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Welcome to the latest edition of the IACI e-news.

Founded in 1962, the IACI is the leading Irish American cultural organization. The IACI is a federally recognized 501(c)(3) not-for-profit national organization devoted to promoting an intelligent appreciation of Ireland and the role and contributions of the Irish in America.

Guest contributors are always welcome! Please note, the IACI is an apolitical, non-sectarian organization and requests that contributors consider that when submitting articles. The IACI reserves the right to refuse or edit submissions. The views and opinions expressed in this newsletter are solely those of the original authors and other contributors. These views and opinions do not necessarily represent those of the IACI or any/all contributors to this site. Please submit articles for consideration to [cbuck@iaci-usa.org](mailto:cbuck@iaci-usa.org).

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## *A Bully Good Ride*

By Steven G. Farrell

The winter of 1908 had been a long and harsh one, especially in the Northeastern portion of the United States. It was the last year of the administration of President Teddy Roosevelt, the country was prosperous, and a great automobile race had just started in Time Square. The entire nation was rooting for handsome Montague Roberts and his *Thomas Flyer* machine to cross the final line in Paris, France ahead of the French, Italian and German racers who were also at the starting line. Now it was nearly St. Patrick's Day, and a warm sun was thawing out the city of New York. By noontime on this Saturday the last of the factories had emptied out and the last of the time cards punched out in downtown Manhattan. New Yorkers were out riding their bicycles, splashing through growing puddles, itching their spring fever with bursts of unnatural energy. Winter was almost over and the sap of spring time was starting to come alive in the blood vessels of millions of inhabitants who had been caged up inside their work places, schools and homes since the Thanksgiving holiday.

Jimmy McCarthy, twelve years old and long-legged, showed off to his two pals, Shorty Rafferty and Hugs Higgins, by belting a pretty teenage girl in the face with a well-aimed snowball. The girl, who was no snowflake herself, countered with a focused right hook to Jimmy's jaw. The boys decided it was the better part of valor to beat a hasty retreat before the girl mopped up the ground with them.

"That lady threw a punch like James J. Jeffries, the heavyweight champion of the world," proclaimed Jimmy as he rubbed his flushed jaw with a gloved hand.

"My little sister could throw a better blow than that," hectored Shorty.

"Ah, your old lady wears combat boots," shot back Jimmy as the trio sprinted away, sniffing out their next adventure.

A newly built snow fort by a couple of boys younger than themselves became their next assault mission. It was always open season in the park for those younger than yourself, but these hardy lads were not about to retreat from their post without a fight. Snowballs filled the air and hit their targets.

"Ah, leave us alone, you bullies."

"You started it, kid."

"So we'll finish it!"

"Hey, you boys, pick on somebody your own size," shouted over McKenna, the flat-footed mick on patrol.

"We're off, me lads!" shouted Jimmy, leading the others deeper into the park.

The boys came across a sour looking old woman selling hot chocolate; her sign reading: two cents to warm you up!"

Times were flush even for the working-class, so the three boys all had sufficient funds to purchase their own drinks. The old woman watched them dolefully to make sure they didn't take-off with her wooden cups she had carried with her all the way from the old country. One could never trust these Irish ragamuffins no matter how much they smiled at you with their freckled-faced sunshine.

"Here you go, old darling," Jimmy said with all of the charm he could muster up as he returned her possessions to her grubby hands after collecting them from his tribe.

"I'll be glad to see the last of you lot!" she sassed back as the boys raced off to seek-out more mischief. She smiled at their backs.

The park was the place to be what with other children to pester, lovers to mock, and old men on wooden benches to catcall.

“Let’s see if the river is still frozen!” Jimmie shouted out directions.

“I’m not skating on thin ice,” announced Shorty, always the cynic.

“Don’t be such a sissy, Shorty. We all have to die someday,” proclaimed Jimmy.

“Sure, Jimmy, it’s a philosopher you are now,” teased Hugs, always game for the high life of merriment.

Water gushed on by in a torrent, seeking an outlet to the Atlantic Ocean. However, the snow was solid on the river bed, beckoning for winter boots to stomp on its’ back. Jack London’s Alaskan mountains could not have been firmer than the piles of snow inside of Riverside Park.

“All secure,” declared Jimmie, pounding on his chest and roaring out like Tarzan the Ape Man.

“We’re the kings of the jungle!” bellowed Hugs.

The vibrations made by the three jumping jacks was enough to cause a crack that rippled rapidly across a chunk of white earth and propelled it in to the rapids. The three sailors and their vessel were now cast upon the open water.

“Now our voyage begins, my fellow explorers,” Jimmie shouted out with glee as the boys were swept away by their icy boat at a rapidly increasing rate.

“Your play is dangerous!” shouted a concerned matron.

“Somebody summons their mother!” pitched in a grannie.

A crowd of adults and children gathered by the coast line to watch the boys sailing eastward on the East River in Riverside Park in Manhattan, New York. It was a spectacle worth watching but it was increasingly more alarming as the boys’ pace picked up volume.

“Tell them all we’re explorers who are off to join Commodore Peary’s expedition to the North Pole,” Jimmie broadcasted with pride and delight.

A passerby had collared McKenna, the flat-footed mick on patrol, and was able to tug him down to the shore line for a gander at the runaway boys on the big block of floating ice.

“You boys stop having so much fun before I arrest the lot of you!” McKenna barked into the breeze.

“Get a horse, you mick!” shouted back Jimmie.

“Go back to the County Galway, you bog-trotter!” taunted Shorty.

“See you on the moon, McKenna!” roared Hugs.

Jimmy McCarthy was savvy enough to figure-out how to steer the frozen schooner by shifting the weight of his feet, legs and hip.

“Put your shoulders to it, me buckles!” the captain roared to his obeying crew.

“Captain, I think our vessel is shrinking,” Hugs said matter-of-factly.

It was true! The block of ice was quickly diminishing in size with each crash of the waves.

“Land, ho!” shouted Jimmy, taking over the steering wheel.

“Look out, landlubbers!” cried a hearty Shorty.

“Get ready to drop anchor,” called out Hugs through cupped hands.

“Abandoned ship, my crew!” ordered Jimmie, making an arching leap on top of a mountain of snow.

“Aye, aye, captain!” responded his crew.

The boys crashed into solid land and all jumped to safety as the block of snow finally shrunk into a tiny ice cube and sunk to the bottom of the river. The boys were patting one another on

their backs over the victory of their wild spree when they noticed a huge mob led by McKenna, the flat-footed mick.

“If they collar us, my old man will horsewhip me for sure,” whined Shorty.

“McKenna will hang us high from the nearest lamp post,” said Hugs, pointing out the nearest lamp post.

“They’ll have to capture us first,” said Jimmy as he bolted away as the others followed. They didn’t stop running until they had penetrated their way back into the cavern of the city. They celebrated their escape by purchasing three roasted chestnuts from a street vendor. The hustle and bustle of the Saturday afternoon strollers provided them with ample foliage to hide in.

“It’s time to split up until tomorrow,” said Jimmy McCarthy, heading home for lunch.

It was mid-morning the next day when Jimmy left his tenement building to head for his headquarters at the corner candy store. He had important matters to discuss with his fellow adventurers. A tough-looking mug collared him and held on tightly to his winter coat.

“We have business to discuss, partner,” the man said gravely.

“I have been with my ailing mother all this time and I was helping her tend to the needs of the wee ones, officer,” said Jimmy with all of his Celtic charm.

“I’m not the fuzz, man,” spat-out the man, “I’m Sexton the reporter.”

“And t’s a grand scholar you are, and my mother reads your stories to us every morning over porridge...even the baby is impressed by your clever choice of words.

“I heard about how you and your pals took a wild ride on the river and I know my readers want to read about the ride”.

“You have the wrong outfit, Mr. Sexton. My colleagues and I are men of science and not mere ruffians of the city’s alleys.”

The man flipped open his notebook and consulted the three names eyewitnesses had given to him.

“Informants have given me the names of three Irish rogues: McCarthy, Rafferty and Higgins.”

“Those are common surnames here on the west side, sir.”

“There’s fifty dollars in it for the McCarthy, Rafferty and Higgins who navigated the East River yesterday afternoon...if I get the scoop on the story...now!”

“Make it one hundred bucks and you’ll get the inside dope straight from the horse’s mouth.”

“You drive a hard bargain....mister?”

“James McCarthy, explorer, at your service, sir.”

“My editor will pay the sum of one hundred dollars to you and friends...”

“My fellow explorers, you mean.”

“Yes, my editor will pay to you and your fellow explorers one hundred dollars for your ripping yarn.”

“We need the money to finance our expedition to the North Pole where we shall join Commodore Peary on his quest to discover the North Pole. We need compasses, rifles, food, supplies, dogs and sleds... and trinkets for the native Eskimos.”

“Before your head for the great white north tell my readers about your ride yesterday.

“A bully good ride it was, sir,” said Jimmy McCarthy, explorer.

## The Irish Immigration to New York, 1846 – 1851

By Raymond D. Aumack

I enjoyed watching the St. Patrick's Day Parade on television. I got a big charge out of Cardinal Dolan's interview outside the cathedral when he described how the Irish refugees from the famine were so enthusiastically greeted and warmly welcomed by the people of New York. He apparently has overlooked the history of the times when the Irish were terrorized by the gangs of New York, hated by recently freed slaves because of the competition for even the most menial jobs, and the atrocious violence in the 1850s, with the Know-Nothings. In fact, the Irish of that period were the most unwelcome of immigrants. Their social status was lower than the toenails of the rats that freely roamed the streets, the ancestors of the rats that still roam freely in New York City. It took the Irish longer to assimilate than immigrants from most of the other countries. Part of that is because they gathered to form ghettos for mutual support because of their extreme poverty. While that was helpful, it also isolated them from the wider New York City community. Ann Coulter last month published an article about the violent Irish attacks on Blacks. Unfortunately Ms. Coulter is right on the money. I read about this in my research but left it out of my draft for this article. I just wanted to focus on the difficulties of the Irish Immigrants of the period. Ms. Coulter has highlighted one of the darkest and the most tragic activities of the Irish path to assimilation in America. While it is not something highly publicized in Irish American history, it should give us some sympathy for the demonstrations of "Black lives matter."

The plight of Irish immigrants is eloquently described in Peter Quinn's extraordinarily well researched novel, *The Banished Children of Eve*. Every Irish American whose ancestors came to this country in that period should read Quinn's book. It might give us some insight into the way America is treating the refugees who arrive at our shores and borders every day.

I also recommend Mary Pat Kelly's, *Galway Bay* for her vivid and gut-wrenching description of life with the famine in Galway and her eventual escape from Ireland by rowing a Galway hooker, with her family, out into the Atlantic shipping lanes until they were picked up by a passing ship. It also vividly describes their assimilation into American life. They landed in New Orleans and made their way to Chicago where they eventually settled. Her book is a novel based on the true story of her family's history. It was told to her by her great grandaunt, a 90+ year old nun, living in Chicago, and a daughter of the original Mary Pat Kelly.

Cardinal Dolan's warm welcome is definitely "fake news."

The Irish immigrants of the period escaped poverty and certain death from starvation and a myriad of diseases that resulted from starvation. It is estimated that over one million Irish died from starvation or starvation-related diseases. Ireland also lost many professionals, physicians and priests, from the epidemic-related diseases. Those who fled from Ireland disembarked in one of the coffin ships, so called because so many died during the Atlantic crossing. Approximately 650,000 arrived in New York in rags with barely the clothes on their backs. Many only spoke Irish with others speaking some version of a broken English. Most had limited education, the best was our sixth-grade level. They were mostly rural farmers and had no skills for the kinds of jobs available in New York. They were also in competition with the recently freed slaves who flocked to New York, a slave free state, in search of the most menial of jobs. The gang culture of New York at the time was fiercely anti-Irish. Signs posted to announce the availability of jobs also stated that "No Irish need apply."

The culture of New York City was defined as affluent and Protestant and most Irish immigrants did not fit into that mold.

The women did better than the men getting jobs as housekeepers, cooks, nannies, and embroiderers, the latter in impossible working conditions. Wages were low, and women were frequently treated as if they were indentured servants. Younger women were frequently sexually harassed and assaulted without any recourse to justice.

Those who fled to Canada fared much better. First of all, the fare on the ships for the transatlantic journey was quite a bit lower. Because Ireland was considered a British colony, the impression was that they were received by their own people. They were better able to assimilate into Canadian society. Even with that, many left Canada and tried to walk to Boston or New York. It is estimated that about 60,000 died trying to do that.

The ports of arrival in America were New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Boston, and New Orleans.

The Irish came to America to escape death by hunger. They were the most desperately poor of all the European nations, verified by several studies commissioned by the British in the five years before the famine struck. They brought their poverty to America with them. The first homes were shanties, built from scrap wood, cardboard, and tin. Sanitation was haphazard. There were no windows.

Irish women were called "Biddys," a takeoff on the traditional name, Bridget, and a mockery of the saint they venerated. Men were called, "Paddys." A Harpers Weekly cartoon of the period entitled, "Bridget and Patrick," demonstrated the vile hatred of the Irish. It proclaimed that they were, drunkards, filled the jails, the workhouses, poor farms, brothels, and lunatic asylums. Whatever money was earned was likely spent on alcohol. As hard as life appeared to be in America, it was infinitely better than life in Ireland.

Most Irish immigrants were Catholic and desperately poor. The residents of New York were mostly affluent, educated, sophisticated, and Church of England Protestant, a culture described so well in the novels of Edith Wharton. They had developed a culture for themselves and the Irish immigrants were disrupting the tranquility of that that culture. The pope at that time was the de facto King of the Papal States that comprised of most of northern Italy. The Protestant aristocracy in America began to fear that the legions of the pope would suddenly invade their shores. The press described the Irish as "aliens" who were mindlessly loyal to their Catholic leaders.

The Irish did seek refuge in their religion and as they became employed began to donate the funds to build churches, schools high schools, hospitals and colleges.

By 1860, the Civil War took the spotlight off the Irish and focused on slavery. During the war the Irish distinguished themselves in both the Union and Confederate armies. A regiment of New York Irishman, the Fighting 69th Infantry Division, fought bravely in major battles particularly at Antietam and Gettysburg, led by Thomas Meagher. Their surprise charge at Gettysburg is credited with turning the tide of the battle to the Union Army.

When they came back from the war, things began to change.

(Watch next month for, The Irish Famine Immigrant and the Catholic Church,)

IRISH TRIVIA

What is the other main ingredient of champ with potatoes?	Scallions (spring onions)
What is 'a wake'?	A celebration of the life of the deceased
How many leaves does a shamrock have?	Three
What does 'An tSean-Bhó Riabhach' mean?	Old brindled cow
Which Irish newspaper was first published on 5 September 1931?	The Irish Press
Who played the part of Eamon de Valera in the 1995 film "Michael Collins"?	Alan Rickman
Which writer James shares his name with a tower in Dun Laoghaire?	Joyce
Who shares a memorial with Alcock commemorating their trans-Atlantic flight from Newfoundland?	Brown
Where did they land?	Clifden
Which early Biblical couple appear on the Tynan Village Cross?	Adam and Eve
Was Dublin's Abbey Theatre created in the 18th or the 20th century?	20th
Which house in Dublin with a long history is the current home of the Dept. of the Environment?	Custom House
What type of mariner's beacon is at Hook Head, Co. Wexford?	Lighthouse
Dublin's Rotunda hospital pioneered the training of which nurses who help with childbirth?	Midwives
Which O is the location for the Battle of the Boyne?	Oldbridge
Which T is the county of the Golden Vale?	Tipperary
Which B was the fictional TV village filmed in Avoca?	Ballykissangel
Which Irish Columban priest spent 5 months in jail in the Phillipines during 1984?	Fr. Niall O' Brien
What do the letters REPS stand for in relation to Irish farming?	Rural Enviroment Protection scheme
What was the name of the man who formed the Brothers of the Christian Schools (Christian Brothers)?	Edmund Ignatius Rice
Who wrote 'Romantic Ireland's dead and gone / It's with O'Leary in the grave'?	W B Yeats
Which saint is associated with Lough Derg?	Saint Patrick
Where, in 433AD, did St Patrick light the Paschal Fire?	Hill of Slane

## On this Day in Irish History

### June

1st 1944 - Fianna Fáil wins the general election.

2nd 1942 - Speed limits are introduced to reduce wear on tyres.

4th 1984 - US President Ronald Reagan addresses both houses of the Oireachtas.

7th 1921 - James Craig is elected first Prime Minister of Northern Ireland.

1944 - Further rationing of electricity is announced.

1996 - Garda Jerry McCabe is shot dead by the IRA in Limerick.

2001 - Ireland rejects the Nice Treaty in a referendum.

8th 1886 - Home Rule Bill is rejected, triggering riots in Belfast.

9th 1903 - University of Dublin agrees to award degrees to women.

10th 1961 - Prince Ranier and Princess Grace of Monaco are received in Dublin.

1983 - Sinn Féin leader Gerry Adams is elected MP for West Belfast.

11th 1843 - Tuam is the location of the first of a series of Monster Meetings calling for Repeal.

12th 1986 - Two giant pandas arrive at Dublin zoo.

13th 1951 - Éamon de Valera becomes Taoiseach with a tiny majority.

14th 1928 - Amendment to the Court of Justice Bill ensures certain judges must have competency in Irish.

15th 1977 - Fianna Fáil win the general election.

1988 - IRA kill six British soldiers in Lisburn.

16th 1871 - Westmeath Act allows detention without trial.

1904 - James Joyce meets Nora Barnacle, and later sets Ulysses on this day.

1922 - A general election in Ireland shows 75% support the Anglo-Irish Treaty.

1997 - National University of Ireland, Maynooth, comes into existence.

18th 1969 - French President Charles de Gaulle meets President De Valera in Dublin.

1992 - Referendum in the Republic approves the Maastricht Treaty.

20th 1890 - St George's covered market is opened in Belfast.

1936 - Irish government declares the IRA an illegal organisation.



22nd 1911 - Sinn Féin protest Irish participation in the coronation of King George V.  
1932 - 31st Eucharistic Conference opens in the Pro-Cathedral, Dublin.

23rd 1914 - Government of Ireland Bill introduced to the House of Lords.  
1929 - Pontifical High Mass at Phoenix Park marks the centenary of Catholic emancipation.  
1993 - Dáil Éireann passes a bill to decriminalise homosexuality.

24th 1973 - Éamon de Valera retires from office aged 90.

25th 1938 - Douglas Hyde is inaugurated as the first President of Ireland.  
1945 - Seán T. O'Kelly is inaugurated as the second President of Ireland.  
1959 - Éamon de Valera is inaugurated as the third President of Ireland.  
1966 - Éamon de Valera is inaugurated for a second term as President.  
1970 - Bishops lift the ban on Catholics attending Trinity College Dublin.  
1973 - Erskine Childers is inaugurated as the fourth President of Ireland.

26th 1887 - Highest temperature ever recorded in Ireland (33.3C, measured at Kilkenny Castle).  
1949 - 80,000 people attend a Pioneer Total Abstinence Society meeting at Croke Park.  
1991 - The wrongful convictions of the Maguire Seven are quashed.  
1996 - Crime reporter Veronica Guerin murdered in Dublin.

27th 1963 - US President J. F. Kennedy addresses both houses of the Oireachtas.  
1998 - The Republic of Ireland qualifies for entry into the Economic and Monetary Union of the EU.

30th 1922 - Anti-Treaty forces storm the Four Courts and take 33 prisoners.  
1932 - The Tailteann Games open in Croke Park.  
1981 - Fine Gael leader Dr Garret Fitzgerald is elected Taoiseach.