing are to place the balance of such income at the end of every year in Government or other approved security for the benefit of said PIERSE POWER and to account with him for the same with him becoming of age. I further direct that a sum of fifty pounds per year be allowed out of his own property for the maintenance of my said son PIERSE POWER until he attains the age of twelve years or is sent to school and thence forward an allowance of one hundred pounds per year to be increased at the discretion of his Guardian but if my said son PIERSE POWER should happen to die before he attains the age of twenty one years my will is that the said lands so devised to him should then devolve to my nephews MAURICE RONAYNE and PIERSE RONAYNE ESQ. to be by them and their heirs possessed in equal shares.

I deviser and bequeath unto my nephew EDWARD FARRELL⁶ my right title and interest in and to my houses and ground situate in Carrick-on-Suir during the term of his natural life but no longer he paying the head rent of the same and after his decease my will is that

4 Registry of Deed 350-160-234787. Marriage articles dated 30 November 1782 on the marriage of William Ronayne of Duagh, Co. Waterford and Anstace Power, daughter of Piers Power, late of Darrigle. Bride's fortune £1,200.

5 No acreage mentioned but Hussey de Burgh's *Landowners of Ireland* (1878) credits Piers Power with the ownership of 3,193 acres in Co. Waterford. This figure includes land held on leases of over 99 years.

6 *Finns Leinster Journal* 11 June 1770, Kilkenny. Married last Tuesday Michael Farrell, an eminent merchant of Waterford, to Miss Power, daughter of Piers Power of Darrigle in the County of Waterford, a young lady of great beauty and merit with a fortune of £2,000.

This was Patrick's sister Mary.

the said premises shall become the property for ever of my said son PIERSE POWER and his heirs upon his attaining the age of twenty one years but in case he should die before he attains the said age I then devise and bequeath the said houses and ground unto the afore-said MAURICE RONAYNE ESQ. and his heirs for ever.

I devise and bequeath unto my son PATRICK POWER⁷ my right title and interest to and in the town and lands of Ballyvad situate in the Barony of Decies County of Waterford part of which is already in his possession he paying all rents and charges to which the same are subject and also paying out of the issues and profits of said land unto his mother MARGARET BURKE the sum of ten pounds during her life by two even half yearly payments the first payment thereof to become due and payable on the twenty fifth day of March or twenty ninth day of September next after my decease.

I leave and bequeath unto my eldest daughter ALICIA POWER⁸ (now aged about ten years) by my said wife MARY POWER, alias FENNELL, an annuity or sum of one hundred pounds sterling per year for her maintenance clothing and education to be paid by my Executors every year by two equal half yearly payments the first payment to become due and payable to her on either the twenty fifth day of March or twenty ninth day of September whichever of these days shall happen after my decease and to continue payable upon these days thenceforward during the term of her natural life. The said annuity to be paid to the said ALICIA POWER without in the case of her marriage the control or interference of her husband in any manner whatsoever and if my said daughter shall upon or after her attaining the age of twenty one years marry with the consent of her Guardian or my Executors then and in that case she shall be entitled to a marriage portion of one thousand pounds sterling which I hereby direct my Executors to pay unto her.

I also devise and bequeath unto my second daughter CATHERINE POWER⁹ (now aged about eight years and a half) by my said wife MARY POWER, alias FENNELL, a like annuity or sum of one hundred pounds sterling per year for her maintenance clothing and education to be paid by my Executors every year by two equal half yearly payments the first payment thereof to become due and payable to her

7 Presumably a natural son.

8 Later married to Valentine Smyth O'Donnell. The O'Donnells were amongst the leading families of Carrick.

9 Later married to William Christian, scion of another leading Carrick family.

on either the twenty fifth day of March or twenty ninth day of September whichever of these days shall first happen next after my decease and to continue payable upon these days thenceforward during the term of her natural life the said annuity to be paid to the said CATHERINE POWER without in case of her marriage the control or interference of her husband in any way whatsoever and if my said daughter shall upon or after her attaining the age of twenty one years marry with the consent of her Guardian or my Executors then and in that case she shall be entitled to a marriage portion of one thousand pounds sterling which I hereby direct my Executors to pay unto her.

It is also further my will that in case any or either of the annuities so bequeathed to my said daughters ALICIA POWER and CATHERINE POWER shall happen to be unpaid in twenty one days after the days respectively appointed for the half yearly payments of the same then and in such case they the said ALICIA POWER or CATHERINE POWER or their Guardian shall be entitled to enter on the lands of Brownswood to distrain the same and the distress or distresses thereon found to seize and dispose of as usual according to law until such annuity and all arrears thereof with the charges of recovering the same are fully paid and satisfied.

I devise and bequeath unto my natural daughter BRIDGET NOWLAN, alias POWER, wife of THOMAS NOWLAN of Kilmalden the sum of two hundred pounds sterling to be paid her during her natural life half yearly by equal payments on every twenty fifth day of March and every twenty ninth day of September the first half yearly payment to be made and payable on whichever of these two days shall first happen next after my decease and after the death of the said BRIDGET NOWLAN my will is that the said sum of two hundred pounds sterling shall be equally divided between her children by my Executors after they shall have attained the respective ages of twenty one years.

I devise and bequeath unto the children of my niece MARY CORMAC¹⁰ wife of MR WILLIAM CORMAC of Thurles in the County of Tipperary the sum of one thousand pounds sterling to be equally divided among the said children share and share alike on their respectively attaining the ages of twenty one years.

10 *Limerick Chronicle* 1814. On 26 Feb. married Wm. Cormack Esq. of Thurles to Mary, daughter of Wm. Ronayne of Ballinad, Co. Waterford.

I leave and bequeath unto the children of my niece ELLEN BRAY,¹¹ wife of MR. LUKE BRAY of the County of Tipperary the sum of one thousand pounds to be equally divided among the said children share and share alike on their respectively attaining the ages of twenty one years.

I leave and bequeath unto my niece FANNY RONAYNE the sum of one thousand pounds sterling.

I devise and bequeath unto my Executors in trust for the sole use and benefit of my niece MARGARET RONAYNE (now Non Compos Mentis) the sum of one thousand pounds sterling the interest thereof to be applied towards her maintenance until it shall please God to restore her to her reason when and upon such event taking place she shall be entitled to receive the said principal sum of one thousand pounds sterling.

I leave and bequeath unto MR. EDMUND RICE of Waterford for the benefit of the poor boys under his care the sum of one hundred pounds sterling.

I bequeath unto the sick poor of the City of Waterford the sum of one hundred pounds sterling. I bequeath unto the Dispensary of the City of Waterford the sum of fifty pounds sterling. I bequeath unto St. Joseph's Poor House in Little Patrick Street Waterford the sum of fifty pounds sterling.

I bequeath unto the poor of Carrigbeg the sum of one hundred and fifty pounds sterling. I bequeath to the Orphan Society of the City of Waterford the sum of one hundred pounds sterling. I bequeath unto the Fever Hospital of Carrick-on-Suir the sum of fifty pounds sterling.

I bequeath unto the Monk House of Carrick-on-Suir for the benefit of the poor boys under its care the sum of one hundred pounds sterling. I bequeath unto the poor of such lands as I receive rents from the sum of one hundred pounds sterling namely the lands of Tinhalla, Portonabor, Ballynahiny, Brownswood, Dunbrattin, Kilmurrin, Knockanecorbally, Curranegurehy, Curraghbalintlay, Rath Upper and Lower, Grehanagh, Killowen and Ballyvad.

11 *Ennis Chronicle*, 30 May 1810. Married on Wed. at Ballinad, Co. Waterford, Luke Bray Esq. of Thurles to Ellen, second daughter of Wm. Ronayne.

I bequeath unto the REVEREND MARTIN FLEMING for his use and the Friary under his care the sum of fifty pounds sterling. I bequeath unto my foster sister JUDY BIGGS, alias HAYDEN, the sum of twenty pounds sterling. I bequeath unto MARGARET BURKE exclusive of the ten pounds per year charged for her on the lands of Ballyvad twenty pounds sterling. I bequeath unto MARGARET POWER wife of PATRICK POWER of Waterford the sum of twenty pounds sterling.

I bequeath and devise unto my Executors the sum of two hundred pounds sterling part thereof to be expended in offering up Masses for my benefit and the remainder to be laid out in such charitable or pious uses as to my said Executors shall seem fit and proper exclusive of this bequest. I also direct my Executors to lay out ten pounds per year for annual Masses for my benefit to continue for ten years next after my decease.

I bequeath the sum of fifty pounds towards building a new Chapel in Carrickbeg. I bequeath to each of my three Executors hereinafter named the sum of fifty pounds sterling. It is also my intention that my two daughters shall receive the respective annuities bequeathed to them during their lives without any deduction or charge for stamp duty. Also that my wife MARY POWER, alias FENNELL, shall receive the annuity of two hundred and fifty pounds bequeathed to her during her life together with the house and demesne devised to her during her widowhood but no longer also all the other bequests made to her in the foregoing part of this Will without any deduction or charge for stamp duty.

I appoint the REVEREND JOHN O'NEILL of Carrick-on-Suir Guardian of my two daughters ALICIA and CATHERINE. Also Guardian to my son PIERSE POWER the reversion of whose property in case he should die before attaining his age of twenty one years is left to my three nephews MAURICE RONAYNE, WILLIAM RONAYNE and PIERSE RONAYNE ESQ. as stated in the foregoing part of this Will.

As to the rest, residue and remainder of my property estate and effects, whether real or personal or of what nature or kind soever not herein before particularly bequeathed or disposed of, I devise and bequeath the same and every part thereof unto my nephews MAURICE RONAYNE, WILLIAM RONAYNE and PIERSE RONAYNE

ESQ. and their respective heirs for ever the said residue and remainder and every part of the same whether real or personal being nevertheless being subject first to and chargeable with the annuity or jointure bequeathed to my aforesaid wife and to all the other annuities legacies charities and incumbrances recited in this my Will and I do appoint the said REV. JOHN O'NEILL of Carrick-on-Suir, PATRICK HAYDEN¹² of Carrickbeg and Edmond Haahesy of Carrickbeg Executors to this my last Will and Testament.

It is also my will that my Executors shall retain possession of my leases until the aforesaid legacies and bequests are collected out of my property secured or paid and that my aforesaid wife shall have a power of entering on and distraining the lands of Portonaboo or Tinhalla to enforce the payments of her aforesaid jointure in case the same should happen not to be paid to her within thirty-one days from the periods appointed for the half yearly payments thereof testimony whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal (my seal being also affixed on the back of this Will) this eight day of February one thousand eight hundred and twenty seven.

PATRICK POWER (Seal).

Signed sealed published and declared by the said PATRICK POWER ESQ. as and for his Last Will and Testament in presence of us who have hereunto subscribed our names as Witnesses at his request in his presence and in presence of each other.

MICHE POWER P.P.

MICHE BURKE

JOHN POWER M.D.

I, PATRICK POWER of Tinhalla in the County of Waterford in addition to the bequests and legacies stated in my Last Will and Testament bearing date the eight day of February, 1827 do further bequeath unto each of my daughters, ALICIA POWER and CATHERINE POWER, a sum of five hundred pounds sterling to be secured chargeable to each of them severally at the times and under the same conditions and in like manner as the bequests of one thousand pounds to each of them are already secured chargeable and payable to my said daughters in my aforesaid Will and in case either of my said two daughters should happen to die before she shall become entitled to the aforesaid sums I direct that the aforesaid two bequests amounting in all to fifteen hundred pounds for each shall revert to and become the sole property of her surviving sister.

12 The exact relationship between Patrick Power and Patrick Hayden is not clear but they were obviously related in some way through Patrick Power's mother Mary Hayden.

I hereby revoke that part of my aforesaid Will which after the payment of legacies and incumbrances devised unto MAURICE RONAYNE, WILLIAM RONAYNE and PIERSE RONAYNE the rest residue and remainder of my property in place whereof I now hereby devise and bequeath unto my four nephews MAURICE RONAYNE, WILLIAM RONAYNE, PIERSE RONAYNE and EDWARD FARRELL¹³ in equal shares to them and to their heirs forever all the rest residue and remainder of my property of what nature or kind soever not herein, hereinafter or heretofore otherwise specifically disposed of said residue and remainder and every part thereof whether real or personal being first subject to and chargeable with all the bequests devises legacies incumbrances and charities recited in this Codicil and in my aforesaid Will.

I further devise direct and declare it is my will that my aforesaid wife MARY POWER, alias FENNELL, have hold possess and enjoy the house and demesne of Tinhalla as already specified in my aforesaid Will during the whole term of her natural life free of any rent whatsoever and without the control or molestation of any of my heirs said devise being made to the term of her natural life but no longer.

I hereby ratify and confirm my aforesaid Will and every part thereof except as the same is herein altered or amended by this Codicil in witness whereof I have hereunto affixed my hand and seal this sixth day of April, 1827.

PATRICK POWER (Seal).

Signed sealed declared and published by the above named PATRICK POWER ESQ. as and for a Codicil to his Last Will and Testament in presence of us who at his request in his presence and in presence of each other have hereunto subscribed our names as witnesses.

PATRICK WALSH

THOMAS BOND

PATRICK WALSH, Gardener

13 No doubt the Farrells in Waterford had heard about the will and Edmund put his claim in. He doesn't seem to have had any ambition to be a landowner, because he sold his share of the property to Patrick Hayden shortly afterwards. See R. of D. 761-69-574070 deed dated 7 January 1830.

I, PATRICK POWER of Tinhalla in the County of Waterford in addition to my Last Will and Testament and the Codicil thereto the latter bearing date the sixth day of April, 1827 do hereby further ordain direct and declare it as my will that in case any attempt shall hereafter be made either directly or indirectly to impeach alter or invalidate any part of my said Will and Codicil by any of my nephews MAURICE RONAYNE, WILLIAM RONAYNE or PIERSE RONAYNE or by any person claiming a right from them or any of their sisters or family then in such case I ordain direct and declare it as my will that all the bequests devises heretofore made by me to the said MAURICE RONAYNE, WILLIAM RONAYNE and to their sisters shall be revoked. I declare the same to be utterly void and of no effect. I direct that the properties so mentioned as bequeathed to them shall in the case of such attempt to in validate or alter my Will be divided among the remaining members of my family or relatives in such proportions as my Executors shall think proper.

I further direct that my son PATRICK POWER shall be entitled to receive all rent and arrears of rent which may be due of the tenants on the lands of Ballyvad at the time of my decease.

I hereby ratify and confirm the aforesaid Will and Codicil referred to except as herein altered. In witness whereof I have hereunto affixed my hand and seal this 13th day of April, 1827.

PATRICK POWER (Seal).

Signed sealed declared and published by the said PATRICK POWER ESQ. as and for a Codicil to his Last Will and Testament in presence of us who in his presence and at his request in presence of each other have hereunto subscribed our names as witnesses.

THOS. HEARN

JOHN PHELAN

PATRICK WALSH

There seems to be no doubt that news of the new will and its contents had reached Ballinad and created quite a stir. No doubt Mary Fennell would have been accused of using undue influence on her aging lover to persuade him to marry her and to legitimise her son, but Patrick moved quickly and decisively to quell the revolt, if such it was. It is possible to feel some sympathy for the Ronaynes in their disappointment but they really were generously treated as residual legatees. In the event, they simply boycotted their Uncle's funeral to show their disapproval of the legacies they had received.

Aftermath

22 May on Tuesday, 1827 Patrick Hayden sourly notes in his diary, being one month and six days after Mr Power's death, his widow Mary Fennell or Power married Doctor John Power of Carrick, her property the demesne of Tinhalla and £250 a year was the sole inducement on Doctor Power's side. She was but a few months married to Mr. P. Power, though she had lived several years with him.

This Doctor Power was one of the witnesses to Patrick Power's will. He had married a Bridget O'Berne about 1790 and had a son John who entered the Kings Inns in 1806. Bridget had just recently died in curious circumstances. According to a report in *The Constitution* of 21 July 1825, she had come to Tramore for the sea-bathing but was seized by violent pains just after leaving the water and died in a few minutes.

Shortly after he had moved in as Lord of the Manor to Tinhalla, a strange incident occurred on the evening of Monday 16 July. The doctor discharged a carbine through the hall door from the inside and the ball passed through his wife's thigh, she having rapped at the door and the Doctor, as he said, supposing that the house was attacked by robbers, fired.

The reader will no doubt be pleased to hear that the redoubtable Mary survived her trigger-happy husband and married for a third time in 1837, this time to George Devon, a young apothecary serving his time to Doctor Shea. Tinhalla had reverted to Maurice Ronayne by 1850 so George did not enjoy his new status for very long.

A minor historical mystery

As may be seen from his will, there was a lot more to Patrick Power than the hard-drinking, duelling squire of legend. He was a delegate to the Catholic Convention in Tailor's Lane, Dublin and took an active part in their debates. All his obituary notices state that he was one of the delegates dispatched in 1793 by the Convention to present their Petition for a total repeal of the Penal Laws to George III, yet all the histories the author has consulted say that the five delegates were named Byrne, Keogh, Devereux, Bellew and French. It seems unlikely that a claim that he was one of the delegates would have been made at a time when many then alive would have known the truth if it was not so, but then why is he not mentioned? Did he travel as a sort of reserve? I throw the question open to the learned readers of *Decies*.

Sources

The main source of this article is Patrick Power's will itself, the probate copy being on two large sheets of vellum covered with the beautiful copperplate of some long dead clerk. I got it from my father who got it from his uncle, Daniel Power, grandson of Patrick. I must also thank my cousin Frank McCan for providing me with the notes written by our grandmother Jane (Power) McCan on her visit to Kilmeaden in October 1887. Other information was obtained from the Cork City Library, National Archives and the Registry of Deeds.

Hibernia, Shamrock, Erin ...

William Thomas Mulvany and the 'Irish mines' in the Ruhr

By Olaf Schmidt-Rutsch

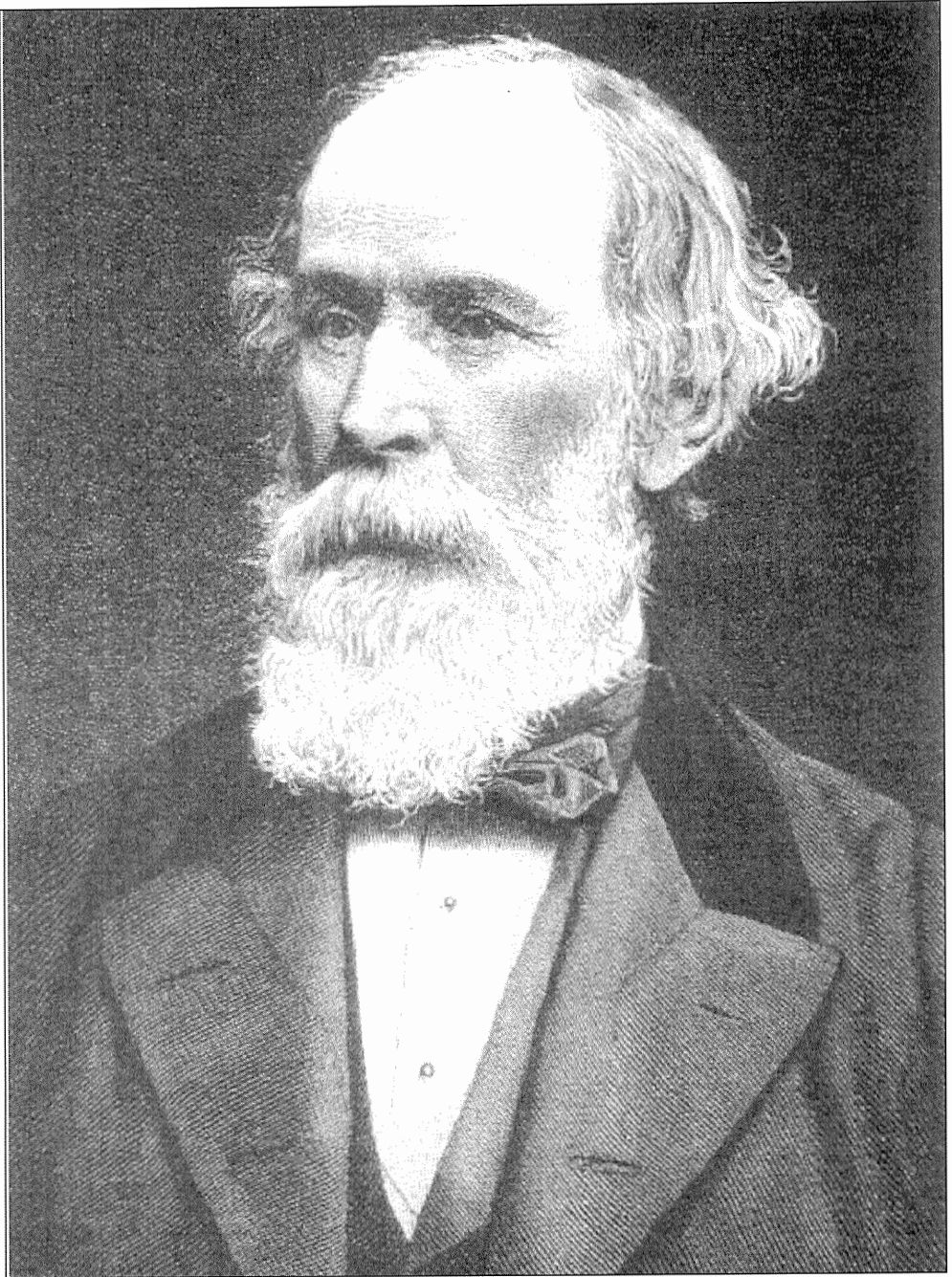
'The land, where there is no night ...'

In 1868 Thomas Edward Cliffe Leslie, Professor of Jurisprudence and Political Economy in the Queen's University Belfast visited the Westphalian coal field in Prussia to examine the political and economic situation there. As he entered the Ruhr, he made an unexpected discovery:

A few hours after he had been wearily watching one afternoon a set of labourers [...], lifting stones lazily one at a time from a roadside quarry into a cart, which half the number of men might have filled in a fourth of the time, he found himself by the side of a coal mine near Dortmund, from which a steam-engine was pumping several thousand feet of water a minute night and day, while around was a colony of miners – English, Irish, and Germans – all looking the incarnation of activity and force, though with striking differences of physical type, and among them the President of the Prussian Mining and Iron Works Company, a man to whose enterprise, energy, and sagacity the Ruhr Basin owes not a little of its extraordinary progress in the last fifteen years. It was like passing from 'a land in which it seemed to be always afternoon,' to one in which there was no night.

It was not only the relationship between pre-industrial working behaviour and industrial activity, which puzzled Leslie. The really surprising thing about the efficient colliery was that it was connected with an Irishman: William Thomas Mulvany. The fact that Mulvany was not only President of the *Prussia Mining and Iron Works Company* but also member of the governing body of the *Association for Mining Interests* in Rhineland-Westphalia made things more remarkable.

William Thomas Mulvany (1806-1885) is still a well known person in the Ruhr. Streets are named after him and also the names of the long gone collieries he was connected with, live on: *Hibernia*, *Shamrock* and *Erin*. The background of these 'Irish mines' is generally unknown not only in Ireland, but in the Ruhr too. Their history stand in the shadow of the 'big man' Mulvany but has, nonetheless, developed into a remarkable story; and the Irish tradition is still evident. After the closure of Erin colliery in Castrop-Rauxel in 1983 the area around the pit-head was developed into a business park with reminiscences of the Irish landscape – and another pit-head also finds itself surrounded by a Celtic tree-circle.



William Thomas Mulvany

Courtesy of Olaf Schmidt-Rutsch

Looking closer at Mulvany opens an insight into an astonishing biography. Thus the story of the 'Irish mines' becomes more than a curiosity and the question as to why Irish capital was invested in the Ruhr becomes more relevant given the difficult economic situation prevailing in Ireland during the nineteenth century. This story deals not only with the second career of a former Commissioner of Public Works in Ireland, but also with an Irish emigrant with a Belgian name and a prominent Waterford Quaker family. It is an amazing tale on a grand European scale.

The Ruhr in the mid-19th century

To understand the relevance of the story of Mulvany and the Irish mines it is helpful to take a look at the situation in the Ruhr before the industrial take-off, which had far-reaching consequences for German society. The Ruhr coal field is roughly contained within the River Rhine in the West, the River Ruhr (which gave the whole region its name) in the South and the River Lippe in the North. Since the end of the Napoleonic Wars the area, formerly divided into several independent states, belonged to Prussia, but was still divided into two provinces: Rhineland in the West and Westphalia in the East. When Thomas C. Banfield visited them in 1846 he found the landscape 'poetically agricultural'. There were just a few indications of the forthcoming industrial take-off, which would change the Ruhr dramatically.

Coal mining was limited to the banks of the River Ruhr. Here, the coal could be found just beneath the ground. Coal working used open pits or small galleries which were driven into the hillsides. This form of mining found its natural and geological frontier in the ground water level. The attempt to reach lower coal seams was connected with an enormous need for capital and pumping power. Both points were a major problem for the mine owners. Normally a mine was divided into 128 shares, and these were owned by entrepreneurs and coal merchants, by local farmers and widows.

In the 1830s several circumstances opened the way into the deep. Belgium's declaration of independence was connected with the loss of the Walloon coal-fields and caused an increased demand for the coal of Rhineland-Westphalia in the Netherlands. Coal transport on the Ruhr, which was one of Europe's most frequented waterways at this time, enabled the supply of the new market and motivated several collieries to sink vertical shafts to reach the deep coal seams, which were untouched until this time. The first of these collieries emerged on the banks of the Ruhr. At this time, it was already known that there were much richer reserves of coal north of the river. The fact that these were covered by a chalk formation caused major problems; financial, technological and administrative. The changing character of the coal from the exposed field in the south to the hidden field in the north was one of the significant features of the Ruhr coalfield and the most important challenge to mining engineers in the mid-nineteenth century.

The exploitation of the northern coalfields was obstructed by the mining laws of Prussia. Coal mining was a royal privilege and the strict regulation of mining prevented the industrial take-off. Banfield wrote:

Yet the weak side of the Prussian system is forcibly illustrated in the mining department. All is under the control of the government officials, who, however, acknowledge no responsibility. An inexperienced youth as [...] overseer, has the power of stopping all works if his suggestions are not attended to. It is true the embargo can be raised by an appeal to the next officer [...] of the district, and from him the party aggrieved can go to the 'Oberbergrath', or even to the mining board assembled *in pleno*.

These appeals were attended to with no expense and quickly dispatched. But a more invidious interference arose out of the government claim to title of the gross produce of all minerals. The mode of securing this claim on the part of the crown strikes at the root of all economy in mining.

This basic problem made things more difficult because it impeded investments into new mines in the northern coal fields. The risks of deep shaft mining were too great for most of the local residents and the regulations of the Prussian mining administration made investments of foreign capital widely unattractive. Nevertheless, there was an growing interest in Ruhr coal mining especially in Belgium, and thus the story of the Irish mines begins in Brussels.

Michael Corr and the 'hidden field'

The tiny village of Gelsenkirchen was situated near the river Emscher just above the 'hidden coal-field', but far from the centre of coal mining. Since 1847 it was connected to the Cologne-Minden-railway, the first major railway line between the Rhine and the river Weser. This brought Gelsenkirchen to the attention of foreign capitalists. October 1847 saw the formation of the *Anglo-Belgian Company of the mines of the Rhine (Société Anglo-Belge des Mines du Rhine)*, which was interested in the operation of a colliery in Gelsenkirchen. This company was not successful, underestimating technical problems during the shaft sinking and the effects of the German revolution of 1848. The global economic crisis made the enterprise collapse in 1849. As a result a new company was formed, but without British capital. These events also ended the career of the chairman of the administrative board of the Anglo-Belgian Mining Company, Michael Corr van der Maeren.

Michael Corr was born on 05 February 1802 in Dublin or in Slane, Co. Meath. His parents had to emigrate from Ireland for political reasons shortly after his birth, leaving Michael alone. After the end of the continental blockade and the defeat of Napoleon, Michael was able to join his family which had settled down in Brussels in the meantime. Here, Michael at first joined the Dutch army and was afterwards involved in the Belgian revolution of 1830. He became a naturalized Belgian and married a Flemish lady, attaching her name to his own. In the following years Michael Corr van der Maeren became an important person in the young Belgian economy. He worked as a merchant and judge at the commercial court in Brussels. As a convinced free-trader and friend of Richard Cobden, Corr was

engaged in international economic and industrial relations. Given this background, his involvement in Ruhr mining seemed to be of minor importance. Nevertheless, his first involvement in coal mining in the Ruhr made Corr aware of the potential – and risks – of further involvement. The failure of the Anglo-Belgian Company handicapped him for some years. At the beginning of the 1850s he started to look for investors in a new mining enterprise in Gelsenkirchen. This resulted in the foundation of *Hibernia* colliery on St. Patrick's Day 1855.

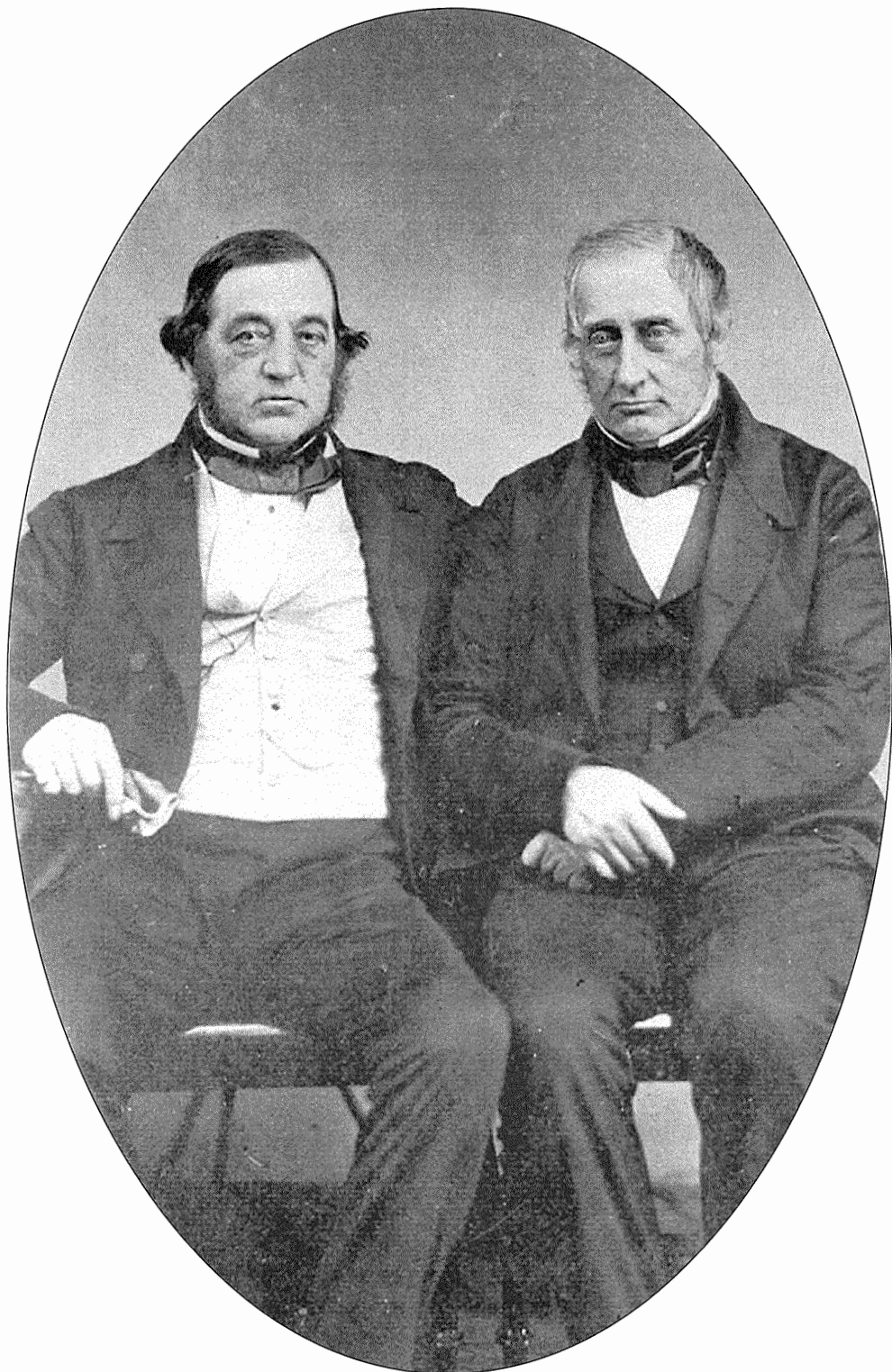
The story of how the investors for this enterprise were found is uncertain. Local folklore later suggested that it was a veterinary surgeon from Gelsenkirchen who rode across Europe to find money for the exploration of the coal fields of his home-town. Nevertheless, the idea that Corr visited the Dublin Industrial Exhibition in 1853 to find investors is much more plausible. The fact that the Prussian mining administration after 1848 was in a phase of liberalization, changing from operating coal mining to inspecting it, made things much easier. The first of the new mining laws, dated 1851, strengthened the position of the mine owners and gave them the responsibility for mine management and the employment of miners, important factors for an entrepreneurial adventure in the Westphalian coal-field.

It is not clear how the group who invested in *Hibernia* colliery was brought together, but it is obvious that neither Corr nor Mulvany had enough money to play a major role in this expensive and risky operation. This role was undertaken by two major Irish Quaker entrepreneurs, James Perry and Joseph Malcomson.

James Perry of Obelisk Park, Blackrock was 'the only genuine proto-tycoon among Irish railwaymen.' He was engaged in the iron business, owned an iron foundry in Ringsend and was interested in coal mining. As one of the directors of the Midland & Great Western Railway he was involved with William Dargan, the central figure in the Dublin Exhibition. It should have been no problem for Corr to contact him and draw out his plans regarding coal mining in Westphalia. In this context it is interesting that Perry offered Mulvany employment with the Dublin and Drogheda Railway Company in 1836. In the same year he gave Mulvany's brother, the architect John Skipton, his first job for the railway and became a regular contract awarder afterwards. Without doubt James Perry had the necessary expertise to judge Corr's mining project.

Joseph Malcomson from Portlaw, County Waterford became the other financial backer. He also was a large-scale industrialist, and was owner of the Portlaw cotton mill and the Neptune iron shipyard in Waterford. More than likely Joseph Malcomson invested his and his family's money because he sensed a good and lucrative business opportunity. However, neither Perry nor Malcomson pursued the aim to secure the coal supply for their Irish enterprises, because British coal was cheap and the traffic routes to Ireland short.

The work in Gelsenkirchen officially started on St. Patrick's Day 1855, and the new coal mine was christened *Hibernia*. One year later the *Hibernia Mining Company* was formed and registered with the mining authority. The 128 shares,



James Perry and Joseph Malcomson

Courtesy of Olaf Schmidt-Rutsch

stipulated by the mining legislation, were divided as follows (with the profession of the shareholders as they were written down in the partnership contract):

Joseph Malcomson, shipowner of Mayfield	40 shares
William Malcomson, manufacturer of Portlaw	8 shares
David Malcomson, private individual of Mayfield-Portlaw	8 shares
James Perry sen., man of private means of Obelisk Park, Dublin	24 shares
William James Perry, private individual of Obelisk Park	8 shares
James Perry jun., man of private means of Kingstown	8 shares
Michael Corr van der Maeren	16 shares
William Thomas Mulvany	16 shares

The new company was very much a family business, following the Quaker practice of raising capital. Joseph and William Malcomson were brothers, David was Joseph's son. James Perry was the father of William James Perry and uncle of James Perry jun. Only Corr and Mulvany were unconnected to the families and were not Quakers.

William Thomas Mulvany became the representative of the new mining company. According to the laws he had to live in Germany. Shortly after the official formation of *Hibernia* mine he and his family settled in Düsseldorf. For him it was a new start after a career in the Board of Public Works in Ireland.

An Irishman of great energy and resource

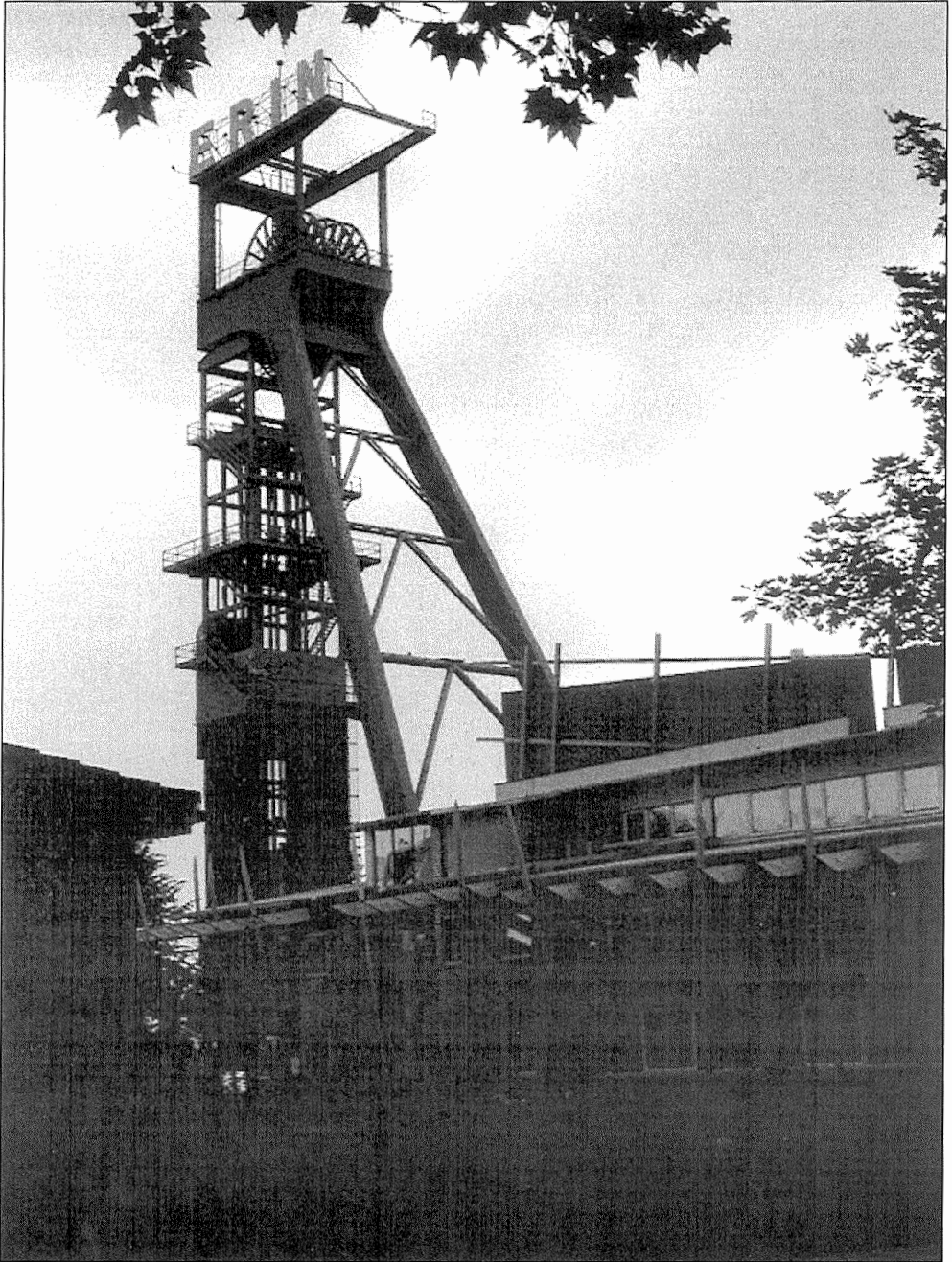
William Thomas Mulvany was born in Sandymount, Dublin, on 11 March 1806. He was the eldest child of Thomas James, a painter, who was engaged in the foundation of the Royal Hibernia Academy and part of Dublin's society:

In conversation he surpassed all the men we ever knew. He was forcible, brilliant, witty, imaginative, eloquent. The most polished language flowed from him without preparation or effort.

William Thomas Mulvany's mother Mary was the daughter of one Dr. Cyrus Field. He grew up in a good and plain family atmosphere and got a good education. The family was Roman-Catholic but his father held a very liberal opinion regarding the question of faith. In 1829 he wrote to his son:

When drinking from the same Source, looking to the same God and resting upon the same Rock, we may all as Irishmen merge all sectarian designations in the harmonized and glorious name of Bible Christians. Whenever that comes to pass our country will prosper, our people will be happy – the voice of political or religious sectarianism will be heard no more, man will no more continue to hate his neighbour for the love of God!

Thomas James Mulvany's profession brought him some success, but it did not lead to prosperity. He had to care for five sons and two daughters. The biographies of his sons showed that the attempt to give them a good education was successful.



Hibernia colliery, ca. 1860

Courtesy of Westphalian Industrial Museum, Dortmund

William Thomas intended to study medicine at Trinity College Dublin in 1823 but had to give up this plan because his father was not able to support him financially. After leaving Trinity College, William Thomas Mulvany worked as an apprentice for two architects, Francis Johnston, who designed the General Post Office in Dublin, and John Semple, who was engaged in the building of several Anglican churches. It is more than likely that during the work with Semple and under the influence of Archbishop William Magee, Mulvany converted to the Anglican faith. His conversion happened from conviction, (later the Mulvany family laid the foundation for a still existent Anglican community in Düsseldorf), but it also opened the way into the civil service.

At the end of 1826 Mulvany joined the Ordnance Survey as a civil assistant. The Ordnance Survey was connected with the army and the employment of civil assistants to this service was the result of differences regarding the efficiency of the survey of Ireland, which started one year before. Under these circumstances William Thomas Mulvany's employment was untenable. He was sent to Coleraine but after just a few weeks left to join the Boundary Survey, which was directed by the well-known engineer Richard Griffith. For the next years he worked as a Boundary Surveyor.

The Assistant Boundary Surveyor not only perambulates and marks the Boundaries of the townlands, &c. but makes a hand sketch showing the detail of the Boundary so perambulated, which he compares with the proprietors' maps; and afterwards he prepares from his notes a general handsketch map of the parish, on each of the divisions contained in which he marks the nature of the Boundary, whether it be by a stream, drain, earthface, wall, &c. And mentions the part of the fence to be measured to.

Mulvany qualified himself in this service and started to look for a civil engineering position. In 1831, he seemed to be at a dead end and was thinking about changing to Perry's Dublin & Kingston Railway, but at this point he had the chance to be employed as a civil engineer with the Shannon commission. The decision to join the Shannon regulation works was the most important in William Thomas Mulvany's career, because he came under the influence of Colonel John Fox Burgoyne and the new system of public works in Ireland.

At this time the character of public works was in a process of changing from a poorly coordinated and limited operation to a system of centralized infrastructural works to promote industrial development in Ireland. Therefore, the founding of the Board of Public Works in 1831 addressed one of the major economic problems of Ireland in the nineteenth century. The regulation of the Shannon was undoubtedly an important task for the new scheme of supporting such industrial and economic development. Nevertheless, this work was carried out by a special commission with John Fox Burgoyne as chairman. It started work in 1831 with an exact survey of the river. Mulvany was engaged in 1836 and employed on the lower Shannon between Lough Derg and the sea. Two years later he was ordered to examine the

project of a canal between the Shannon and the Erne. This project seemed to be very important for the infrastructural schemes in Ireland because it connected the Shannon with the north of Ireland and completed the backbone of the Irish inland waterway system. Mulvany's project was published in 1839. Apart from the fact that the Shannon-Erne-Canal, when realized some years later, became an economic failure, the project was a milestone in Mulvany's career and had an enormous impact on his way of thinking regarding questions of traffic systems. It continued to have an effect during his time in Germany as well.

One of the main aspects of the Shannon regulation, besides the improvement of navigation, was the drainage of the adjacent land. The experiences made during the works formed the basis for an Irish drainage scheme and it was mainly Mulvany's task as Burgoyne's assistant to prepare the material for legislation. Drainage also played an important role in the strategies of the Board of Works. When Alexander Somerville reported the horrors of the Famine years, he gave an impressive description of the problems of inadequate drainage:

The worst of the land is under cultivation, the best lies wet, rushy, and boggy, and neglected because it is wet. Though drainage is easy in most places, it is rarely attempted. At the distance of twelve or fourteen miles from Kilkenny, the land presented such a shocking aspect of foulness and disorder, the top water and springs of one field running into and over the field of another farmer below; and all the surface and spring water of that field, natural to itself, and acquired from above, running upon another still lower, until many hundreds of acres of the best land, that which lies lowest, were abandoned, the miserable tenantry preferring to give the high rent of thirty and forty shillings per acre for the thin, high, and dry soils, verging on the moorland, rather than have the rich soils below at any price.

Cultivating the land was only one aspect of the drainage works, the other one was optimizing water power for industrial use. Robert Kane wrote in his standard work about industrial Ireland in 1845:

The land will be brought into a better state for cultivation, the supply of water to mills may be rendered steadier, and even increased, as the loss by evaporation from a great flooded surface will be obviated, and by the body of water being confined more strictly to the river channels, the navigation of these will be, in many cases, materially facilitated.

In 1842, Mulvany was appointed commissioner for drainage and fisheries. Now he was responsible for realizing the ambitious arterial drainage scheme. In April 1843 he reported for the first time on the progress of the works:

Considering the short time which has elapsed since the passing of the Act, and that from the extensive nature of the measure it cannot yet be

very generally understood, we are disposed to think that a considerable desire is manifested by the proprietors of lands to avail themselves of its provisions, and that as the greater portion of the expenditure under its provisions will be in labour, and, generally speaking, in the execution of simple and inexpensive works, much good will result if the Act be brought successfully into operation. Much of the success must, however, depend upon the liberal feelings and cordiality with which the proprietors and tenants of flooded lands (the persons themselves to derive the benefit from its provisions) shall act in concert with the Commissioners; but as much prejudice, and a very general want of knowledge of the principles and effect of drainage on a large scale, exist in Ireland, and a consequent inability to understand projects for the purpose or to appreciate their results, it is very probable that the progress of the measure will be slow in the first instance, and will depend much upon the successful issue of the first few works undertaken under its provisions.

Mulvany himself was interested in carrying out the drainage work upon a foundation of knowledge and theory:

In the wide range of subjects which the noble profession of the Engineer involves, (to the true and legitimate objects of the profession it is noble) I know of none in which principle, rather than mere rule or precept, should more prevail. I do not mean that rule, or precept, or example should not be known and studied, but that the principles of these rules, &c. should be thoroughly investigated and known, before the rule, precept or example was adopted. Our pursuit, in all its branches, is, and should be, that of practical truth. Nothing will lead more directly to this than the thorough investigation of principle. Nothing leads to more fatal error than the blind adherence to rule, when the full value of the principles which formed it, is unknown or unappreciated. If this be the case in the mere mechanical parts of the Engineer's duties, how much more so, when he has to deal with nature, (whose laws are truth itself) in some of her most subtle operations; as, for instance, in water-works, where the 'truthteller', water, tests and tries the work of man.

Nevertheless, the time for the drainage scheme ran short when the famine broke out. In November 1845 Mulvany reacted to the failure of the potato-crop, realizing that there was necessity for relief works. He pointed out that drainage works were suitable for the engagement of over 33,000 workers:

Works of this class are peculiarly fitted to meet such an emergency as that anticipated, diffusing employment of a simple class, which agricultural labourers can be made easily to perform, through so many parts of the country, bringing it home, in fact, to the very dwellings of

the peasantry, and in their results not only preventing, to a great extent, the recurrence of this evils which called for their execution, but tending to alleviate, if not remove, the sickness and fever which in an undrained country is almost certain to follow a scarcity of food, or the use of bad food.

Though the drainage works played no role in Trevelyan's relief schemes, Mulvany ensured a change in the legal procedures to accelerate the start of new works. During the famine years over 20,000 workers were engaged in drainage works, and were not affected by the closing of relief works in 1847. In 1848, Mulvany, who had become Commissioner of Public Works in 1846, drew a positive conclusion regarding the drainage operations:

On the whole, it appears that up to the present time about 72,000 acres of land have been drained and relieved from liability to injury by floods, independent of the quantity of land to which only partial benefit has been given by the yet incomplete state of works.

The lands so relieved are, generally speaking, some of the richest alluvial soils of the country, heretofore flooded frequently from three to six months of the year, yielding in most instances precarious crops, – in some cases nearly valueless, from the height to which the waters were retained even in summer; whilst in others, – such as lands reclaimed from the sea, or lakes wholly drained, or cut out bogs and marshes, – the extent of land drained, forms an absolute addition to the fertile producing of the country. The whole of these lands, before their drainage, not only afforded little employment for man, but, from their flooded state, were injurious to the health of the inhabitants, and the ripening of crops in the adjacent lands.

Nevertheless, after overcoming the famine it became obvious that the drainage scheme touched the basic problem of the Irish land system. During the famine years a large number of drainage works were started. To give some security to the proprietors, who had to finance the works, the modified legislation of 1846 provided a 'second assent', if the costs for drainage works exceeded the sum of £3 per acre. Indeed, in the early 1850's increasing costs relating to drainage works became evident. Eleven of 121 projects exceeded the limit of £3 and needed the proprietors' 'second assent'. This resulted in an investigation by the House of Lords. Mulvany did not see the seriousness of the situation nor did he realize that he had lost the support of most of the other commissioners. The striving for perfection, which was one of the reasons for the increasing costs related to the drainage schemes, brought Mulvany difficulties – not for the last time in his career.

On 11 June the investigation started. Richard Griffith, who was chairman of the Board of Works since 1850, did nothing to help Mulvany in front of the examination board. He gave a sketch of the development of drainage in Ireland and pointed out that he – as one of Ireland's leading engineers of that time, had differed with

Mulvany on some occasions. This statement was remarkably forthright. Burgoyne tried to defend Mulvany, as did fellow commissioner Thomas Larcom, who characterized Mulvany's work as 'an act of very great patriotism.'

Nevertheless, the commission of the House of Lords decided to reduce the drainage schemes and fault was found with the lack of control exerted by the Treasury over such schemes. Mulvany was not held responsible for incorrect behaviour in office but it was clear that he was made a scapegoat. After 1852 the drainage works were brought to an end. Mulvany retired on pension in 1854 and headed for the Ruhr shortly afterwards.

The virgin soil of Westphalia

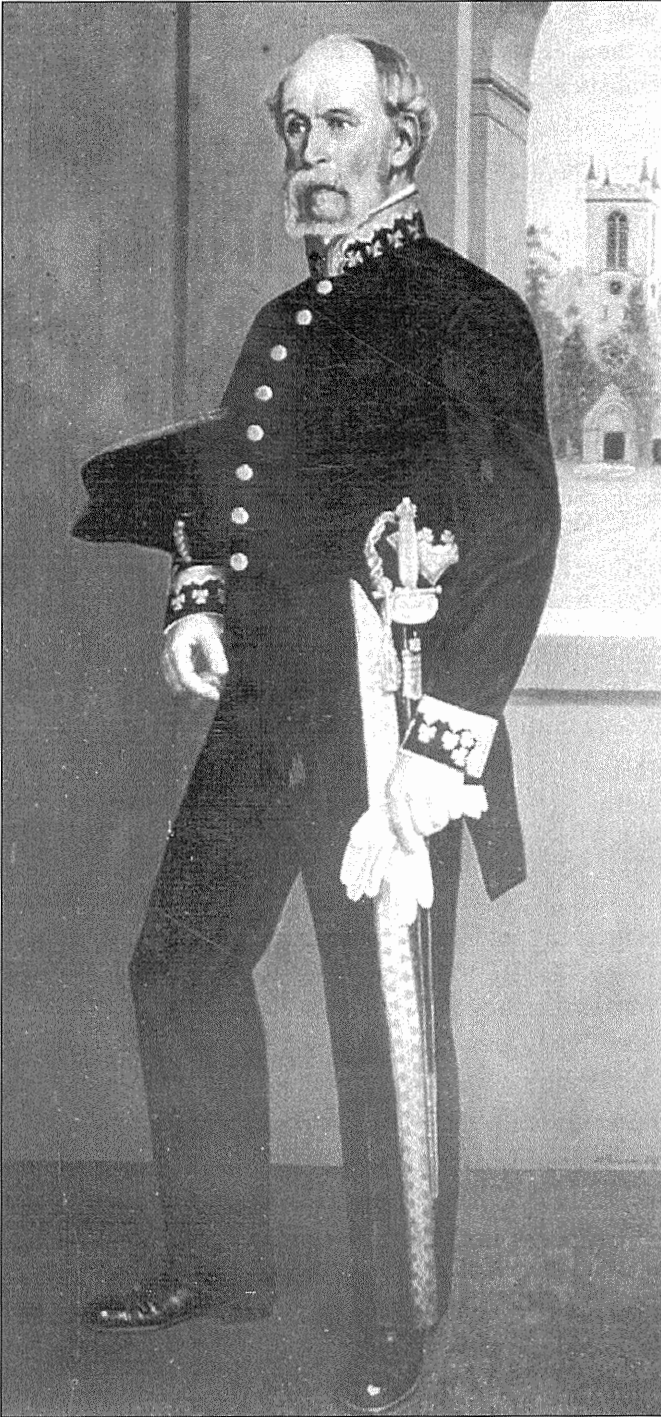
In the summer of 1854 Mulvany visited the Ruhr coalfields for the first time. It was not difficult for him to get information about coal mining. Banfield wrote about the Prussian mining board of this time:

[...] as sources of information, these boards are invaluable. Every stranger has to blame himself if he embarks in any mining operations in Prussia without knowing what he is doing. At these boards he can see the plans of mines, hear the traditions of the country, and obtain an impartial opinion; for all mining officers are prohibited by the official regulations from engaging in mining speculations, and their interference with the mines engenders anything but love on their part for the mining proprietors, or of a corresponding feeling on the part of the adventurers.

Mulvany put it another way:

A year before my moving I had made the first visit here in 1854. I was used to overlook every aspect on the prosperity of a country from my official position in Ireland. I was convinced that these provinces have wonderful riches in all relations. I had looked up the geological map at the mining authority and recognized the area where wonderful extensive riches were under the earth. I had seen how incompletely the channels and the means of transport were and I said of the place: "These people don't understand what they have here".

Mulvany's approach towards his new field of activity was not reckless. He used the summer of 1854 for collecting information about coal mining, not only in Prussia but also in Great Britain. An important question was how the new colliery should be constructed. Compared with the mining industry in Great Britain, coal mining technology in the Ruhr was underdeveloped. There was a need of engineering knowledge and money, but both could only be brought into the area if the mining authorities were willing to support such an enterprise. The signals given to Mulvany were positive and so he started to look for able engineers and technicians to explore the coal fields near Gelsenkirchen. Once again Mulvany proved himself to be an organizer of great talent. He engaged William Coulson, a well known



Mulvany as benefactor of the Anglican Christ Church in Düsseldorf. The church was destroyed during an air-raid in 1943. A new church was built after the war.

Courtesy of Olaf Schmidt-Rutsch

contractor for shaft sinking operations from the Durham coal fields in the north of England. Sixty-three year old Coulson represented a type of self-made engineer typical of the industrial revolution:

... He was not an engineer in the today's meaning. He has never used the drawing pencil. One stick of chalk in his pocket and the board was enough to show his foremen and workers his intentions if not proficient but completely understandable. All that he knew, he knew from practice.

Coulson and his workers were the best choice for overcoming the problems of shaft sinking operations in the Ruhr coal field, because they were familiar with a mode of shaft construction which was not in use in Germany till then. The main problem in sinking shafts was that the coal seams were covered with water bearing strata of around 100 metres thickness. The usual German method of building the shafts in massive brickwork was dangerous, because suddenly occurring water break-throughs were difficult to control and at worst caused the collapse or flooding of the shaft. Coulson's sinkers used the more modern method of lining the shaft with cast iron tubbing segments:

When tubbing is to be put into a shaft, the first thing to be done is to select a suitable stone upon which to lay the wedging or tubbing crib. This bed is carefully levelled and tested with a straight-edge and spirit-level, The wedging crib is sometimes made of segments of oak, but more often of cast iron. [...] A thin sheeting of wood is first laid on the bed, then the segments are fitted together end to end and a sheeting of wood is placed between the joints. The crib is then made secure by driving wedges between it and the shaft side, and also wedging the joints. Great care should be taken in doing this, as it is very important that the centre of the crib, when ready for the tubbing, should coincide exactly with the centre of the shaft.

When the wedging crib is finished the segments of tubbing are sent down and laid upon it until a circle is completed, then the second circle is formed by laying segments on the top of the first, and so on until the water-bearing strata is passed through; then a crib is laid on the last circle and wedged tight up against the stone above.

More than twenty-five years later Mulvany described the progress of the works at *Hibernia* colliery in Gelsenkirchen in short and plain words:

No. I shaft was sunk very rapidly, and without any difficulty worthy of note; and the water feeders, amounting to about 120 cub. ft. per minute, were successfully tubbed back. [...] The shaft was sunk to a depth of 696 feet from the surface, into the coal face; and within about eighteen months from commencement of sinking coalwork was started. Within a short time a production of 600 to 700 tons per day was reached; more than double that of old established collieries in the district.

The success of *Hibernia* mine astonished the local observers and made them look for explanations. Some thought they had found it in the strangeness of the foreign miners. First observations in this direction appeared during the shaft sinking operations already mentioned. One reporter described Coulson's sinkers:

The miners working under the direction of the mentioned technician are Scots mostly. [...] Many of them stand out by their colossal body dimensions and their enormous appetite, too. However, they are untiring workers.

And another tried to explain the high output of the Irish mines in 1859 as follows:

If one asks how it is possible that a so abnormal performance can emerge in the midst of the famous Ruhr pool, then we know only to answer that the same is reached by new, more systematic, forceful and hardworking workers. Whereas the Westphalian miner uses a simple pick in a way as if to make artificial sculptures, the English miners swings a double pick with a force, as if oak trees should be felled.

Nearly ten years later, the comparison between Anglo-Irish and German miners was noticed by Cliffe Leslie too:

But even at coal-mines [...] where the upper miners were English, I was assured that they preferred to have Germans to work with; the preference being founded on the superior docility and sobriety of the Germans. It is curious to find local prejudices stronger than national ones among English miners in the Westphalian coal-field. A north-countryman who works amicably with the Germans will resent the intrusion of a Cornishman. 'They are not Englishmen, they are Cornishmen' said an English miner to me of two poor fellows who had come over on an unsuccessful expedition of work. On the other hand, as regards the effect of Prussian military training and State supervision on the national character, there are occasions on which the superior individuality of the Englishman is conspicuous. A very large coal proprietor in the Ruhr Basin, employing many English as well as Germans, assured me that when an accident occurs the Englishman will do on the moment the best thing to be done, while the German stand at attention waiting for orders, probably given to them promptly by their English comrade. As an individual the English are, if I may venture to express such an opinion, naturally superior to the German. His history down to the last fifty years was a much happier one, his personality was more respected, and, what is no small matter, he was and still is [...] better fed. Among the Germans at the Westphalian mines the type of the Englishman appeared to me by comparison heroic and majestic.

The engagement of English miners in the Ruhr coalfield was one of the reasons for the success of *Hibernia* mine because they brought their knowledge with them and played an important role in technology transfer. Nevertheless, it was only possible because the mine authority allowed Mulvany to do so. At this time the structure of the mining industry in Westphalia was still very traditional, the miners were very proud on their special status, which meant that they had to be engaged and dismissed by the state authorities. The fact that at *Hibernia* nearly all foremen and engineers were English or Irish illustrated, that both sides, Mulvany and the mining authorities, were interested in setting an example for the whole mining industry. At last, *Hibernia* looked very much like an English mine with wooden pit-heads and looked very different from the typical German mines of this time with massive brickwork buildings and shaft towers, reminding one of fortress architecture.

Whereas the sinkers left the mine after finishing the shaft operations, most of the engineers and foremen stayed. For them and their families the first workers' houses were built. They looked strange to the natives because of their curved roofs, showing typical similarities with the Malcomson's workers' houses in Portlaw. The first line of houses stood in Gelsenkirchen besides the railway, looking like a line of passenger train waggons. Colloquially this form of workers' housing estates became known as the *D-Zug*, i.e. 'fast train'. Many of the workers stayed in the Ruhr until death. George Laverick, for example, was born in County Durham in 1836 and was engaged as a pumping engineer in 1855. He retired in 1911 and died two years later.

After the positive experience with *Hibernia* mine, the Irish shareholders around Malcomson and Perry purchased a larger coal royalty in Herne, some miles east of Gelsenkirchen. The *Shamrock* mine was established in March 1856, repeated the success of *Hibernia* and surpassed the coal production of its predecessor shortly after the start of coalmining. A few years afterwards, *Shamrock* was one of the most productive mines in the Ruhr.

This success was mostly identified with William Thomas Mulvany. In 1858 he was elected member of the executive board of the just formed Association for mining interests (*Verein für bergbauliche Interessen im Oberbergamtsbezirk Dortmund*), the sole foreigner in this position. The same year saw major changes in the group of shareholders: Joseph Malcomson and James Perry died. At first, the death of the two main financiers indicated more entrepreneurial freedom for Mulvany, who was still the only one who lived in Germany. Convinced of the high quality of Westphalian coal, in his opinion equal to the British coal, he started a remarkable sales policy for the coal from *Hibernia* and *Shamrock* mines, selling it to the Netherlands, London and even Buenos Ayres. At this time costs of transport and production, combined with reservations against German coal, made such efforts economically unviable. Nevertheless, it made Mulvany widely known in the Ruhr and enhanced the self confidence of the young coal-industry; though it caused problems with the majority of the other shareholders. Moreover, the development of the Malcomsons' business after Joseph's death initiated the process which was to lead to the dismissal of Mulvany in 1864. The blockade of cotton

imports during the American Civil War, the collapse of the Bank of Overend & Guernsey and the withdrawal of capital by family members had an enormous impact on the Malcomsons. Their involvement in Germany became more and more economically important and the dissatisfaction with Mulvany's high-handedness grew. At the same time, the shares of *Hibernia* mine were increasingly diluted and were used as collateral to underwrite business and family liabilities:

William Malcomson	10 shares
David Malcomson	24 shares
George Pim Malcomson	14 shares
Frederick Malcomson	14 shares
Marcus Goodbody	24 shares
James Perry	4 shares
William James Perry	7 shares
Michael Corr	4 shares
Carl Staes	1 share
Clementine Albertine Fanning	1 share
Helene Henriette Charlotte Marie Couvreur	1 share
William Thomas Mulvany	12 shares
Thomas John Mulvany	2 shares
Henry Macnamara	2 shares
William David Latimer	1 share
Anthony George Robinson	2 shares
Samuel William Perrott sen.	3 shares
Samuel William Perrott jun.	1 share
Sir Cussack P. Roney	1 share

Mulvany was dismissed in July 1864, but held his shares until the mines were sold to a German joint stock company, the *Hibernia & Shamrock Bergwerksgesellschaft*, in May 1873, just a few weeks before the crash of the Vienna stock exchange and the resulting economic crisis. Mulvany used his excellent connections to manage the sale and became president of the new company's supervisory board. He held this, more or less, honorary position until his death.

At the time of his dismissal Mulvany was still involved in another mine. *Eblana* colliery was founded in 1860 and was very much an enterprise of the Mulvany family. Mulvany, his brother, his sisters and his son held seventy-seven of the 128 shares, The remaining belonged to Cussack Roney, a Dublin railway entrepreneur, James S. Forbes, who was director of a Dutch railway Company, and Louis Christian Kenig, former business director of *Hibernia* and *Shamrock* mines and the only German. *Eblana* mine developed only after Mulvany was able to set up the *Prussian Mining and Iron Works Company*, combining *Eblana*, now renamed Erin, with two more coal mines and a blast furnace at the River Rhine, creating a combination of coal and iron in 1866. The company was backed financially by Anglo-Irish and German capital, including shareholders like Ebenezer Pike of Cork and Henry Bewley of Dublin.

The new company was expected to be another success, but collapsed in 1877. Apart from the crisis the collapse was caused by major technical problems in developing the mines, an underdeveloped railway system, which made the interchange of material and goods between the company's plants difficult, and an overly optimistic economic forecast. Mulvany retired from active entrepreneurship but still played a major role in the Ruhr's industrial pressure group afterwards.

One of ours

A special event took place in Düsseldorf on St. Patrick's Day 1880. William Thomas Mulvany's 25th anniversary was celebrated by his companions with a formal reception and a solemn dinner. The report of this celebration contained fifty pages and nearly every member of Ruhr business life and several government representatives were there. The Prussian Minister of Public Works and the Chief of the Mining Authority sent congratulatory notices from Berlin. This event signified that William Thomas Mulvany was highly esteemed in the Ruhr area. Friedrich Hammacher, chairman of the Mining Association, put it this way: 'In many questions you were the teaching master, everytime the courageous pioneer.'

Mulvany actually played an important role in the process of forming industrial pressure groups. When he settled in Germany he was highly qualified to observe the infrastructure of his new field of activity. Although the economic situation in Germany was far better than in his homeland, he recognized many points which were at variance to the principles he had acquired during his work with the Board of Public Works. Since working in the Shannon-Erne Canal he was convinced that the transport system played an important role for the national economy. Therefore the means of transport had to serve the common interest more than the individual interests of their respective owners. One of his main arguments was that the interests of producers, consumers and transport companies were identical and supported the growth of the national economy. In fact, the expansion of industrialisation was obstructed by the tariff policy of the railway companies. Mulvany prepared himself for the reduction of the tariffs and put his individual stamp on the discussions, which lasted for years. It just came to an end when the Prussian railways were taken over by the state in the late 1870s:

The great mission of railways in all countries, but especially in extensive countries like Germany, is to eliminate the disadvantages of distance, to increase, and almost create traffic, and manufactures, which could neither exist nor pay their promoters before these means of transport existed. But from these very circumstances of their nature, however controlled occasionally by higher powers, or by competition for a time among themselves, or however contrary to the objects of their original institution, as highways for the public, they become more or less the arbiters of industry, and may be either the levers to raise if well managed, or the barriers to prevent if ill-managed the trade and industry of the countries they connect or traverse.

On the other hand Mulvany promoted the creation of a German inland waterway system to provide alternative transportation for bulk goods. At first the Mining Association provided the forum for his statements, but the one sided orientation of this institution caused major problems and much criticism. In 1871 Mulvany was heavily involved in the formation of the 'Association for the common economic interests in Rhineland and Westphalia'. Locally it became known as the 'Association with the long name'. Mulvany was elected the first chairman and made the association one of the major pressure groups in Germany. He held this position until 1883 when he retired because of increasing deafness. However, Mulvany never managed to master the German language. To take part in discussions he wrote over forty memoranda, some in English, most of them translated into German. These publications covered a wide range of topics, dealt with railway tariffs and custom duties, with coal exports and canals. As the first major miners strike broke out in 1872, Mulvany wrote an extensive memorandum, recollecting his Irish experience:

Some will perhaps question my right to, and criticize my presumption as a stranger in interfering, but on the other hand, I have nothing to do with politics, and treat the question solely as a practical man, with forty-six years experience in the direction of great public works of various kinds, affording employment to many thousands of men in all departments of work, ever earnestly seeking to promote the interests of those so employed and their families, and considering it my greatest pleasure, not being a capitalist myself, to promote new works which would afford employment to and raise the position of the working classes.

Mulvany's statements characterized him as representative of the ideals of economic liberalism. He was convinced that the progress of business and technology would create a better world. So his ideas regarding the further development of transport were typical and in many ways rather visionary:

Mankind is surprised at the results in wars, at the sudden great influx and reflux of money, and the other rapidly occurring crises in money matters, – the sudden flood of prosperity following the establishment of peace – and last not least the rapid spread of enlarged and sounder views on religion and education, (everywhere outside those walls where men wilfully seclude themselves and shut out the light and experience of the world's progress); but the moving and immediate mechanical causes – Steam and Electricity, Railways, Steam-Ships and the Telegraph – with their daily accumulative results on the whole life and business of man, must be palpably plain to all calm reflecting minds.

The Nations which have not yet obtained the advantage of those mechanical means of all progress cannot longer hold their place without them; unknown countries, deserts and wilds must be slowly but

surely opened up and rendered available for mankind and civilization by importing these invincible conquerors, these, in reality, most suitable though slow means of secure discovery and development; and we cannot doubt that ere long the very heart of Africa, which has so long been hidden from civilized man – and which, lying so near Europe and Asia, still shows on the map of the world – a void blank – if not disgraceful to the civilized nations of the world, at least challenging their enterprise and manhood to fulfil the first command of the Creator, will be traversed and made accessible to civilization.

William Thomas Mulvany died on 30 October 1885 in Düsseldorf and was buried at the North Cemetery. His name is still remembered in the Ruhr area, mainly for his mining activities. The establishment of the mines in Gelsenkirchen, Herne and Castrop-Rauxel initiated their industrialization and changed their appearance from little villages to great cities. But in time the mines disappeared. The last one, *Erin*, closed in 1986. But there are still traces: If you walk to the old Goldschmieding Castle in Castrop-Rauxel, you will find a door with a carved harp and shamrocks. It was used by William Thomas Mulvany and his son Thomas Robert as their residence. Also visible is the old *Erin* pithead, now a Business Park with its Mulvany Centre. Nevertheless, the only foundation of the Mulvany family, which exists largely unchanged, can be found near his grave in Düsseldorf: an Anglican church.

Thus Mulvany is still remembered in the Ruhr. Many years ago in 1864 one of his colleagues from the Board of Works, Thomas Larcom, jotted down the following words in the margin of an article in *Freeman's Journal*, reporting the former Commissioner's success and the awarding to him the freedom of Gelsenkirchen:

'I rejoice in seeing the great ability of my friend Mulvany receive though in a foreign country the approbation denied him in his own.'



Harp, shamrocks and Westphalian horse. Carved door of Goldschmieding castle in Castrop-Rauxel. Courtesy of Olaf Schmidt-Rutsch

Notes

T. E. Cliffe Leslie (1870) *Land Systems and Industrial Economy* (London: Longman, Green and Co.), pp. 241-242.

This article is based on O. Schmidt-Rutsch (2003) *William Thomas Mulvany* (Cologne: Rheinisch-Westflisches Wirtschaftsarchiv). See also: K. Bloemers (1922) *William Thomas Mulvany* (Essen: Baedeker). W. O. Henderson (1953) 'William Thomas Mulvany. An Irish pioneer in the Ruhr', in *Explorations in entrepreneurial history* **Vol. 5**, p. 107-120. O'Loan, John (1960) '19th Century Administrators: William Thomas Mulvany', in *Administration* **Vol. 8, No. 4**, p. 315-332. J. Dooge (1997) 'Hibernia im Ruhrgebiet: William Thomas Mulvany & the industrialisation of the Ruhr', in *History Ireland*, **Vol. 5, No. 3**, p. 31-35.

For general information see: W. Kellmann et al. (1990) *Das Ruhrgebiet im Industriezeitalter*, 2 Vol. (Düsseldorf: Schwann). Also useful is N. J. G. Pound (1952) *The Ruhr. A Study in Historical and Economic Geography* (London: Faber and Faber).

T. C. Banfield (1846) *Industry of the Rhine*, **Vol. 1: Agriculture** (repr. New York: Augustus M. Kelley, 1969), p. 47.

Pound, Ruhr, p. 63.

Banfield, *Industry of the Rhine*, **Vol. 2: Manufacture**. p. 55.

T. E. Sève (1864) *Galerie de l'Association internationale pour le progrès des sciences sociales* (Brussels: Bols-Wittouck), p. 55-58. Bloemers 1922, p. 41-42.

Michael Corr's younger brother Erin, who became an artist, was born in Brussels in March 1803. That indicates that the parents left Ireland before the outbreak of Emmet's rising. Dooge, writes that Michael's parents left Dublin only two weeks after his birth: p. 33.

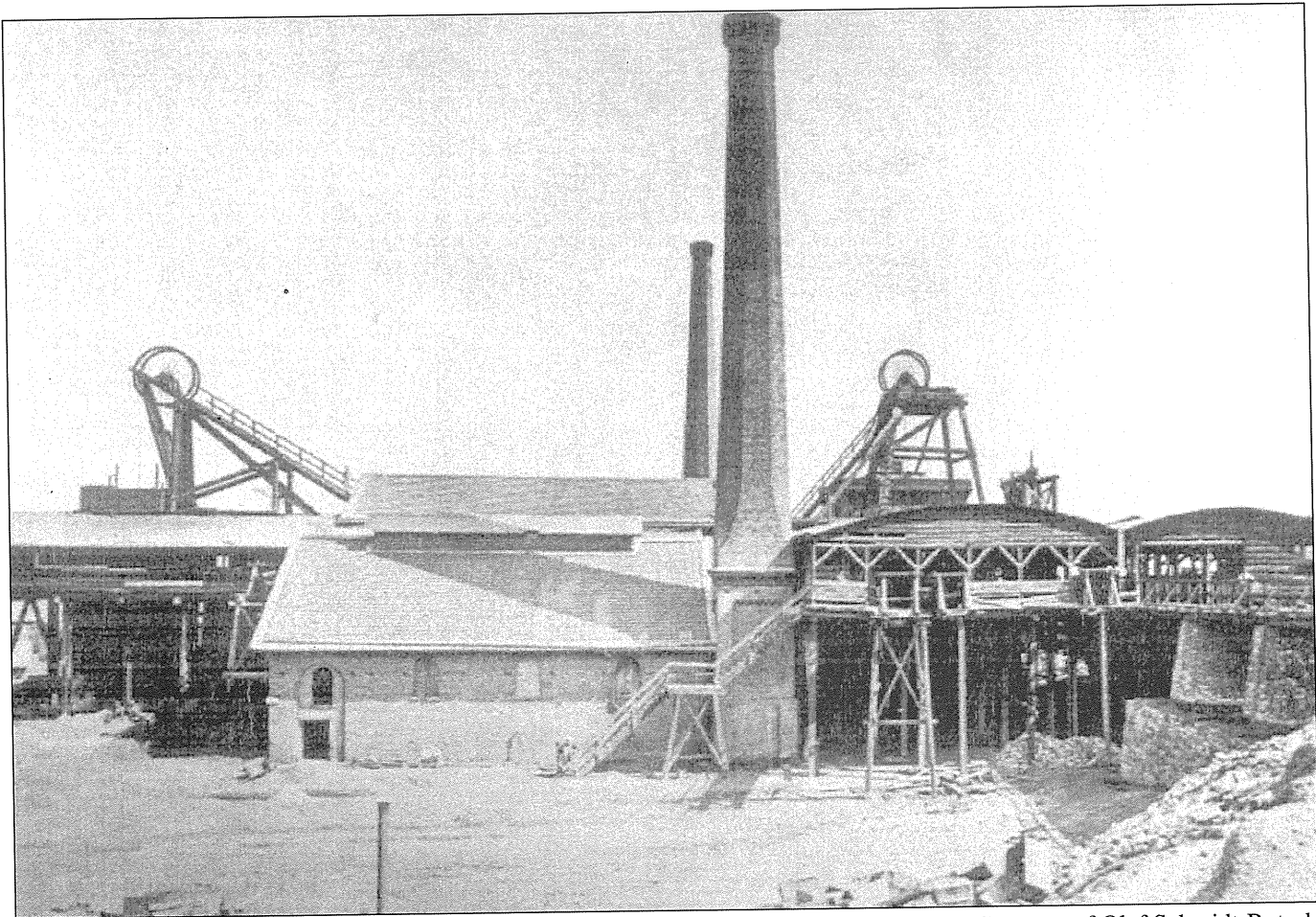
The process ended with the decree of the 'Allgemeines Berggesetz' in 1865 and was one of the most important preconditions for the development of the Ruhr industry.

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A. C. Mulvany (1907) Letters from Professor Thomas J. Mulvany R. H. A. to his eldest son William T. Mulvany Esqre. Royal Commissioner of Public Works Ireland, from 1825 to 1845 and Appendix containing Correspondence with Sir Thomas Lawrence and Obituaries, pp. 69-70.

F. O'Dwyer (2000): 'The architecture of John Skipton Mulvany (1813-1870)', in *Irish architectural and decorative studies* **Vol. 3**, p. 10-75.

For further details see: T. Hunt (2000) *Portlaw, County Waterford, 1825-1876. Portrait of an Industrial Village and its Cotton Industry*, (Dublin: Irish Academic Press). B. Irish (2001) *Shipbuilding in Waterford 1820-1882. A historical, technical and pictorial study*, (Bray: Wordwell), pp. 113-144.



Erin in the Ruhr: The pit-head of Erin colliery in Castrop-Rauxel.

Courtesy of Olaf Schmidt-Rutsch

A. C. Mulvany, Letters, p. 101, quoting an obituary from the *Dublin Monitor*, 28.2.1845.

A. C. Mulvany, Letters, p. 38.

George Francis (1809-1869) became a painter and first director of the National Gallery of Ireland. John Skipton (1813-1870) worked as a well known architect. Richard Field (1811-?) was engaged in the railway business and Thomas John's (1821-1892) career was closely connected with his brother William Thomas. As often in these times we know nothing about the life of the two daughters Eliza Anastasia (born 1807 or 1808) and Mary (1816?-1863).

E. McParland (1969) 'Francis Johnston, architect' in *Quarterly Bulletin of the Irish Georgian Society*, July-December 1969, p. 62-139.

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Alexander Somerville (1994) *Letters from Ireland during the Famine of 1847*. (Blackrock: Irish Academic Press), p. 49.

Robert Kane (1845) *The industrial resources of Ireland* (Dublin: Hodges & Smith), p. 273

John O'Loan (1960) *Origin and Development of Arterial Drainage in Ireland and the Pioneers*. (Department of Agriculture, Ireland, reprinted from the Department's Journal Vol. LIX). J. Dooge (1987) 'Manning and Mulvany: River improvement in 19th century Ireland' in Gunther Garbrecht (Ed.): *Hydraulics and hydraulic research. A historical review*, (Rotterdam: Balkema), p. 173-183.

First Annual Report, Drainage, Ireland. (HC-PP 1843, [466.] Vol. XXVIII), p. 4.

W. T. Mulvany (1845) 'Observations of regulating weirs', in *Transactions of the Institution of Civil Engineers of Ireland*, **Vol. I**, p. 83-93, p. 83-84.

Mulvany, *Regulating weirs*, p. 117.

Sixteenth Report from the Board of Public Works Ireland. London 1848, (HC-PP 1847-48, [983.] Vol. XXXVII), p. 19.

Report from the Select Committee of the House of Lords appointed to inquire into the Operation of the Acts relating to the Drainage of Lands in Ireland, as administered by the Board of Works; and to report thereon to the House; together with the Minutes of Evidence and Appendix. (HC-PP 1852, [10.], Vol. XXVI).

House of Lords Report, p. 96.

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William Thomas Mulvany, Thomas Robert Mulvany (1882): 'On shaft-sinking in the Westphalian district', in *Proceedings of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers* 35, p. 335-363, p. 340-341.

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Fritz Franz V. Ducker (1859) 'Englische Steinkohlengruben in Westfalen' in *Der Berggeist* **Vol. 4**, No. 41, p. 346.

T. E. Cliffe Leslie, *Land Systems*, p. 249-250.

Henry Axel Bueck (1880) 'Die Jubelfeier des Vereinspräsidenten Herrn W. T. Mulvany' in *Mittheilungen des Vereins zur Wahrung der gemeinsamen wirtschaftlichen Interessen in Rheinland und Westfalen* **Vol. 8**, No. 3/4, p. 81-131

H. A. Bueck, Jubelfeier, p. 86-87.

William Thomas Mulvany (1868) *Germany. Progress in coal and iron industry dependant on railways*, (Düsseldorf: Dietz), p. 5-6.

Verein zur Wahrung der gemeinsamen wirtschaftlichen Interessen in Rheinland und Westfalen

William Thomas Mulvany (1872) *The strike of the miners in the Essen division of the Oberbergamts-District Dortmund, Province of Rhine & Westphalia, Prussia. A few friendly words to the employers & employed* (Düsseldorf: Spiethoff & Krahe), p. 3.

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National Library of Ireland, Ms. 7746: 'Irish enterprise in Germany' in *Freeman's Journal*, 5. Nov. 1864

The wreck of the *Mars*, April 1862: – Anatomy of a disaster

By Tom Hunt

Introduction

Swiftly gliding o'er the ocean,
Manned by many gallant tars;
Graceful as a swan in motion,
Sailed that splendid ship the *Mars*.
Not a fear disturbed one bosom,
Each were wending on their way;
Some from home, and friends had parted,
For other lands far, far, away.

All was hope, and joy, and sadness,
Little thought they, ere that day;
Hearts that knew no fear or danger,
Would slumber in the cold dark sea;
'Tis night, and darkness veils the ocean;
But hark! What means that dreadful shock,
These frantic shrieks of wild emotion,
The *Mars* had struck upon a rock.

In vain they cry for help to aid them,
No human hand is near to save;
All, all is o'er, and now for ever,
They sleep beneath the dark blue wave;
No friends around their graves can gather,
Their only torch the silvery stars,
Let hearts and hands unite together,
To aid the sufferers of the *Mars*.

The above lines were written by Mary Hayden from Tallow, county Waterford, especially for the *Waterford Mail* and were published by that newspaper on 12 May 1862. The poem is one of a number dealing with the wreck of the *S.S. Mars* an event that happened on 1 April 1862. The sinking of the *Mars*, in which fifty lives were lost, was one of the worst sea disasters involving a Waterford vessel. The purpose of this essay is to conduct an in-depth examination of the accident by re-constructing the final voyage of the ship, and to identify and profile the crew and the passengers and re-construct as many of their personal biographies as possible and to establish the purpose of their journey on 1 April 1862. The reaction to

the tragedy will be examined and an attempt will be made to establish possible reasons for the accident and serious loss of life.

The S.S. Mars

The *S.S. Mars* was the property of the Waterford Commercial Steam Navigation Company. This company was incorporated on 13 July 1835 with a share capital of £97,200 made up of 972 ordinary shares of £100 each. It was formed by a consortium of the leading commercial families of the city and its hinterland and dominated by members of the region's leading business family, the Malcomsons. Various members of the family had purchased 251 (26%) of the original shares issued.

Table 1 Malcomson shareholding in WCSN Co. in 1835.

Name	Shareholding	Value £
John Malcomson	51	5,100
Joseph Malcomson	40	4,000
Joshua Malcomson	40	4,000
David Malcomson junior	20	2,000
David Malcomson senior	40	4,000
Robert Malcomson	20	2,000
William Malcomson	20	2,000
Thomas Malcomson	20	2,000

Source: National Library of Ireland. *Articles of association of the Waterford Commercial Steam Navigation Company, Ms.*, 11,798.

At the time of incorporation the Malcomson family had established extensive cross-channel trade, especially with Liverpool, where large consignments of cotton were imported directly from America and trans-shipped to Waterford. At this time Waterford merchants were concerned at the exorbitant fees and freight charges demanded by Pope Brothers who held the monopoly on the Waterford-Bristol-Liverpool routes. The Popes had yet to make the transition from sail to steam and the establishment of the new company, with its emphasis on steam propulsion, offered a range of vessels that were technically superior and these provided a regularity and consistency that was beyond the remit of sailing vessels.¹

1 Bill Irish (1997), 'Waterford Steamship Company' in *Decies: journal of the Waterford Archaeological & Historical Society*, No. 53, pp 70-1.

The *Mars* was launched at eight o'clock in the morning of 22 September 1849. According to the technical details recorded at registration, the ship measured 185 feet in length, her breadth in mid-ships was twenty-five feet and with a depth in hold at mid-ships of sixteen feet. The *Mars* was iron framed and plated, with a registered tonnage of 176 tons, schooner rigged with a standing bowsprit.² The christening formalities were performed by Miss Josiah Williams, eldest daughter of one of the trustees of the company.³ Joseph Dunn Lapham, Josiah Williams, John Malcomson and Joseph Malcomson as trustees of the company were the registered owners.⁴

The *Mars* is significant in the history of the Neptune yard where she was constructed. She was the last ship built to the design of John Anderson and the first screw steamer to be placed on the Waterford-Liverpool route. The original plans were for a paddle steamer but these were changed while she was on the stocks.⁵ The *Mail* eulogised Anderson's contribution to the Waterford shipbuilding success story. He had 'earned for Waterford a character that is not second to any other town or city in this country for the splendour of the vessels he has constructed'.⁶ On this occasion the good news of the launch was tempered somewhat by the news that Anderson was about to leave the Neptune yard.

The earliest reference to the Neptune shipyard dates to 1840⁷ and by the end of 1846 the first ship to be completed at the yard, the 172 foot long screw-propelled iron steamer *S.S. Neptune* was launched. Bill Irish in his outstanding work on the history of shipbuilding in Waterford has established the importance of the Malcomson owned Neptune yard to the history of Irish shipbuilding.⁸ Although, essentially the yard built ships for the Malcomson family fleet only, the requirements of the firm were such that all types of vessels were built as they advanced from moderate sized vessels to the largest transatlantic liners, four of which exceeded 300 feet in length. Bill Irish has also clearly shown that any fears that Anderson's retirement from the Neptune Iron Works as articulated by the *Waterford Mail* were without foundation as his successor John Horn was a brilliant and innovative engineer.⁹

2 National Archives of Ireland (hereafter NAI), Revenue 1, Waterford Register of Shipping, 1845-55.

3 *Waterford Mail*, 22 Sept. 1849.

4 NAI, Revenue 1, Waterford Register of Shipping, 1845-55

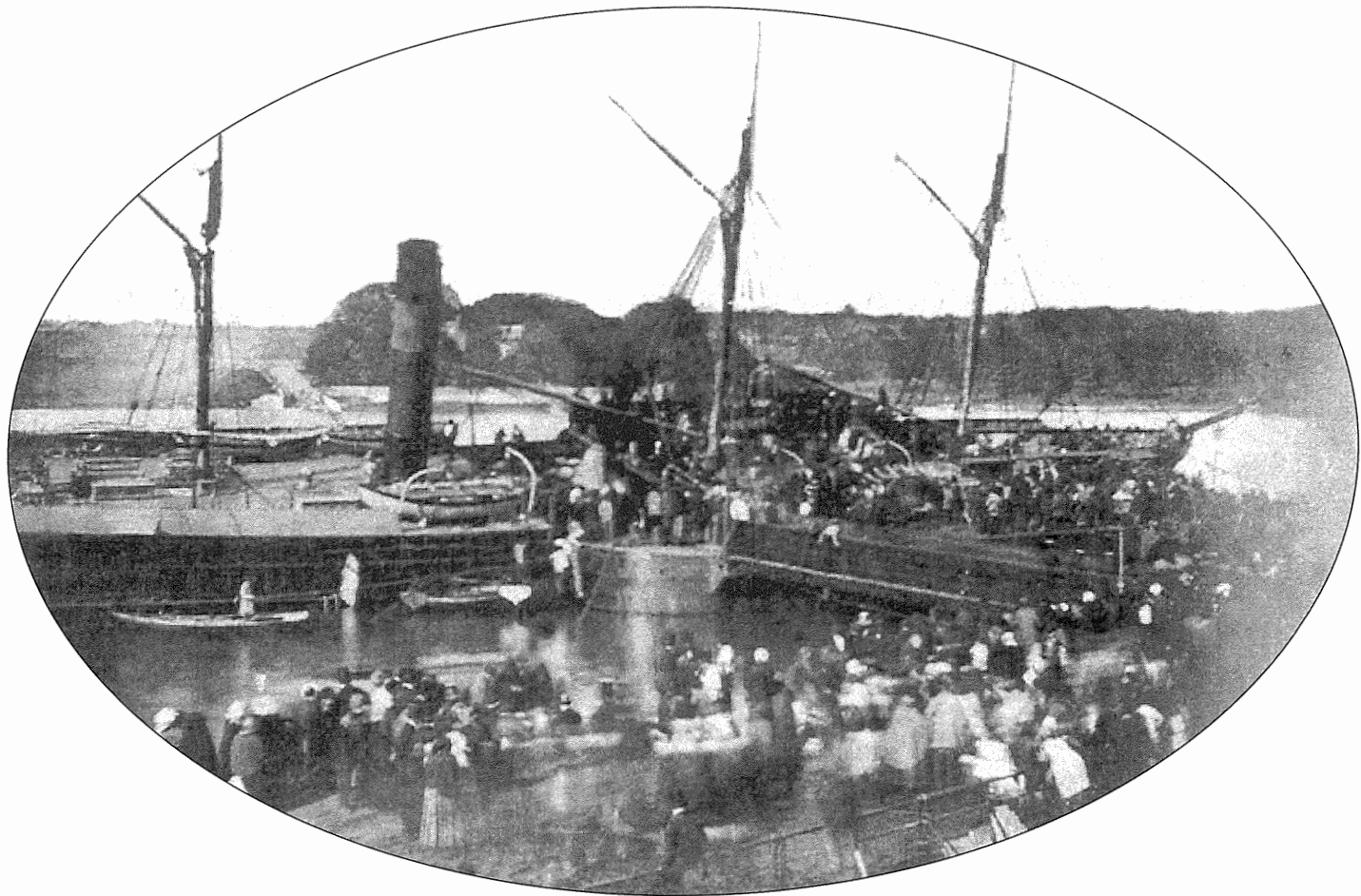
5 N.L.I. *Malcomson family memoir*, p6935.

6 *Waterford Mail*, 19 Sept. 1849.

7 *Waterford Newsletter*, 31 October 1840 lists a consignment of 358 bars of iron and ninety-seven boiler plates for the Neptune Foundry. This is the earliest reference to what was then a repair yard for Malcomson owned and part-owned ships.

8 Bill Irish (2001), *Shipbuilding in Waterford, 1820-1882: a historical, technical and pictorial study* (Bray), pp 224-5.

9 *Ibid*, pp 228-9.



The S.S. Mars (built in 1849) at Waterford in 1859.

Courtesy of Terence Crosby

It was an opportune time to launch a new steamer on the Liverpool route. Traffic in people and agricultural produce was booming following the rupture of the economy and society that followed the famine years. The *Waterford Evening News*, which was conducting an anti-Waterford Steamship Company crusade at the time, suggested in 1849 that the steamer *William Penn* was earning a net profit of £10,000 annually.¹⁰ The 1850s was the great decade of emigration. 38,383 people emigrated from Waterford county between 1851 and 1860 almost twice the number (19,681) that emigrated in the 1860s.¹¹ In addition 78,502 emigrated from Tipperary,¹² 33,748 from Kilkenny¹³ and 26,964 from Wexford¹⁴ in the same period. The likelihood is that the majority of these would have departed from the port of Waterford. The years 1852-54 were the most serious years of emigration when a total of 17,929 departed the county and 73,555 from the three fore-mentioned counties.¹⁵ The *Mars* was responsible for carrying thousands of these emigrants to Liverpool on what was for many the first stage of a journey to a new continent and an improved quality of life. An attempt was made to quantify the importance of the *Mars* as a people carrier by analysing the published emigration data in the *Waterford Mail* for the year 1852. In that year 33,483 people emigrated from the four counties mentioned above.¹⁶ Approximately 7,440 (22 per cent) people departed from Waterford on the *Mars*.¹⁷ Whilst this figure is the most general of approximations and obviously not all Tipperary, Waterford, Kilkenny and Wexford emigrants departed from Waterford, the statistics are useful in that they illustrates the commercial success of the *Mars* and the volume of passengers carried by the vessel within a short time of its launch.

Agricultural trade from the port had also recovered from the vicissitudes of the famine although the paucity of raw economic data has meant that economic historians have not documented the mid-nineteenth century trade from the port in the detail that is available for the early and late nineteenth century. The major increase in steamship tonnage after the mid 1850s at Waterford port suggest a striking increase in the volume of livestock exports from the late 1850s a development that continued more gradually to the early 1870s. High-value, low volume items such

10. *Waterford Evening News*, 23 March 1849.

11. W.E. Vaughan & A. J. Fitzpatrick eds. (1978), *Irish Historical Statistics: population 1821-1971* (Dublin), p.309.

12. Vaughan & Fitzpatrick, *Irish Historical Statistics*, pp 306-7.

13. Vaughan & Fitzpatrick, *Irish Historical Statistics*, pp 276-7.

14. Vaughan & Fitzpatrick, *Irish Historical Statistics*, pp 292-3.

15. Vaughan & Fitzpatrick, *Irish Historical Statistics*.

16. *Ibid.*

17. This number was compiled by totaling the numbers who were reported by the *Waterford Mail* to have departed from Waterford in 1852. The reporting was consistent, with as far as can be ascertained, all departures of the *Mars* recorded but the numbers mentioned were vague with descriptions such as 'approximately', 'almost', 'upwards of' 'in excess of', 'nearly', frequently used. Despite these reservations the figure is useful in that it is indicative of the extent to which emigrants used the *Mars*.

as butter and bacon required small amounts of space so tonnage figures are not a good indicator for these trades. Available statistics suggest a sharp rise in the volume of bacon exports from the mid 1850s onwards, a development that was paralleled by a short-lived increase in butter exports.¹⁸

The cargo of the *Mars*, during her thirteen-year sailing career from Waterford, was typical of an agriculture exporting port as the following sample cargos illustrate. On 24 April 1851, her cargo from the port of Waterford consisted of 1,887 firkins and 2 barrels of butter, 480 cwt. of oatmeal, 50 kegs lard, 23 packs hair, 2 quarter casks of wine, 4 packs of feathers, 100 empty kegs, 46 casks porter, 57 bales (of cotton), 43 bundles merchandise, 142 bales of rags and bones, 33 cases of eggs, fish and poultry, 69 head of cattle and 26 sheep. Her cargo the following week included 1200 bales of bacon, 1137 cwt. butter, 234 cwt. of lard, 5010 barrels of oats, 2697 cwt. of flour, 480 cwt. of oatmeal, 4 cwt. of bread, 123 pigs, 69 cows and 26 sheep.¹⁹

Malcomson's various commercial and manufacturing enterprises provided a ready-made cargo for the return voyage in many instances. The *Mars* was an integral part of the infrastructure of the Portlaw cotton plant and was one of the main vessels used to import bales of raw cotton from Liverpool for processing at the Portlaw integrated plant. Chemicals used in the manufacturing processes and machine parts were also imported via the *Mars*. Production at the plant increased significantly in the 1850s a development associated with increased mechanisation of the weaving process. This section expanded spectacularly between 1850 and 1856 when the number of power looms installed increased by 44 per cent from 626 to 900.²⁰ According to a paper delivered by Dr James Martin to the social science congress in August 1861, 2,284,248 pounds of cotton wool were annually manufactured at Portlaw.²¹ The bulk of the raw cotton for this enterprise would have been sourced in Liverpool the main trans-shipment port for raw USA cotton. Iron plating used in the Neptune Iron Works was frequently carried also. In 1855, 320 tons of iron used in the building of the screw steamer *Nora* was shipped from Liverpool at a rate of 10s. per ton.²² Indian corn, flour, consumer goods such as wine, tobacco, tea, sugar and soap as well as iron goods were also important constituents of the ship's return voyage cargo.²³

Prior to her last voyage, in April 1862, the *Mars* would have crossed the Irish Sea on over 1,000 occasions without experiencing any serious incident. At a time when sea voyages were fraught with hazard, her exemplary record was a tribute to the quality of workmanship and expertise of the Neptune Iron Works and the skill

18 Peter Solar (1992), 'The agricultural trade of the port of Waterford, 1809-1909', in *Waterford History and Society: interdisciplinary essays on the history of an Irish county* (Dublin), William Nolan and Thomas P. Power (eds), pp 502-7.

19 *Waterford Mail*, 28 April 1851.

20 Hunt, Portlaw, county Waterford, p. 52.

21 *Waterford Mail*, 30 August 1861.

22 N.A.I. Business records, Carlow 15, 22/1 p. 32.

23 *Waterford Evening News*, 17 May 1850.

and competence of her captains' and crew. William Clarke, who had served as master on the *Neptune* on the St Petersburg-London route, was the first master of the vessel and Michael James Binnes replaced him in January 1853.²⁴ The veteran Clarke suffered a serious injury that brought about his retirement when 'a heavy sea' struck the *Mars* opposite the Tuskar light on the night of 15 December 1852. Earlier that week, the former first mate of the *Mars* who then commanded the *Camilla*, Captain Newton, was washed overboard and drowned on his way from Dublin to London.²⁵ Captain Burns also had charge of the *Mars*²⁶ and was replaced by the ill-fated Captain Blinman who captained the vessel for a number of years prior to the fatal shipwreck.

The most notable incident that involved the *Mars* happened when she was loaded with cattle at the Quay on 15 June 1859. On this occasion, because of her larger capacity to the *Camilla* she was temporarily transferred to the Bristol route. From the morning of the day of scheduled departure 'the Quay, Mall and Parade, were crowded with animals waiting shipment, and the anxiety of each shipper to get his stock on board in order to catch the market led to their forcing them on board against the wishes of those in charge'. The gangway was rushed and the deck of the *Mars* became so crowded with cattle that the vessel took a sudden list off the Quay. According to the *Waterford Mail* cattle owners then refused to allow them to be driven off the deck but instead they

Took the law into their own hands, and would not allow it, and the vessel then listed towards shore and heaved heavily on the gangway. A few feet of the deck was under water, and the cattle were launched into the water, the tide being full in at the time. They were directed towards the quay, where they were raised by ropes from the water.

At this stage the Marquis of Waterford who was on a visit to the city emerged as the hero. He ordered the men whose cattle were in the water to break down part of the quay to get the cattle ashore more quickly and promised 'to make good any damage'. As soon as the deck had been cleared the ship righted herself but by this stage several head of cattle had been suffocated in the hold.²⁷ The *Mars* had also one notable sea rescue to her credit. On 20 February 1861 she rescued the American ship, the *W.D. Sewell*, that was completely disabled off the West Nash Sands as her masts had been cut away to slow her drift towards destruction and towed her safely back to the King's Road.²⁸

In 1862, the *Mars* was one of at least eleven steamers operated by the Waterford Steam Company out of the port of Waterford. The *Mars* sailed directly to Bristol each Tuesday making the return journey on the following Friday. The

24 Waterford Register of Shipping, 1845-55.

25 Waterford Mail, 22 December 1852.

26 Irish, Waterford Steamship Company, p. 79.

27 *Waterford Mail*, 16 June 1859.

28 Bill Irish (1992), 'Ship-building in Waterford' in *Decies, Journal of the Waterford Archaeological & Historical Society*, No. 46, p. 52.

Shamrock also served the route and left Waterford each Friday and also called at Pembroke Dock. The busiest route for the company was the Liverpool one where the *Gipsy*, *Vesta* and *Zephyr* made three sailings weekly. Separate weekly sailings were also conducted between Waterford and London, Plymouth and Belfast. The company also operated daily sailings to New Ross and Duncannon.²⁹ The *Mars* officially became part of the Waterford-Bristol route in August 1860. In that month she became part of the advertised schedule but had served the port of Bristol occasionally before becoming a permanent feature of the route taking the place of the paddle steamer *Camilla* and the *Shamrock*, although the latter steamer returned to the Waterford-Bristol route.³⁰

The final journey of the *Mars* began on 1 April 1862 when she departed from the port of Waterford at ten-o'clock destined for Bristol. Unfortunately for those involved while on the river she 'lay to' and received on board some passengers who had arrived on the Limerick train. Another man took a car to Passage and boarded there. As she finally exited the Suir estuary on her final voyage on board were thirty-two passengers and a crew of twenty-four.³¹ The cargo typically included processed agricultural produce and live animals. On this occasion it consisted of 186 cattle, 11 horses, 137 pigs, forty-five cases of eggs, twenty miscellaneous packages, twenty boxes of fish and twenty-five bales of rags.³² Many of the cattle were the property of the Slattery firm of Waterford city who reportedly suffered a financial loss of over £1,400, as a result of the disaster.

According to the *Pembrokeshire Herald* both the cargo and number of passengers on board were above average for the *Mars*

For some years past, so large a number of passengers had not taken shipping on board this ill-fated vessel, and even her cargo of live-stock exceeded the average of two years past.³³

This report underestimates the importance of the *Mars* to the cross channel trade of the city at the time. On the first month of serving the port of Bristol, she reportedly transported over 1,600 cattle, over 700 pigs, 1,246 sheep and a small quantity of horses. Apart from the live trade large quantities of processed agricultural produce were also carried.³⁴ In 1862 the *Waterford Mail* began to regularly publish statistics on the exports of agricultural produce from Waterford in a systematic fashion that listed exports carried by scheduled vessel. It is possible using these statistics to quantify the importance of each vessel to the export trade of the

29 *The Munster Express*, 29 March 1862.

30 *Waterford Mail*, 1 August 1860.

31 Various figures have been published for the number on board the *Mars* and this figure has been calculated by examining the several newspaper accounts that listed the names of passengers and crew.

32 *Waterford News*, 4 April 1862, 11 April 1862.

33 *Pembrokeshire Herald*, 25 April 1862.

34 *Waterford Mail*, 1 August, 8 August, 15 August, 22 August, 29 August 1860.

port. In the three months prior to the disaster, the *Mars* had made twelve scheduled outward journeys. The trade figures for the period illustrate the importance of the *Mars* to the live animal export trade. Nineteen *per cent* of all cattle, 17% of the sheep and 14% of all pigs exported were carried on the *Mars*. The amount of processed agricultural produce carried was statistically insignificant by comparison. In general terms it seems that the status of the *Mars* as a carrier of processed produce had declined and its importance as an exporter of live animals had increased with the switch from the Liverpool to the Bristol route.

The journey passed without incident until the final minutes. As night fell the weather became increasingly difficult and in the terminology of the seamen of the time was 'a dirty night'. Joseph Fisher, proprietor of the *Waterford Mail* was in the district at the time of the *Mars* disaster and provided an eyewitness account of the weather conditions at the time. Fisher had travelled from London and boarded the *Courier* at Milford to return to Waterford. The captain decided for safety reasons not to depart and remained at anchor. The fog had become so severe that the lights of Pembroke Harbour could not be seen from one side of the harbour to the other.³⁵

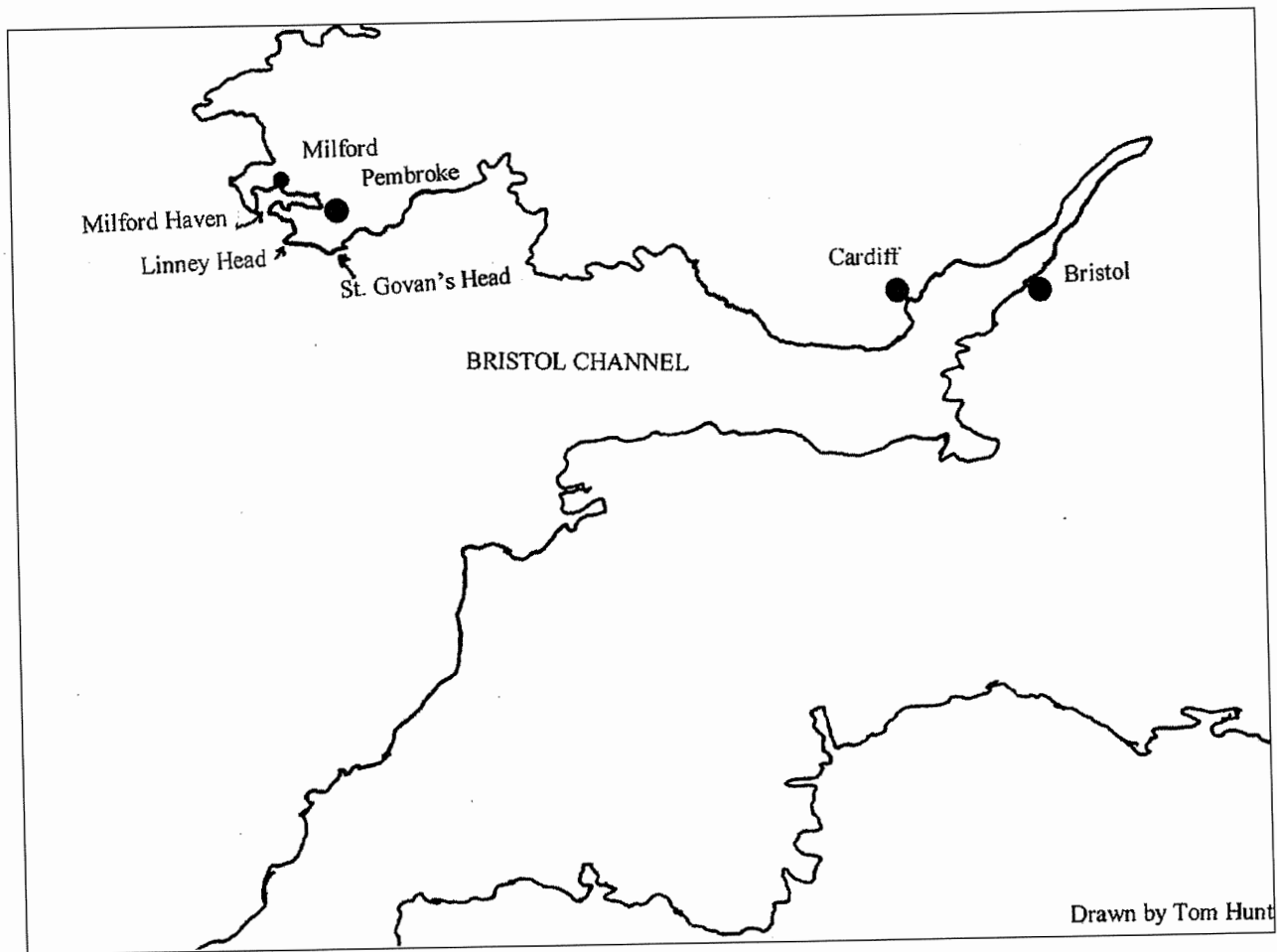
The immediate cause of the disaster is quite clear. At approximately eight-o'clock and ten hours after departing the city in difficult conditions the ship travelled on full steam and with three of the four sails set, the *Mars* struck the Crow Rock, a short distance from Linney Head within seven miles of Milford. The rock was portion of a headland jutting into St. George's Channel.

Breaking news

The port of Waterford went into mourning when word of the accident reached the city at about noon on the following day. The *Waterford Mail*, which was published three times weekly, was the main printed source of up to date information for the city inhabitants on the extent of the disaster. It reported the news of the tragedy almost immediately on 2 April 1862. In a short nine-line paragraph it was reported that the *Mars* had foundered during the night off Linney Head, on Crow Rock, near the entrance to Bristol Channel. It was reported that six persons were saved.³⁶ The next issue of the *Waterford Mail* carried a more detailed report and reflected some of the confusion that was felt in the city following the news of the loss. More detail was available on the identity of the survivors. 'Two of them were brothers by the name of Sutton, who were stokers on board. Two of them persons in charge of cattle and Two (sic) sailors'. These survivors were responsible for a story that suggested a number of others on-board the vessel might have escaped. They were under the impression that another larger boat had had been launched and that they heard the mate calling to them as they drifted at sea. One of the Sutton brothers claimed to have hailed the other boat and was answered by the chief officer. The *Mail* however in its final notes before going to print rejected the story. Almost seventy hours had passed since the accident and as there was 'no intelligence of the boat', it was

35 *Ibid*, 4 April 1862, 14 April 1862.

36 *Ibid*, 2 April 1862.



Map of Bristol Channel illustrating location of places mentioned in this article.

feared 'that she had been upset, and little, if any hope, exists of the safety of any of the passengers or crew'.³⁷ The next issue of the *Waterford Mail* of 7 April 1862 had 'hardly a word of intelligence to add' to their previous report. Again grave doubts were entertained also on whether the second boat had been launched. According to the report the *Mars* had disappeared within ten minutes of the collision and

It would have been almost impossible, in that short interval, to have got any of the larger boats unleashed, or launched; or if she had been got into the water, she could not have had the passengers and crew on board, and been at such a distance from the sinking ship as not to have been drawn down in the vortex.³⁸

This edition of the paper concluded with the hope that the messages of sympathy 'would assume a more tangible shape, in some means being devised to relieve the sufferers'.

In Bristol accurate information on the nature of the disaster was equally difficult to source. According to the *Bristol Daily Post* the event was the 'chief topic on everyone's mouth, the very slightest information being sought after and received with eager interest'.³⁹ The morning after the disaster a rumour that proved equally false to the effect that the Irish steam packet the *Shamrock* had picked up twenty survivors from the *Mars* spread through Bristol.⁴⁰

Passengers

The *Mars* carried thirty-two passengers and a crew of twenty-four. Only seven first class passengers were on board. Captain R.W.J.Russell, an officer of the 6th Bengal Native Infantry, was accompanied by his wife, their one year-old daughter and their nurse. Captain Russell had family connections in the city being a nephew of Mrs. Coombe and had spent some time on his leave with his family in Waterford where he lodged at Mrs Lunham's on the Mall.

Accompanying Captain Russell and family on board was Augusta Coombe, the twenty-six year old daughter of the John's Hill merchant, John Coombe. She was on an intended visit to some friends in Shropshire and an initial report that she was on her way to England to marry was later withdrawn. Another who traveled first-class was Samuel Baird Blest who was a surgeon in the service of the Peninsular and Oriental Company.⁴¹ Dr Blest had spent some time in the Portlaw district, where he had family connections, and was returning to resume duty with his shipping company. These cabin passengers paid 17s. 6d. each, a tariff that included the steward's fee and it also included female attendants for the ladies' cabins.⁴² Also in cabin class was Mr William Belcher from Kells, County Meath, a grazier who

37 *Ibid*, 4 April 1862.

38 *Waterford Mail*, 7 April 1862.

39 *Bristol Daily Post*, 4 April 1862.

40 *Ibid*.

41 *Waterford Mail*, 16 April 1862.

42 *Munster Express*, 29 March 1862.

accompanied the valuable cattle he was exporting.⁴³ The body of Augusta Coombe was one of the few to be washed ashore and the only one to be returned to Waterford for interment where 'the many carriages and mourning coaches in attendance, and the great number of gentry and merchants present fully testified the high esteem and sympathy entertained by the citizens of Waterford for her family'.⁴⁴

Ten males and seven females travelled as deck passengers with the adults ranging in age between twenty and forty years of age. They paid 7s.6d. each for the privilege of travelling from Waterford to Bristol. Eleven were from Tipperary, five from Waterford and one from Killkenny. The age selective nature of the emigration process ensured that these were relatively young people. The average male age of those on deck was twenty-eight and the average female age was twenty-six. The seventeen included five children, all less than five years of age. Two families provided eleven of these passengers. Six members of the Beaver family from Tipperary and five⁴⁵ members of the Hearne family from Villierstown, county Waterford were on board. One of Michael Hearne's children remained behind in west Waterford and was left destitute as a result of the accident. The extended Hearne family had pooled their resources and contributed sixty-five sovereigns to facilitate the emigration of the family a sum the family carried on board with them.⁴⁶ James Keating and William Beston were from Newcastle, county Tipperary, as were James Keyes and a soldier John Rowe who were travelling to Bristol. For Keys this was the first leg of a journey to Australia. He intended to travel on to Plymouth and embark on the *Hotspur* to join his brother in New South Wales.⁴⁷ John Whelan was on his way from Kilmacow to Bristol. All cabin and deck passengers were lost with the exception of Michael Dease who was travelling from Tipperary to Milford and was the only passenger to survive.⁴⁸

There was also a minimum of eight drovers on board 'who left their families quite un-provided for'.⁴⁹ The *Bristol Daily Post* identified Messrs. Cooper, Wiltshire, Kerwick, Brien and Molloy as pig dealers who were on-board and on their way to Bristol.⁵⁰ John Keane was described as 'cattle-man' and was one of those who survived.⁵¹ Kerwick according to the *Waterford News* was 'an honest dealer' from Ballybricken who was survived by a 'a poor wife and six helpless

43 *Waterford Mail*, 4 April 1862.

44 *Waterford Mail*, 18 April 1862.

45 According to the *Waterford Mail* four members of the Hearne family were on board but the *Bristol Daily Post* includes a fifth member of the family, twenty-two years old Mary, in the list of passengers. This is probably correct as when finance was distributed from the compensation fund it was paid to 'Mary, a child left destitute by loss of the entire family and to the grandparents of same'.

46 *Waterford Mail*, 18 April 1862.

47 *Waterford Mail*, 9 May 1862.

48 *Ibid*, 18 April 1862.

49 *Ibid*, 21 April 1862.

50 *Bristol Daily Post*, 7 April 1862.

51 *Ibid*, 14 April 1862.

children, the oldest only eight years of age⁵² The dealer Cooper was reported to have had between £200 and £300 in his pocket and it was planned to send a diver down to the wreck to retrieve the money. The *Bristol Daily Post* reported on 11 April 1862 that a man had been sent to Waterford to make arrangements for the dive.⁵³

The crew

A crew of twenty-four worked the *Mars* on its last voyage. Given the gender specific nature of the employment available on board nineteenth century ships it was a male dominated one. The only one female crewmember on board was the stewardess Mrs. Way. Eleven of the crew resided in Waterford including Captain Blinman. Villages in the Bristol area provided ten of the crew. Six were natives of Hotwells and four were from Pill. Pill was the native village of Captain Blinman who had a policy of selecting members of the crew from his own locality.⁵⁴ Another, Thomas Connors was from Carrick-on-Suir and one was from Templeback, also in the Bristol district.

The employment structure of this crew was typical of the time. As well as the captain it included seven seamen, six firemen, first and second engineers and first and second mates, a steward and stewardess, a cabin boy, a crane-man and a carpenter as well as a cattleman. The Waterford natives on the crew would have attended the maritime school in the city where they would have received their basic training and obtained certificates of competency at the local marine boards examinations held in Cork city.⁵⁵ A factor which may have had some part to play in the eventual disaster was the fact that the ship was travelling without its regular first mate as the regular holder of the post was taken ill shortly before departure and missed the voyage necessitating the promotion of the second mate to the position.

The Survivors

Six individuals survived the disaster. These were the Sutton brothers, John and Patrick from Waterford who were firemen, two seamen from the Bristol area, Joseph Cross and James Case, a cattleman named John Keane and a deck passenger named Michael Dease. The story of the small boy who was reported to have crept into a lifeboat, seasick and frightened and who awakened to find his boat swept from the steamer's deck is just that-a story without foundation.⁵⁶ All except Dease provided eyewitness accounts. The accounts of the voyage and accident are essentially similar. All are in agreement that nothing unusual happened on board from the time the ship left the port of Waterford until striking the rock shortly after eight o'clock. All testify to the diligence and watchfulness of Captain Blinman

52 *Waterford News*, 4 April 1862.

53 *Bristol Daily Post*, 11 April 1862

54 *Bristol Daily Post*, 4 April 1862.

55 *Waterford Mail*, 16 January 1858.

56 D. B. McNeill (1969), *Irish passenger steamship services, volume 2, South of Ireland*, Devon, p. 91.

during the course of the voyage. He spent most of the journey on the deck and according to the Suttons and Case was on the bridge at the time of the collision. All are in agreement on the weather conditions characterized by a fresh breeze and 'thick weather'. Joseph Cross saw no lights from the time he rounded Hook Tower. Shortly before striking the rocks the captain was heard to give the 'hard a port' order and soon after orders were given to 'reverse the engines' at full speed. The engines were then reversed five or six times, the vessel reversed about forty yards and stopped. On reversing water poured into the vessel and according to the survivors it sank within ten minutes. John Kane, the cattleman who survived gave an account that was published in the *Bristol Daily Post* and differed significantly to the others regarding the position of the captain at the time of the collision. In Kane's account, Blinman left the bridge about fifteen minutes before the collision and was replaced by his nephew Edwin Marshall, the acting first mate, 'who ascended the bridge and kept the watch'. In the words of Keane 'the collision was a tremendous one and caused the utmost consternation amongst all on board' resembling 'two iron mountains forced violently together'.

The ship trembled from end to end, and then all was confusion, the passengers, and all appearing terrified. Marshall, then called out 'Hard a port', and ran at once aft to the cabin. The captain, who had felt the shock, met him in the companion stairs, and asked him what he had been doing seized him angrily by the throat. One of the passengers (Belcher) interfered and he then let Marshall go, and gave orders to reverse the engines, and haul down some sails. By this time the sea commenced breaking heavily over the side of the ship, and ran down into the engine-room, putting out the boiler fires. The vessel began to fill very fast forward, and some of the people exerted themselves to get the lifeboat lowered.⁵⁷

He then offers a very plausible reason why this was not done and why more lives were not saved. He claims he heard the carpenter claim that the lowering rope had been accidentally cut and the lifeboat could not be lowered. At this stage, the two firemen and the two seamen had lowered a small boat over the larboard quarter of the *Mars*. Keane then claimed to have jumped into the water between the boat and the vessel and succeeded in grasping hold of the boats gunwale by one hand and dragged himself on board to safety.⁵⁸

The survivors then spent a harrowing night at sea in the small boat, shocked, exposed and isolated in the fog. They were without light, food, rudder and the seamen faced the added hardship of being lightly clothed. Their tiny craft was tossed violently about and the risk of capsizing was increased by the presence of over one-hundred drowning cattle some of whom swam about and occasionally moved extremely close to the small boat. Case, one of the seamen lashed an oar through the rudder hole and provided a makeshift steering device. The occupants of the

⁵⁷ *Bristol Daily Post*, 11 April 1862.

⁵⁸ *Bristol Daily Post*, 11 April 1862.

little vessel passed 'the long hours of the night, tossing about at the mercy, or almost at the mercy, of the elements, not knowing where they were, wholly ignorant of the course which it would be best to take'. They suffered greatly from exposure to cold and wet and in the course of the night the small boat shipped a great deal of water. At one point during the night the men considered rowing the boat on to a rock but this was rejected. The survivor Keane cut down a boot and he and the young boy on the boat bailed out the water. Cold and exhausted at daylight they succeeded in landing at St. Gowan's Head. They made their way to the house of one of the coast-guard assistants where help was given.⁵⁹

As is the case with several major disasters this one produced examples of unusual coincidences, lucky escapes and unfortunate loss.⁶⁰ A cattle dealer who was late for the Waterford quay boarding took a car to Passage and unfortunately boarded the vessel there. The first-mate took ill shortly before the *Mars* departed and was unable to make the voyage.⁶¹ The long serving stewardess of the *Mars* had retired from duty shortly before the final voyage but her son-in-law George Hallett was the steward on the ill-fated voyage.⁶² By an extraordinary coincidence Captain Blinman's father had suffered a similar fate several years previously. In 1831 he perished when his ship the *Frolic* was wrecked on the Nash Sands.⁶³ The Hearne family had reportedly missed the Plymouth sailing.⁶⁴

Reaction to the disaster

Following a 'numerously signed requisition' the Lord Mayor of Waterford, W. Johnson, convened a public meeting at the Town Hall, on Friday, 11 April 1862, for the purpose of expressing sympathy with the bereaved families and 'adopting such measures as might substantially alleviate their distress'.⁶⁵

At the meeting a committee was established to collect subscriptions and make arrangements for collections in other parts of the country and in the United Kingdom. Collectors were appointed in London, Liverpool, Glasgow, Ardrossan, Plymouth, Milford, Dublin, Cork and Limerick.

A separate sub-committee was formed to distribute the funds to the widows and orphans. A sum of £646 was immediately pledged at the meeting with the steamship company subscribing £300 and Messrs Malcomson £200.⁶⁶ Within ten

59 *Ibid*, 7 April, 11 April 1862.

60 Another unusual coincidence is that 141 years later a namesake of one of the lost crew-members was drawn to the *Mars* story. Thomas Hunt, from Hotwells, Bristol and no relation was one of those who lost his life in the accident!

61 *Waterford News*, 4 April 1862.

62 *Ibid*, 11 April 1862.

63 Ted Goddard (1983), *Pembrokeshire Shipwrecks* (Swansea) p. 84: Tom Bennett (1982), *Welsh Shipwrecks*, Volume III (Haverfordwest) p.15.

64 *Waterford News*, 18 April 1862.

65 *Waterford Mail*, 14 April 1862.

66 *Ibid*.

days the sum subscribed had reached £958 3s,⁶⁷ and by 24 April £1,408 7s. 6d. was collected.⁶⁸ On 9 May, £2,065 16s. 6d. had been received at the Lord Mayor's office, and by the end of the month subscriptions amounted to £2,832 19s. 2d.⁶⁹

The dependents of those lost were left destitute and without means of support, despite a company infrastructure that was in place to cater for certain personnel in the event of such an eventuality. The paternalistic Malcomson family enthusiastically promoted the self-help concept in their commercial enterprises. Self-help schemes worked on the principle that the Malcomson firm supplied the social infrastructure that would benefit their employees but these in turn were expected to make some contribution to cover operating expenses. These schemes were at their most effective in the health and education provision made for their cotton mill employees at Portlaw.⁷⁰ Unfortunately for the dependents, the eligible members of the crew of the *Mars* did not avail of a scheme in place for ships' captains and mates. An arrangement was in place at the Waterford Steam Company and on all Malcomsons' steam ships whereby captains and mates were encouraged to take out insurance cover and to encourage this the firm paid half the cost of any insurance cover purchased. On this occasion the crewmembers had not availed themselves of the facility.⁷¹

Public reaction to the disaster was given added impetus when the news that a widow and her orphan applied to the workhouse for outdoor relief on the Wednesday prior to the meeting. The *Waterford Mail* published another story concerning the widow of Patrick Corcoran the publication of which was designed to have emotional impact. This woman had four children and was expecting her fifth child in the near future. Therefore

The relatives of this poor woman were afraid to tell her of the accident on the arrival of the melancholy news, and she went on expecting the return of her husband on the usual day for the return of the *Mars*, and had his breakfast ready, his boots cleaned and his clothes prepared, and watched the arrival of the ship. At length her relatives had to break the melancholy news to her, and the poor widow was overwhelmed with grief.⁷²

Stories such as these helped solicit support for the dependents as did the weekly publication of the subscription lists in the local press.

The emotional impact of the disaster on the extended business community was evident at the meeting when a letter was read from the meat and poultry salesmen in the live and dead markets of London. These Newgate Street based business men

67 *Ibid*, 21 April 1862.

68 *Ibid*, 25 April 1862, 28 April 1862,

69 *Munster Express*, 10 May, 24 May, 31 May 1862.

70 Tom Hunt (2000), *Portlaw, County Waterford, 1825-1876: portrait of an industrial village and its cotton factory* (Dublin), pp. 29-45.

71 *Waterford Mail*, 18 April 1862.

72 *Ibid*.

requested 'an account of the necessities of the families of the poor men through their own pastors – and how best they can best be alleviated, that they may properly and judiciously do their duty'.⁷³ Some of the produce on board was destined for sale at the London markets. Members of this group also led a deputation to the Lord Mayor of London after which he 'commended the widows and orphans to public consideration' and requested that donations be forwarded to the head offices of the National Bank at Broad Street, London where the directors of the bank had made arrangements for the receipt of same.⁷⁴ The Lord Mayor of Dublin subscribed and made his offices available for receiving donations. The Lord Mayor of Bristol, John Hare, was a less enthusiastic in his support of the cause claiming that the citizens of Bristol were suffering from collection overload. He contacted Fisher and informed him that they were doing 'something for the sufferers of the *Mars* in Bristol but pointed out that 'the Bristol people have lately had such a number of calls on their pockets, that they are almost drained dry! ... I never remember such a time for subscriptions of all sorts'.⁷⁵

The total sum raised was £2,858 1s. 8d. Final decisions on the distribution of the funds were made on 2 June 1862.⁷⁶ Whether the response to the appeal matched the expectations of the organisers is debatable. Support for the scheme was not total within the Waterford business community. There was some in the city who felt that compensation for the disaster was the responsibility of the steamship company.⁷⁷ Joseph L. Richardson, who spoke at the launch of the appeal hoped that several thousand pounds would be collected and highlighted the response to a similar disaster in the north of England as the template against which to measure the reaction of the people of Waterford. On that occasion 'a calamity by which 200 persons died, it was believed it would require at least £17,000 to assist the relatives of the deceased, but when the public sympathy was appealed to, there was no less a sum than £70,000 subscribed'.⁷⁸

An analysis of the published lists of subscribers⁷⁹ to the fund reveals that it was the members of the merchant and marine community who were most supportive, a support that was drawn from a wide geographic base. Over 60% of the funds raised were sourced from outside the Waterford (including Kilkenny, Tipperary and Wexford)) region. London merchants and traders and in particular the Newgate street market meat and poultry salesmen delivered on their promise 'as men of business who thoroughly understand what suffering and necessity is ... properly and judiciously' carried out their duty.⁸⁰ Approximately £722 or 25% of the total

73 *Ibid*, 14 April 1862.

74 *Ibid*, 18 April 1862.

75 *Ibid*, 21 April 1862.

76 *Waterford News*, 17 October 1862.

77 *Waterford Mail*, 14 April 1862.

78 *Ibid*.

79 *The Waterford Mail* 11 April, 18 April, 21 April, 26 April, 28 April, 2 May 1862; *The Munster Express* 10 May, 17 May, 24 May, 31 May 1862.

80 *Waterford News*, 14 April 1862.

subscribed amount originated in London. Despite the initial reluctance of the Lord Mayor, the news of the disaster impacted sharply on the consciousness of the Bristol business community and £392 was forwarded from that city to the fund. Liverpool, Manchester, Glasgow and ports serviced by the Waterford Steamship Company all contributed. Contributions sourced from Irish cities were headed by subscriptions from Dublin where in excess of £150 was collected. Finance raised in Cork and from steamers operating from that port was next in significance. Subscriptions were also received from Belfast, Tralee and Limerick.

The amount collected in Waterford (£1,152) equated to approximately 40% of the total. The £300 contribution of the Waterford Steamship Company and the £200 donation of Malcomson Brothers accounted for forty-three per cent of this leaving a sum of approximately £652 given by the concerned citizens and members of the business community of the city. The firms of A & F. M. Denny, J. S. Richardson, J. D. Lapham & sons, E & G Courtenay and J.P. Graves and company headed this group. Also included were donations from the Catholic and Protestant clergy as well as the chief Quaker community members of the city; the main banking establishments donated as did the workers of the Neptune Iron Works, the city's main administrative figures and the officers of the 36th army regiment based in Waterford. Captains and crewmen of steamers working from Waterford and London and shipping companies were also to the forefront in organizing donations. These included the captains and crew of the steamers *Gipsy*, *Vesta*, *Courier*, *Malakoff*, *City of Paris* and the *Holyrood*. Steamship companies also supported the cause. The Cork Steamship Company and the City of Dublin Steamship Company each donated £50, the Dublin and Liverpool Company contributed £30 and the British and Irish Steam-packet Company £20.⁸¹ Reflecting the global dimension of the Malcomson business empire a £2. contribution was received from Captain Wiley of the barque *Prairie Bird* sailing out of Charlestown, South Carolina.⁸²

Individual contributors included many that were prominently connected to the Malcomson commercial empire both as business associates and those in a managerial capacity. A £25 donation was received from the London financial house of Overend, Gurney and company, one of the banking houses used by the multinational conglomerate. The bankruptcy of this company in 1866 is sometimes suggested as a contributory factor to the Malcomson collapse in 1876.⁸³ In 1861 the Malcomson brothers began their great mansion building phase to the design of John Skipton Mulvany the great Dublin Victorian architect.⁸⁴ His name appears amongst the list of subscribers as the contributor of £5.⁸⁵ A key figure in the organisation and the collection of subscriptions in London was William Horn, brother of John Horn, the managing superintendent at the Neptune Ironworks in Waterford

81 *Munster Express*, 10 May 1862.

82 *Ibid*, 24 May 1862.

83 *Irish, Shipbuilding in Waterford*, p. 136.

84 Frederick O'Dwyer (2000), 'The architecture of John Skipton Mulvany (1818-1870)' in *Irish Architecture and Decorative Studies* (Dublin), pp 58-64.

85 *Waterford Mail*, 18 April 1862.

and one of the most influential individuals in Irish shipbuilding during the third quarter of the nineteenth century.⁸⁶ William Horn also had an involvement in the world of ships and shipping as the sum of £203. 10s. 4d that he forwarded to his brother in Waterford included donations contributed by the captain and crew of eighteen different steamers.⁸⁷

The Portlaw cotton plant was the most visible element of the Malcomson multi-faceted business empire and individuals associated with the plant and the purpose built industrial village supported the fund. Robert Shaw was the manager of the cotton plant and a partner with the Malcomson family in this element of their business. His contribution of £20 was one of the largest donations by any individual to the fund. Factory doctor, James Martin (£1) and accountant Christopher Barker (£2) were also listed.⁸⁸

Elite patronage was a crucial element of the support structure of nineteenth century social organizations. Sporting and cultural events and organisations, church and school renovation and building funds, funds for the alleviation of poverty and distress all counted on subscriptions from members of elite county society for their finance. Aristocratic and gentry subscribers to the relief fund of the *Mars* was limited and dominated by those who held the important positions in local and national administration. The subscribers were headed by the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, the Earl of Carlisle and also included the Earl of Bessborough (Lord Lieutenant of county Carlow), Lord Stuart de Decies, at the time Lord Lieutenant of Waterford, Lord Carew, the Honourable Colonel W. F. Tighe (Lord Lieutenant of county Kilkenny), Sir Robert Paul, the Duke of Devonshire, Sir Benjamin Morris (Deputy Lieutenant), and the High Sherriff of county Waterford, Mr. Charles Moore Smith.⁸⁹

An element of closure was achieved on this aspect of the tragedy when the funds were allocated to the widows, orphans and others made destitute by the loss. The sums finally allocated were based on the circumstances and position in life of the survivors and were decided by a special relief sub-committee of John Horn, Abraham Denny and William Joyce that was established 'to investigate the titles to relief of the several applicants and after a very tedious and very minute enquiry' the final report was issued.⁹⁰ The widow of the ship's captain and his extended family were the chief beneficiaries of the fund. Captain Blinman's widow was awarded a sum of £200 while his mother and niece received £100. The wife of the first engineer Peter Duncanson was awarded £150 and her four children £30 each. £250 was granted to the Ballybricken widow of John Kerwick and her five children. The widow of Patrick Corcoran, the ship's carpenter from Ferrybank, was awarded £75 and her four children £20 each. A similar amount was granted to the family of James Maher, one of the firemen on board the ship. In total £1,942. 10s. was

86 *Irish, Shipbuilding in Waterford*, pp 145-170.

87 *Waterford News*, 24 May 1862.

88 *Waterford Mail*, 20 April 1862.

89 *Ibid*, 23 April 1862.

90 *Waterford News*, 17 October 1862.

distributed to dependents in the Waterford region and a sum of £815 was transferred to Bristol for relief of distress in that city.⁹¹ In addition to the monetary compensation, Joseph Fisher made a representation to the commissioners of emigration, that was positively received, on behalf of Elliza Keys. He requested the commissioners to grant her a passage to Australia in lieu of her brother who was lost in the *Mars* disaster.⁹²

Conclusion

A number of factors combined to bring about the disaster of April 1862. In the absence of a Board of Trade inquiry it is only possible to speculate on the exact reasons as to why the *Mars* ran aground. A suggestion in the *Waterford Mail* that the accident was connected to unusual tidal conditions present when the ship set sail from the city may have some validity. The *Mars* normally set sail from the city at high water and reached the entrance to Bristol Harbour at low water. As a consequence the ship did not normally experience any drift to the north or west from the flood tide. On 1 April 1862 the *Mars* left Waterford at low tide and was thus caught in the flood tide a considerable distance from the Welsh coast and this may have influenced the course of her voyage. The allowance made by Captain Blinman to counteract the drifting of the vessel were insufficient and the *Mars* was on a course much further north than anyone realized.⁹³

The captain and crew were totally unaware of the fact that the ship had drifted seriously off-course with the heavy fog on the night camouflaging this fact. The sailors who survived did not see the light on the Smalls nor those at the entrance to Milford Haven. The captain obviously believed that their position was much further south so they pushed full steam ahead with three sails fully set.⁹⁴ The fact that the *Mars* was on full power with three of her sails set and travelling at full speed at the time of the collision does not indicate any recklessness on the part of Captain Blinman. This was a technique that was commonly used at the time to maintain stability in difficult weather conditions. Rather, it indicates how hopelessly oblivious was Blinman on the ship's location and impending danger. This is further emphasized by the decision of the captain of Milford-Waterford steamer to remain in port because of the density of the fog and the captain of the *Juverna* on her passage from Waterford to Bristol steamed at quarter speed.⁹⁵ As a captain Blinman was conservative in his approach to managing the ship. He was quite prepared to seek refuge when the occasion demanded and when he felt the safety of the ship and her passengers were compromised. In August 1860, he took refuge in Milford when he feared that the lives of four valuable horses he had on board for the Earl of Bessborough were endangered. While there, the cabin passengers persuaded

91 *Ibid*, 17 October, 1862.

92 *Waterford Mail*, 9 May 1862.

93 *Waterford Mail*, 14 April 1862.

94 *Ibid*, 7 May 1862.

95 *Bristol Daily Post*, 11 April 1862.

him to remain an additional night at anchor in order to give them an opportunity of viewing a section of the navel fleet.⁹⁶

It is probable that the only boat launched on the night of the disaster was the one on which the six survivors made their escape. The fact that none was ever washed ashore gives credence to this view. Reference has already been made to the evidence of survivor Keane who offered a reason as to why the main lifeboat was not launched. Another explanation is also possible. It was customary when steamers went to sea that the boats were lowered on the deck and secured in position by ropes. Untethering the boats and lowering them was an operation that took some time and as the *Mars* seems to have gone down within minutes of striking the Crow Rock, in the chaos and panic that followed the collision, such an operation may not have been possible.

There was also the possibility of mechanical malfunction of a vital piece of equipment that may also have been a contributory factor to the disaster. The patent log was used throughout the voyage on the orders of the captain.⁹⁷ This devise essentially measured a ship's speed and this enabled an accurate calculation of position. The version of patentlog aboard the *Mars* was known as Massey's log and was the one that was extensively used at sea throughout the nineteenth century since its invention in 1802. The log was towed at the end of a log-line and had to be hauled aboard to take a reading. It was renowned for its impressively accurate results.⁹⁸ Mitchell's *Shipping Register* published an account of the disaster in which James Case claimed that they believed that they were twenty miles from the coast when they struck the rocks and that they could only account for the catastrophe if the compasses were out of order.⁹⁹

The decision of the captain to order the reversal of the engines proved to be in hindsight an error of judgment. The bottom plates of the *Mars* were obviously severely torn by the collision with the rocks. Believing that the ship could be refloated safely and unaware of the great under-water damage Blinman ordered the reversal and the *Mars* reversed about forty yards with little difficulty. The sea then poured in and within minutes the ship had floundered.¹⁰⁰ A similar manoeuvre had been ordered by Captian Silly of the *Adonis* in January 1862 when the Muglin Rocks in Dalkey Sound were struck. The *Adonis* was on a voyage from Belfast to Waterford, Plymouth and London. At the official inquiry held to investigate the circumstances of the loss of the ship in evidence it was stated that

A scene of the most indescribable confusion appeared to have ensued upon her striking and it was not too much to say that a universal panic appeared to have paralysed masters, officers, crews and passengers.¹⁰¹

96 *Waterford Mail*, 20 August 1860.

97 *Bristol Daily Post*, 4 April 1862.

98 Peter Kemp ed. (1992) *The Oxford companion to ships and the sea* (Oxford), p. 493.

99 Quoted in *Bristol Daily Post*, 14 April 1862.

100 Richard and Bridget Larne (2000) *Shipwreck Index to the British Isles: Volume 5, West Coast and Wales* (London), un-paginated.

101 *Waterford Mail*, 20 January 1862; 27 January 1862.

On this occasion the master of the ship, Captain Silly admitted to an error of judgment in sailing too close to the land and a misjudgment of his position in relation to the Hill of Killiney and the Muglins Rocks. The next few sentences of his evidence are significant in relation to what was to happen a few weeks later at the Crow Rock and in helping to understand the totality of the loss. Silly told the inquiry that

I gave orders to reverse, when several of the crew shouted 'For God's sake do not move the engines until the boats are out' and I beg to refer the court to the melancholy loss of life in case of the *Victoria*, which was occasioned by reversing off the rocks at Howth before the precaution of launching the boats was launched.¹⁰²

On this occasion the engines were incapable of reversing and as the ship seemed to be sinking fast, two lifeboats were launched and the passengers and crew reached the safety of Bray after four hours of rowing. The captain and carpenter stayed with the boat until it was no longer safe to do so and eventually boarded a third lifeboat which landed at Greystones before noon the following day.¹⁰³

The wreck of the *Ceres*, bound from London to Dublin, when it ran ashore on the 'Lane of Stones' off Carnsore Point on 10 November 1866 was similar in many respects to the loss of the *Mars* in 1862. On this occasion thirty-nine lives were lost, including eleven of the twenty-seven crew members. The captain kept watch on deck, the weather was 'thick' and it rained heavily but was not unduly stormy. Unlike Blinman, the captain had ordered the sails to be taken down and the speed reduced for safety purposes. However, the ship had drifted twenty miles off the course steered, with Captain Pascoe, despite his vigilance, totally unaware of its position. At the Board of Trade Inquiry, Pascoe could only suggest a failure of the ship's bridge compass by which the ship was steered to explain the position. However, when the Board of Trade officials delivered their verdict the captain was found 'guilty of a default'. The possibility of compass error was rejected on the basis that if this were the case the problem would have been identified in the earlier stage of the voyage but accepted the possibility that the ship might have been carried westwards of her intended course by the tide. The use of the lead to take soundings and establish depth was crucial to counteract the risk of accidents due to compass defects. As a result of this omission the verdict of the Court of Inquiry was that the loss of the ship was attributed to the default of Captain Pascoe 'in not using his lead when the circumstances of the case imperatively demanded'. Pascoe had his certificate suspended for two years from the date of the inquiry.¹⁰⁴ No official investigation took place into the loss of the *Mars* because the key personnel of the ship were all lost at sea. If an inquiry had taken place it is difficult to avoid the conclusion, given the standards of the day, that a similar verdict against Captain Blinman would not have been returned.

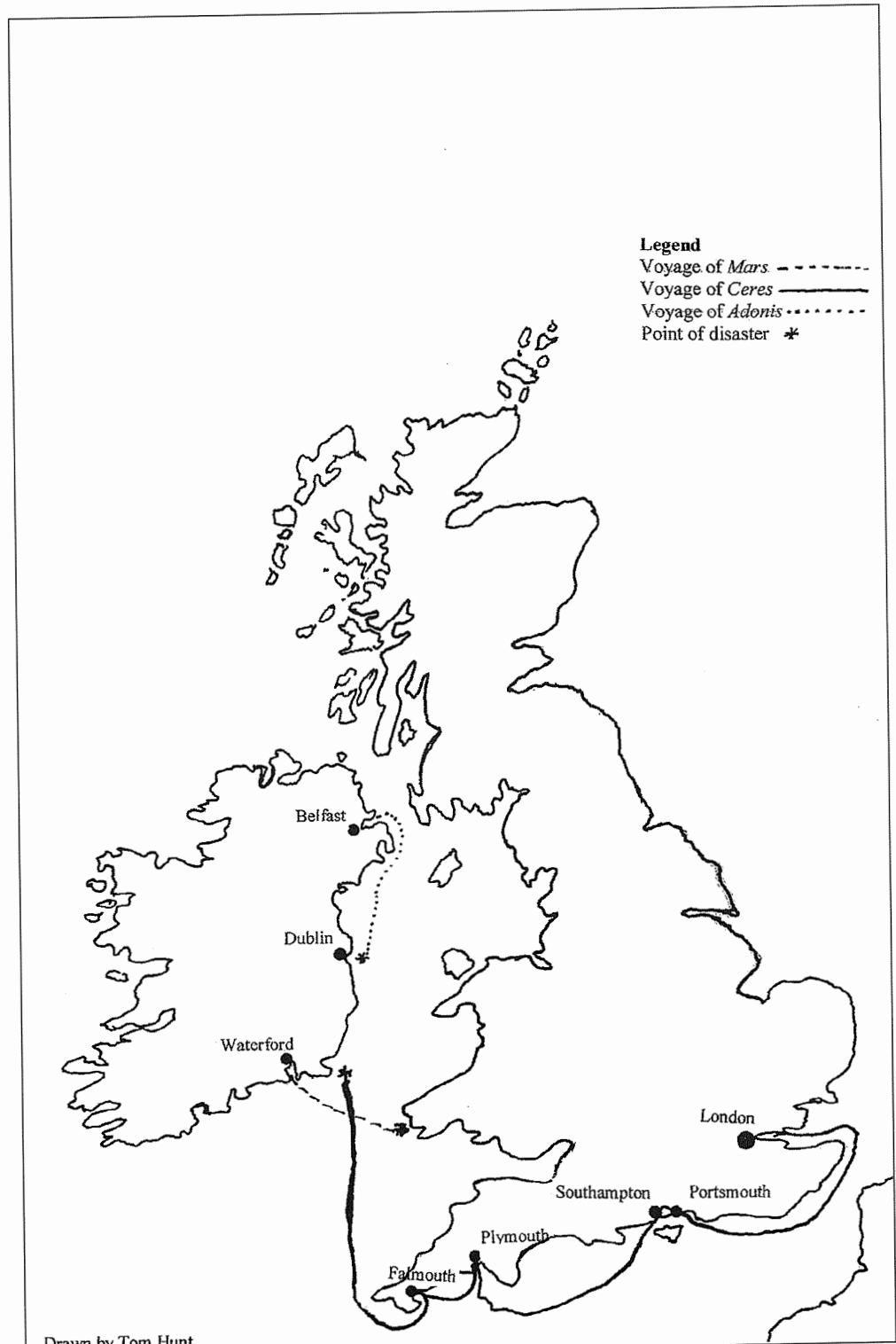
102 *Ibid*, 27 January 1862.

103 *Ibid*, 20 May 1862.

104 *Ibid*, 10 November, 14 November, 16 November, 10 December 1866.

The *Mars* was just one of many Malcomson associated ships that was lost at sea: the *Ceres*, a 3 masted barque wrecked at Carnsore Point in November 1866, the *Aura* wrecked off Cornwall during April 1869, the *Flora* wrecked on the Island of Dogs, October 1859, the schooner rigged and clencher built iron framed *Adonis* totally lost off Dalkey Island, January 1862 and the *Malvina* wrecked off Drogheda in August 1862. The *Liverpool* was lost off the coast of Holland in February 1852, the *Earl of Auckland* wrecked entering Rotterdam in August 1866; the 790 ton *Camilla* floundered entering Oporto in September 1874; the *SS Macedonia* wrecked on the Mull of Kintyre en route to Galsgow in 1881; the Neptune built *Cuba* lost on her maiden voyage in November 1858. The list of losses is long, a product of mass ship ownership by the family and the location world-wide: the Irish sea, the Mediterranean sea, Oporto, the Bay of Biscay, an indication the global nature of the family shipping empire.¹⁰⁵

105 NAI, *Register of Ships, 1845-55 revenue I, Waterford; Register of Ships, 1855-77 revenue II, Waterford* The information in this paragraph is based on an analysis of these registers in which the details of the final destiny of the registered ships was recorded.



Drawn by Tom Hunt

Course of final voyage of the Adonis, Mars and Ceres.

Book Reviews

Genteel Revolutionaries. Anna and Thomas Haslam and the Irish Women's Movement by Carmel Quinlan. Cork University Press, HB, 266 pp. E57.25

In their 2002 publication, *Reinventing Ireland. Culture, Society and the Global Economy*, the editors Kirby, Gibbons and Cronin contend that we should not be afraid of delving into the past to rediscover strands in Irish life that transcend narrow forms of nationalisms that can be reinterpreted to suit contemporary Ireland. Dr Quinlan's erudite study is certainly another step on this voyage of discovery and in the process chronicles, through the Haslams, the evolution of feminism in Ireland.

This is a wide - ranging book that, in detailing the unorthodox lives of Anna and Thomas Haslam and their quest for women's suffrage, touches many controversial subjects such as eugenics, population control and proto-fascism. But be warned, this is not an easy read. A second reading may not only be essential but also important in unravelling the complex, though nonetheless, interesting narrative of this book.

Anna Haslam was born into a middle - class Quaker family in Youghal, Co. Cork in 1829; the sixteenth of seventeen children. Her husband, also a Quaker, was four years her senior. Anna's early schooling was in Newtown school, Waterford, and from there in 1844 she spent three years at another Quaker school, Castlegate in York and worked as an assistant teacher in the Yorkshire town of Ackford from 1847 to 1848. It is here that she met her future husband, Thomas, who by this time had repudiated Quakerism, and, as a result, when they married in Cork in 1854, Anna was disowned. Thus began their long life together crusading on behalf of female suffrage.

From 1866, having signed John Stuart Mill's petition for the enfranchisement of women, Anna Haslam began her lifelong commitment to the cause of women's suffrage. By 1868, Thomas had begun his letter writing and pamphleteering with his pamphlet, *The Marriage Problem* which advocated the use of the 'safe' or infertile period as a means of limiting family size. During the next fifty years, until his death in 1917, he wrote on such other causes as the protection of prostitutes, sexual morality and women's education; all in the pursuit of women's equality. Unfortunately he did not live to witness the granting of the franchise to women in 1918.

Chapters two to four are interesting in that the embryonic political and economic ideological foundations of many of the issues that were to confront the twentieth century, and still with us in the twenty- first, are touched upon. Population Theory, Eugenics, Social Darwinism and Fascism are all brought to light through their famous proponents, Malthus, Mill, Spencer, Lamarck and Maudsley. Clearly, there is more to this book than initially meets the eye. Indeed, for economists, and especially for those interested in the development of economic thought, this study

sheds a new and interesting light on the social consciousness of the early economists.

There is also an interesting international dimension to this study which firmly places the Irish Women's Movement within a larger and more class diverse International movement for women's equality. The early influence of the American peace and anti slavery campaigner, Elihu Burritt on Anna during the 1840s, and of Maria Stropes, helped form the ideological bedrock upon which the Haslams pursued equality for women. But unlike the suffrage movement in England which was, in general, a working class organisation, in Ireland it was clearly the preserve of the middle class; at least up to the beginning of the twentieth century. And when militancy became part of the suffragist vocabulary through the likes of Rosamund Jacob and Hannah Sheehy Skeffington, the Haslams distanced themselves; though a small compromise seems to have been made with their attendance (at a very advanced age) at the London suffrage march in 1911, where '40,00 women of every social grade' took part. That the Haslams were only prepared to work within the existing power structures and use only constitutional methods to achieve their aims, in many ways, justifies the title of the book, *Genteel Revolutionaries*. Although the great issues affecting Ireland during this time, such as the Famine, Home Rule and the Land Question, are understated, the attitudes of the Haslams to Parnell, Redmond, Asquith, Birell and others, and their attitudes to the issues being advanced by the Women's Movement is, I believe, far more incisive being dealt with in this manner; especially as the Women's Movement was competing for the same space in the national consciousness as the various nationalist movements. However, as many women put their nationalism before their feminism and joined such militant organisations as Inghinidhe na hEireann, Sinn Fein and Cumann na mBan, the Women's Movement, in general, was marginalised.

In a compact and lucid conclusion Quinlan states that the Haslams represented an Ireland that did not survive them. It is hard indeed to comprehend how, in any way, the Haslams represented the generality of nineteenth or even early twentieth century Ireland. But this should not undermine their commendable achievements nor the author's resolve in giving the Haslams their rightful place in the Women's Movement. As such, this book adds a refreshing diversity to nineteenth and early twentieth Irish history.

John M. Hearne

Maynooth Studies in Local History: Number 45

The Holy Well Tradition: The Pattern of St Declan, Ardmore, County Waterford by Stiofán Ó Cadhla; Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2002, pp 64. Price E9.95 (Paperback: ISBN:1 85182 706 4).

This is the second volume in the excellent Maynooth Studies in Local History which concerns itself with an aspect of Waterford's history. The first was by Tom Hunt and had as its subject Portlaw and the Malcomsons.¹ Stiofán Ó Cadhla's scholarly and illuminating study considers the pattern of St Declan at Ardmore, 1800-2000.

Patterns-pilgrimages to holy wells on the feast days of their patrons- have long been a central feature of Irish life, especially in the decades before the Great Famine. Ardmore is a focal point in both the literary and popular tradition of pre-Patrician Christianity, St Declan having brought the gospel to the people of Waterford before the arrival of Patrick. The monastic settlement, characterised by its famous cathedral and round tower, was established by the twelfth century, and by that time had an important pilgrimage tradition. The pattern of St Declan was celebrated on July 24 though in recent times it is held on the Sunday nearest the feast.

Stiofán Ó Cadhla draws on a wide range of contemporary sources, spanning two centuries, in his description of the Ardmore pattern. It was an event which attracted a significant attendance. An observer in 1832 wrote that no pattern day had ever witnessed such multitudes, people coming as far away as Kerry, the city and county of Cork and Limerick. Nearly a hundred years later (in the 1940s and 1950s) we read that the day was looked forward to in the locality in much the same way as Christmas. In the 1960s the pattern reminded an observer of Liberty Square in Thurles on a Munster Final day. But what makes Ardmore's pattern so interesting is that it is still held and still drawing crowds. Thus this book is dealing with the history of a living event.

At the pattern pilgrims visit locations associated with St Declan. St Declan's Rock, situated on the shore, was especially popular in the nineteenth century, though it still attracted the devoted into the middle of the last century. The popular legend is that this rock floated to Ardmore carrying a bell very precious to the saint. As part of their devotions pilgrims squeezed under it three times, believing it could cure ailments. The focus of to-day's pattern is the holy well located in the townland of Dysert, lying on the side of a high cliff beside St Declan's Chapel. Here pilgrims make the traditional rounds, reciting the Rosary as they walk, clockwise, around the path there. Stiofán Ó Cadhla cites many contemporary accounts of the devotions which brings them to life in all their drama and religiosity.

Patterns were also social occasions and in the nineteenth century became associated with violence, drunkenness and disorder. Ardmore was no exception. It was these aspects of the gathering which aroused the particular hostility of the Catholic

1 Tom Hunt (2000), *Portlaw, County Waterford 1825-1876: Portrait of an Industrial Village and its Cotton Industry* (Dublin, Irish Academic Press). It was reviewed in *Decies* 56 by the present editor, Dr Martin Hearne. See pp 209-10.

clergy and the civil authorities. Vigorous efforts were made to curb such excesses, with Bishop Nicholas Foran suppressing the Ardmore pattern in 1838. There is evidence that it continued, however, and as Stiofán Ó Cadhla comments the assertion that the pattern was revived in 1870 seems premature.

Patterns were very important parts of vernacular culture in the nineteenth century. It is in his consideration of this fact that Stiofán Ó Cadhla makes a very real contribution to our understanding of the Ardmore pattern. He brings his perspective as a folklorist and ethnologist to bear. Thus the reader is given an interpretation which complements that of a historian. There is real sympathy evident in his writing for this culture as he seeks to shed light on it. A case in point is his discussion of the social aspect of the event. He does not engage in criticism of the participants. Rather, he sees the social events, through the eyes of the folklore scholar, as an example of the 'carnavalesque' aspect of popular culture. The pattern became 'an oasis in the routinised workaday existence', in which the norms and rules of the between-festival society were inverted. The faction fighting at patterns, so much highlighted and criticised by contemporaries, is presented as having a 'symbolic dimension' to them, particularly when they coincided with the great events of the ritual year of vernacular culture. To the outsider it was a barbaric affair but in the society of ordinary folk it was governed by well-known conventions.

Stiofán Ó Cadhla's book contributes, in a significant way, to our understanding of the Ardmore pattern and to patterns in general. It is essential reading for those who want a deeper insight into the world of ordinary people who kept devotions alive for centuries- ordinary people whose history needs to be better understood so that we can all better understand our past.

Eugene Broderick

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Barrett, Very Rev. P. F., The Deanery, Grange Park Road, Waterford.

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Brennan, Mr D., 11 The Brambles, Ballinakill Downs, Dunmore Road, Waterford.

Brennan, Mrs E., 11 The Brambles, Ballinakill Downs, Dunmore Road, Waterford.

Brennan, Mr J., 25 Daisy Terrace, Waterford.

Broderick, Mr E., 1 Pheasant Walk, Collins Avenue, Waterford.

Brophy, Mr A., Bush Lodge, Catherine Street, Waterford.

Burns, Mrs A. M. B., 97 Park Road, Loughborough, Leicester LE11 2HD, England.

Burtchaell, Mr J., Gyles Quay, Slieverue, via Waterford.

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Byrne, Mr N., Auburn, John's Hill, Waterford.

Carpendale, Mr S., Dublin Road, Dunkitt, via Waterford.

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Caulfield, Mr S., Robinstown, Glenmore, Co. Kilkenny.

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Collopy, Mr M., 75 Doyle Street, Waterford.

Condon, Very Rev. E., P.P., Killea, Dunmore East, Co. Waterford.

Condon, Mr S., 52 The Moorings, Ballinakill, Waterford.

Cook, Mr D. W., 5486 Wellington Drive, Trappe, Maryland 21673-8911, U.S.A.

Cornish, Dr R. T., 1166 Evergreen Circle, Rock Hill, South Carolina 29732, U.S.A.

Cowman, Mr D., Knockane, Anestown, Co. Waterford.

Cranley, Mrs M., 6 Parnell St., Waterford.

Croke, Prof. D. T., 89 Monkstown Avenue, Monkstown, Co. Dublin.

Crowley, Mrs M., 'Fernhill', Ballyvooney, Stradbally, Co. Waterford.

Crowley, Ms N., 45 Orchard Drive, Ursuline Court, Waterford.

Curham, Mr L., 19 The Folly, Waterford.

Davis, Mrs M., 1335 Fairway Oaks, Sun Lakes, Balling, CA 92220, U.S.A.

Deegan, Mrs E., 40 Lismore Park, Waterford.

Deegan, Mr P., 2 Fairfield Park, Belvedere Manor, Waterford.

Deevy, Mr J., Landscape, Passage Road, Waterford.
Delahunty, Mrs M., Rocksprings, Newtown, Waterford.
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Fay, Mr G., 43 Pinewood Drive, Hillview, Waterford.
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Gorwill, Mrs C., 81 Seaforth Road, Kingston, Ontario, Canada K7M 1E1.
Gossip, Mrs P., 'Garden Cottage', Ballinakill, Waterford.
Gough, Lt Col. P., 201 Fuller Street, Oceanside, California 92054, USA.
Grant, Mrs E., 9 St. John's Villas, Waterford.
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Grogan, Mrs V., 41 Summerville Avenue, Waterford.
Gunning, Mr T., 7 Ballinakill Vale, Waterford.

Halley, Mr G., M. M., Solicitors, George's Street, Waterford.
Hearne, Ms A., 2007 Sutters Mill Lane, Knoxville, Tennessee 37909, U.S.A.
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Lumley, Mrs R., 'Formby', Daisy Terrace, Waterford (Hon.).

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Ontario Genealogical Society, 40 Orchard View Blvd, Suite 102, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M4R 1B9.

O'Reilly, Miss E., 5 Railway Square, Waterford.

Ormond, Mr G., Gainstown, Navan, Co. Meath.

O'Sullivan, Mrs D., 'Juverna', Tramore, Co. Waterford.

O'Sullivan, Mr G., 257 East End Road, East Finchley, London N2 8AY, England.

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Phelan, Capt. B. C., Oldenburg, Rushbrooke, Cobh, Co. Cork.

Phelan, Mr R., 34 Ferndale, Ballytruckle, Waterford.

Plunkett, Mrs A., 2 Lyon Terrace, Tramore, Co. Waterford.

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Power, Mr W., Circular Road, Dunmore East, Co. Waterford.

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Power, Mrs W., Circular Road, Dunmore East, Co. Waterford.

Quinn, Mrs R., 'Baymount', Dunmore East, Co. Waterford.

Quinn, Mr T., 'Baymount', Dunmore East, Co. Waterford.

Reale, Mr S., 5 Marian Terrace, Ballinakill, Waterford.

Royal Irish Academy, The Librarian, 19 Dawson St., Dublin 2.

Russell, Ms M. A., 3383 Wellesley Avenue, San Diego, California 92122-2336, U.S.A.

Ryan, Mrs E., 7 Leoville, Dunmore Road, Waterford.

Ryan, Mr J. L., 18587 Martinique Drive, Houston, Texas 77058-4213, USA.

Ryan, Ms R., Caherleske, Callan, Co. Kilkenny.

Ryan, Mr T., 7 Leoville, Dunmore Road, Waterford.

School of Celtic Studies Library (Ms Niamh Walsh), 10 Burlington Rd., Dublin 4.

Shine, Mrs K., 17 Viewmount Park, Dunmore Road, Waterford.

Simpson, Mr B., 29 O'Reilly Rd., Cork Rd., Waterford.

Stacey, Dr J., Strandside North, Abbeyside, Dungarvan, Co. Waterford.

Steadman, Mr E., 21 Pleasant Drive, Mount Pleasant, Waterford.

Steadman, Mrs E., 21 Pleasant Drive, Mount Pleasant, Waterford.

Stewart, Mr J., 'Tivoli', Marian Park, Waterford.

Strathman, Mrs C., 2130 Rancho Hills Drive, Chino Hills, CA 91709, USA.

Sullivan, Mr A., 63 Seacape, Sausalito, CA 94965, USA.

Sweeney, Mrs M., Gaulsmills, Ferrybank, Waterford.

Synnott, Mr E., Weatherstown, Glenmore, Co. Kilkenny.

Tarbett, Miss M., 34 Elm Park, Tramore, Co. Waterford.

The East Tennessee Historical Society, P. O. Box 1629, 600, Market Street,
Knoxville, TN 37901, USA.

Tipperary Libraries, Castle Avenue, Thurles, Co. Tipperary.

Tipperary S. R. County Museum, Parnell Street, Clonmel, Co. Tipperary.

Tobin, Ms P., 'Grannagh', 9 Cuil na Greine, Ard na Groi, Tramore, Co. Waterford.

Treacy, Mrs M., Newtown Rise, Tramore, Co. Waterford.

Turner, Miss M. C., 'Cooleen', Church Lane, Thames Ditton, Surrey KT7 0NL,
England.

Tyrell, Mrs M., 6 St John's Villas, Lower Grange, Waterford.

Upton, Mr S., 99 Mount Sion Avenue, Waterford.

Upton, Mrs S., 99 Mount Sion Avenue, Waterford.

Veale, Mr T., 120 Lindsay Road, Dublin 9.

Walsh, Mr J., Trenaree, Slieverue, via Waterford.

Walsh, Mr J. F., 5 Chestnutt Close, Viewmount Park, Waterford.

Walshe, Ms C., The Vinery, Summerville Avenue, Waterford.

Walshe, Mr J., The Vinery, Summerville Avenue, Waterford.

Walsh, Mr W., Woodstock, Coolroe, Portlaw, Co. Waterford.

Walton, Mr J. C., 'The Old Forge', Seafield, Bonmahon, Co. Waterford.

Waterford Co. Library, West Street, Lismore, Co. Waterford.

Waterford Heritage and Genealogical Survey, Jenkin's Lane, Waterford.

Willis, Mr M., 'Gorse Cottage', Killegar, Bray, Co. Wicklow.