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EARLY IRISH IN ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI.

BY FRANCIS J. WARD, ST. LOUIS.

In 1815 the population of St. Louis was 2,000. Billon's Annals for 1817-'20 states: "The adult male population of that day was about 700. Of American birth 400, French and Spanish 150, and of foreign birth 150. Of these, fully two-thirds, or about 100, were Irishmen, some fifteen or twenty European Frenchmen, about the same number English and Scotch, and some ten or twelve Germans."

The tax list for 1811 shows Auguste Chouteau as the largest taxpayer, the Irish-American firm, McKnight & Brady, second. The first directory of St. Louis (1821) contains 749 names. Of these but few are Germanic. As late as 1827 there were but twenty-seven German families here.

In 1663 Marquis de Tracy was governor-general of all the French possessions in America, and another Franco-Irishman, Chevalier McCarthy, in 1751, was commandant of the French settlement of the Illinois territory, and in 1769 a native Gael, Alexander O'Reilly, had command under the Spanish.

Peter Conley appears as a witness to Laclede's will. Charles Gratiot was a member of the firm of David McCrae & Co., at Cahokia, from 1771 to 1781. Among the earliest mortgages in St. Louis is that of Pierre Saffray to Joseph O'Neill. Mathew Kennedy, in 1771, executed a bond to Antoine Bernard, and in the will of Jan Louis Lambert, a merchant, who died here in 1771, is found memoranda of indebtedness due Morrissey & Co. Both Kennedy and Morrissey were prominent merchants here long prior to this.

When Patrick Henry, then governor of Virginia, determined to check the progress of the English on the Western frontier, he gave the command to the son of an Irishman, Gen. George Rogers Clark. Virginia was unable to furnish the money to equip Clark's troops for the Illinois campaign, but an Irish merchant of New Orleans, Oliver Pollock, borrowed \$70,000 from Count O'Reilly, once commandant of the Louisiana territory. What Morris did in the East Pollock did in the West for the American cause. To his financial aid, the United States owes the success of Clark's Illinois campaign. That Clark had many soldiers of Irish birth in his army is shown by a deposition taken at Kaskaskia, on June 11, 1779, in which are the names of Andrew McDonald, Aaron Barrett, Patrick Shine, Andrew Coil, and Tarrance Mooney.

The first American who settled in St. Louis after Clark's surprise of Kaskaskia, in 1778, was Philip Fine, son of Thomas Fine, an Irish settler in Virginia. He came in 1781. Kaskaskia was the settling place of many Irish in the early days, among them being Robert Morrison, an Irish merchant, who arrived in 1792.

In 1800 occurred the murder of Adam Horne, on the Meramec. The commandant at Carondelet appointed as witnesses to the inventory John Cummings and John Donald, the witness to the order being Bartholomew Harrington.

In 1803 Governor Delassus organized two companies of militia for the protection of New Madrid and appointed Richard Waters, captain, and George K. Reagan, lieutenant of cavalry, and Robert McCoy, captain, and John Hart, ensign of infantry. William Sullivan obtained the first tavern license issued in the town after its transfer to the Americans and was appointed by General Harrison constable and coroner, holding in the latter capacity the first inquest. In 1816, when Chouteau laid out the first addition to the town, Sullivan purchased a half block, on which he built a residence, where he died.

Immediately after the transfer of the territory, Colonel Delassus addressed an official note to the new American officials commending, among others, the following officers who had served under him in the French service: James Mackay, commandant at St. Andrew, "an officer of knowledge, zealous and punctual"; also Mr. Mathew McKonel, Robert McKay, "a brave officer," and Dr. Samuel Dorsey, surgeon of the fort.

After the transfer came the descendants of Irish settlers of Pennsylvania, Ohio, Kentucky, the Carolinas, and Tennessee, a sturdy, vigorous, independent, and progressive race, to whom President Roosevelt, himself a descendant on the maternal side, pays tribute in his *Winning of the West*. Fathers of many of them took part in the Revolutionary War, others were who were banished from Ireland through the same laws that forced Americans to rebel.

Among the latter was Joseph Charless, a native of Westmeath, who sought his fellow refugees, Mathew Carey and William Duane, in Philadelphia. He worked as a compositor on Duane's *Aurora* and set up for Carey the first folio edition of the Bible printed in the United States. Shortly afterward he left for Kentucky, coming later with his printer's outfit on mulebacks to St. Louis, where he began the publication of the first newspaper printed west of the Mississippi, the *Missouri Gazette*, in 1808.

In 1804 came John Mullanphy, the celebrated philanthropist. His third daughter, Jane, married Charles Chambers, son of John Chambers, a United Irishman, who, with Thomas Addis Emmet, Dr. William Macneven, and thirteen others, after their release from political prison, came to America, where they rose to distinction.

James Rankin was the first sheriff of St. Louis under American rule, and the first grand jury contains some Irish names, and many transfers of real estate from early settlers are recorded this year, among them that of Manuel Lisa to Patrick Cullen and Joseph Bent. Eighteen hundred and four was the year when the old Fort Bellefontaine was selected for the establishment of Jefferson Barracks, which, after its abandonment, in 1826, was left in charge of Capt. John Whistler, a native of Ireland, founder of Fort Dearborn, in 1803, now the city of Chicago, and

grandfather of the famous American artist, James A. McNeil Whistler. He died in St. Louis in 1829.

This year also saw the departure of Lewis and Clark to the Rocky Mountains, Clark being a brother to Gen. Rogers Clark. Among the party were George Shannon, who afterward became United States attorney for Missouri, and Patrick Gass.

A remarkable Irishman came in 1805—Jeremiah Conners. In 1818 he was the owner of the 40–arpent lots, on which he laid out Washington Avenue. Part of his property he donated to Bishop Dubourg, in 1820, for founding St. Louis University, the first of its kind in St. Louis. At his house was organized the first Irish society established in the city, in 1818.

William Christy, whose people came from County Down, was also a famous man. He laid out the whole section known as North St. Louis. Another large Irish landholder was Patrick McMasters Dillon, who, previous to leaving Ireland, was involved in the Emmet rising. He laid out several additions to the city on lands he purchased, 49his last being “Dillon’s Fourth Addition,” in 1840, on a tract purchased from Fred Dent, father-in-law of President Grant. One of his daughters, Martha N., married the celebrated Capt. James B. Eads.

Among other large purchasers of real estate in the early years occur the names of James Mackay, James Conway, Mathew Boyse, John Hogan, Hugh O’Neill, and John Dougherty. A famous lawyer of this time was Col. Luke E. Lawless, a native of Dublin, who came in 1816, and who, after the resignation of Judge William C. Carr from the Circuit Court, succeeded him. Still, another was Nathaniel Beverly Tucker. He became a judge of the Circuit Court. One of the family married John Patten Emmet, the youngest son of Thomas Addis Emmet, who was appointed professor of chemistry at the University of Virginia by Thomas Jefferson, the son of the union being the celebrated Dr. Thomas Addis Emmet of New York. Another legal luminary was Hamilton Rowan Gamble, whose people came from Belfast. In 1861 he was chosen as provisional governor of the state.

In the first House of Representatives of the territory, S. McGrady represented Ste. Genevieve. In the legislative council occurs the name of James Flaugherty. William Neeley became president of the council. The first state Legislature met in the Missouri Hotel, built by Thomas Brady, a famous Irishman of his day.

Col. John O’Fallon, son of Dr. James O’Fallon, a native of County Roscommon, a surgeon under Washington, came in 1811 and resided with his uncle, General Clark. The name has become so identified with the history of the city as to need no mention. Francis Redford opened, in 1804, the first school for instruction in English. The honor of giving the grounds for its first seat of learning belongs to a native of the Emerald Isle. The proud distinction of being called the “Father of the University of Missouri” belongs to a man whose ancestors came from the County

Tyrone, Dr. James Rollins.

The first bank, the Bank of St. Louis, organized in 1813, had as one of its commissioners Thomas Brady, and the second, the Bank of Missouri, had among its directors John McKnight and Mathew Kerr, and the Bank of the State of Missouri, organized in 1837, had among its directors Hugh O'Neill, Edward Walsh, Edward Dobyns, and John O'Fallon. A branch of the United States Bank was started in 1819, with John O'Fallon as president.

The Merchants' Exchange began as a debating Society, in 1836, with Edward Tracy as president and John Ford as secretary. The Millers' Association, the first of its kind in the West, was established in 1849, among the members being John Walsh. Financial exchanges need telegraphic connections, so along came a Leitrim man, Henry O'Reilly, in 1847, who opened here the first telegraph office west of the Mississippi.

In military life, the men of the "Fighting Race" were to the fore. St. Louis Grays, the first volunteer organization, started in 1832, had for its ensign John P. Riley, but a volunteer company of light infantry preceded it in 1819, having for its captain Henry W. Conway. Other companies were added to the Grays in 1842, forming the First Regiment, St. Louis Legion, among the designations of the companies being "Montgomery Guards," with Patrick Gorman, captain; "St. Louis Guards," Daniel Byrne, captain; "Mound City Guards," John H. Barrett, captain; "Morgan Riflemen," Henry J. McKillop, captain.

In this review of the "pioneer" Irish in St. Louis, many names necessarily are omitted. Sufficient to mention men of worth in their day, such as John C. Sullivan, collector, in 1814; Judge Thomas McGuire, 1817; Captain McGunnegle, the Rankin Brothers, Hugh, Robert, and David, who came hither from Ireland in 1819; Bernard Gillully, who was in partnership with Edward C. Cummings; James Clemens, Patrick Walsh, Richard K. Dowling, Thomas Hanley, Thomas M. Doherty, Mayor Ferguson, William Carr Lane, Bryan Mullanphy, and others.

Such men, indeed, were the "cream of St. Louis society" in the early part of the nineteenth century.

We hear much of the part played by the Irish in the creation and maintenance of the American republic in the military sense, but what they have contributed towards its civil, commercial, manufacturing or educational development is much overlooked and remains unknown to readers of the present day.