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IRISH PIONEERS AND BUILDERS OF KENTUCKY.

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The number of distinctive Irish names met in looking over the early records of North Carolina, Virginia, South Carolina, and Kentucky is simply wonderful. When are added to them the names more distinctively Scotch, but fully as Gaelic in origin as the Irish, one is justified in believing what Ramsay wrote in 1789, that:

“The colonies which now form the United States may be considered as Europe transplanted. Ireland, England, Scotland, France, Germany, Holland, Switzerland, Sweden, Poland, and Italy furnished the original stock of the present population and have been supposed to contribute to it in the order enumerated. For the last seventy or eighty years no nation has contributed so much to the population of America as Ireland.”[23]

Dr. Hart and William Coomes were the first Catholic settlers in Kentucky, locating in Harrodsburgh in 1775. The doctor was the first medical practitioner in the state, as Mrs. Coomes was the first teacher. This credit is given them in Collins’ History of Kentucky. Among the fortified stations or forts built for protection from the Indians by the early settlers, not a few bore names familiar to Irish ears, denoting the presence of many of the old race.

Among them may be mentioned Bryan’s Station, Dougherty’s Station, Drennan’s Lick, Feagan’s Station, Finn’s Station, Fleming’s Station, Hart’s Station, Higgins’ Block House, Irish Station, Lynch’s Station, Logan’s Fort, McAfee’s Station, McFadden’s Station, McGee’s Station, Sullivan’s Old Station, Sullivan’s New Station, Sullivan’s Station, Daniel Sullivan’s Station, McGuire’s Station, McCormack’s Station, McKeenan’s Station, McConnell’s Station, Kennedy’s Station, Givin’s Station, McKinley’s Station, McMillan’s Station, Owen’s Station, Kilgore Station, Hoy Station, Kincheloe’s Station and Gilmore’s Station.

Ten Kentucky counties bear Irish names: Adair, Butler, Logan, Hart, Montgomery, McCracken, Boyle, Carroll, Rowan, and Casey. John Carty, the most successful merchant in Lexington, was the son of John Carty, a native of Ireland who went early to Kentucky from New Jersey; and General James Morrison, for many years one of the leading men of the state, was the son of another Irish emigrant.

As late as 1840, among the surviving veterans of the Revolutionary War residing in Kentucky were the following:

James McElroy,

Andrew Linam,

James McElhaney,
Michael Moore,
William Brady,
George Bryan,
Edward McConnell,
Michael Smith,
Michael Freeman,
John Hart,
Joseph Dunn,
William De Courcey,
David Driscoll,
John Short,
John Dehan,
Richard Wade,
Randall Haley,
Cornelius Sullivan,
Hugh Drennon,
Patrick McCann,
E. Madden,
John Burke,
David Kennedy,
Timothy Logan,
John Slavin,
James Logan,

John Martin,
John Herron,
Patrick Marvin,
Michael Hargan,
Daniel Bryan,
John Carroll,
John McGee,
John Murphy,
Joseph Casey,
Richard Bellew,
John Keen,
Stephen Collins,
William Lyons,
Jacob Dooly,
William Kelly,
Charles Hart,
William Conner,
Daniel McCarthy,
James Fitzpatrick,
Robert Burke,
John Reilly,
John Mahon,
Martin Hughes,
Joseph Sweeney,

Thomas Laughlan,

John Adair,

Patrick Coyle,

Dennis Dailey,

John McQuilty,

William Devine,

John Mitchel,

Gen. Richard Butler,

Maj. John Finley,

Col. James Morrison.

80The following served in the several companies named, during the Revolution, on detached service, mainly against the Indians, who were the auxiliaries of the British:

In Captain Bourman's company,—William Barry, Edward Bulger, Patrick Doran, Isaac McBride, Robert McClanahan, Edward Murray, Joseph Michael and Thomas Pendergast.

Captain Logan's company,—Capt. Benj. Logan, Lieut. John Logan, William Casey, George Flynn, Bartholomew Fenton, Stephen Houston, John McCormack, John McElhone, James McElwain, John McKaine, Archibald Mahone, William Neal.

Captain Harrod's company,—Daniel Driskill, John Conway, Patrick McGee, John Lewis, William Smiley, James Sullivan, James Welch.

Captain Boyle's company,—Capt. John Boyle, Barney Boyle, Elisha Clary, James Coyle, Owen Devine, Peter Higgins, Robert Moore, William Rowan, Dennis Devine.

Captain Holder's company,—James Barry, James Bryan, John Butler, William Collins, William

McGee, Hugh Ross.

Captain Boone's company, —John Butler, Patrick Ryan, Morgan Hughes, John McFadden.

An idea can be formed of the Irish blood in Kentucky during those stirring times, from the character of the names given. Nearly all the great Gaelic family names are represented, and the absence of Scriptural (Old Testament) names, so common among those of the Presbyterian and Congregational denominations, indicates that these men were of Catholic stock when they, or their fathers, immigrated. The first settlers of the "Blue Grass" state were from Virginia, North Carolina and Pennsylvania,—nearly all of this stock, which no doubt accounts for the gallantry and beauty of the modern Kentuckians, men and women, and the superior quality of the whiskey and horses, for the usquebaugh, or "mountain dew," was first distilled in Ireland, and when first tasted by the sluggish Saxons, the effect was such on their thick blood, muddled by beer, that they considered it good not only as a beverage, but as "cure-all" for medicinal purposes.

James McBride, an Irishman, has the credit of being the first white man to enter the territory, "paddling his canoe up the Kentucky river in 1745." Twenty years later Col. George Croghan, the well-known Indian agent of the same stock, was at Shawane town, on the Ohio river.

When Daniel Boone left North Carolina for Kentucky in 1769, he was accompanied by James Mooney, John Stewart, Joseph Holden, John Findlay and William Cool, all but the leader being of Irish stock.

In 1775, James, George and Robert McAfee, and James McCowen went to the territory on a surveying tour. In 1778 Capt. James Grattan, John Tuel and John McManus were among those who laid the permanent foundation of the city of Louisville. Bryan's station was one of the earliest garrisons for protection against the Indians, and two of the prominent Indian fighters were Captains Orr and Shannon.

Captain Flynn was one of the founders of the town of Columbia, 1787, and Dr. John Connelly was agent in 1778 for the British government in the territory. The first newspaper established northwest of the Ohio, in Cincinnati, was by William Maxwell, of the same stock.

Col. John Lutteral, an Irishman, was one of a party which left North Carolina for Boonesboro', Ky., in April, 1775. He was one of the pioneers and a noted man for years. He was accompanied by John Hart and John Kennedy. Daniel Boone was the leader. Captain Flynn, who has been mentioned as one of the founders of Columbia, had as associates Francis Dunleavy and John Riley.

Among the first settlers of Harrodsburgh were the families of McGarry and Hogan, welcome acquisitions on account of their wives and children. Major McGarry was one of the bravest, as well as one of the best known, Indian fighters in Kentucky, having for an associate a brother Celt named Major McBride, and another named Captain Bulger. The recital of their deeds would alone fill a good-sized volume.

In an attack on Bryan's station, a garrison named after another Celt, by a party of 500 Indians, in 1782, the savages were repulsed, but some of the women were killed. This enraged the whites in the vicinity, and a party of 160 met at the station to arrange for the pursuit and punishment of the Indians. The cooler heads, led by Daniel Boone, tried to dissuade the hotheads from making the attempt, but in the midst of the discussion the impetuous McGarry, putting spurs to his horse, cried out for all but the cowards to follow him, and galloped in the direction taken by the savage foe. Every man of the 160, nettled by the taunt, followed him, but the result which was predicted, followed. They fell into an ambush and sixty of the number were killed, among them McBride and Bulger. McGarry fought like a madman and escaped unhurt.

Among the first Presbyterian ministers in the state were James McCready, William McGill, Samuel McAdoo, Henry Delaney, A. M. Bryan, William McGee, William McMahan and John Dunleavy; and among the first Methodist ministers were James O'Cull, William Burke, William McMahan and John and William McGee, all Irish enough in appearance to be staunch Catholics of the old Milesian type, and it is not unlikely their fathers may have been.

Among those who distinguished themselves in the history of the state as legislators, soldiers or writers, were Wm. T. Barry, who was chief justice of the court of appeals in 1825; one of a commission to digest a plan of schools for common education; lieutenant-governor in 1820; member of the National House of Representatives in 1810-'11; and in the United States Senate in 1814-'16.

Gen. John Adair held high command in the War of 1812-'15; received the thanks of the Kentucky legislature for gallantry at New Orleans; was governor of Kentucky in 1820; in the National House of Representatives 1814-'16, and had served in the United States Senate in 1805-'06. John Rowan was secretary of state in 1804; Benjamin Logan was presidential elector in 1793, William Logan in 1809, and Robert Ewing, William Irvine, William Casey and William Logan in 1813.

The indomitable Matthew Lyon who went from Vermont to Kentucky was again sent from

Kentucky to congress in 1829-'33-'35, and his son, Chittenden Lyon, was there in 1827-'35. Colonel Chittenden Lyon was a veritable giant in size, being considerably over six feet in height and weighing over 350 pounds. The admixture of Irish and Yankee blood in his make-up, if anything, increased the pugnacious spirit inherited from his father, who had married one of the Vermont Chittendens; and the stories told of his prowess as a wrestler and a boxer are countless.

Being at one time a candidate for a public office, when the margin was close, he was approached by a political opponent, his rival in fisticuffs as well as in politics, and fully his equal in size and weight, and challenged to a boxing match, the condition being that the loser would vote for the winner. This Lyon agreed to, and they went at it, over 700 pounds of bone and muscle. After a severe contest the spectators interfered and it was declared a draw, Lyon, however, receiving his rival's vote.

Thomas Dougherty was clerk of the House of Representatives in 1815. Among native Kentuckians who served in Congress from 83 other states were James B. Foley from Indiana, 1857-'59; Willis A. Gorman from the same state, 1849-'53, and also a major-general in the Civil War; Edward A. Hannegan from the same state, in 1855-'57; and Cornelius L. L. Leary from Maryland.

Among the noted military men of the Irish stock were Generals John Boyle, Adair, Croghan and Commander Prendergast.

Among Kentucky poets were Dr. John M. Harney, brother to Gen. W. S. Harney, Theodore O'Hara, Gen. W. O. Butler, W. D. Gallagher, Noble Butler and William M. Harney. Among legislators and educators, in addition to those already named, were McNamara, Hogan, Kane O'Hara, "the great educator" and father of Colonel Theodore, the poet; Judge James O'Hara, brother to Kane, and Major James O'Hara, son of the Judge. John McGill, James McGinty, Cassidy, O'Bamon, Kennan and Finley were also honored names in the "dark and bloody ground."

Michael Cassidy, born in Ireland and a soldier of the Revolution, went to Kentucky in 1782. He was small in stature, being barely five feet in height, but he made up in courage what he lacked in size, and was, in addition, as tough and wiry as a hickory sapling. He was considered one of the most noted Indian fighters in his day, and many anecdotes have been printed about him.

Dr. John M. Harney, mentioned elsewhere, went to Kentucky from Delaware. He was born in 1789. He was the son of Major Thomas Harney. Major Benjamin F. Harney was an elder brother. In 1847 he was the senior surgeon in the United States army. A younger brother was Major-General W. S. Harney, who distinguished himself in the Florida and Mexican War. He was prominent for a while at the outbreak of the Civil War, being in command at St. Louis until

relieved by General Fremont.

Dr. John M. Harney married the daughter of another Celt, the celebrated John Rowan, in his day one of the best known and respected men in Kentucky. In his latter years Dr. Harney returned to the faith of his fathers, dying in the Catholic fold at Bardstown, the original seat of Catholicity in Kentucky, on January 15, 1825. Gen. John Adair, for whom the county of that name was called, was born in South Carolina in 1757. He served in the Revolutionary War. He was one of Kentucky's pioneers and first citizens. His name denotes his origin.

Daniel Boone, it is said, was a descendant of one of the original Catholic settlers of Maryland. Let that be as it may, some of the 84name are still found in Maryland, who cling to the old faith. His is the greatest name among the early pioneers of the state. Boyle county was named for the Hon. John Boyle, for many years chief justice of Kentucky, who was a native of Virginia. Butler county received its name from Major-General Richard Butler of Pennsylvania, who fought through the Revolutionary War and was killed in St. Clair's disastrous defeat, November 4, 1791.

Few of the prominent families, not only of Kentucky but of any state in the Union, have been so distinguished in many ways as this of General Butler. The emigrant ancestor was Thomas Butler, born in Kilkenny, Ireland, April 8, 1720. Five of his sons attained eminence in America. Of these, Richard, William and Thomas were, like their father, natives of Ireland. Percival and Edward were born in Pennsylvania. All were officers in the Revolutionary War. Edward was too young at first, but entered it before its close. Richard was the second in command of Morgan's rifle regiment. He was afterwards its colonel and commanded Wayne's left in the attack on Stony Point. All these brothers and their immediate descendants were engaged in the military service of their country, in all the wars before 1800; while their survivors were in the war of 1812, and not less than nine of a younger generation were in the Mexican War.

Gen. Percival Butler migrated to Kentucky in 1784. His son, Col. Thomas L. Butler, was aide to General Jackson in the battle of New Orleans. A second son, Gen. Wm. O. Butler, also served in the war of 1812, received the commendations of General Jackson for bravery at New Orleans, was afterwards appointed on Jackson's staff and was a major-general in the Mexican War. The third son, Richard P. Butler, was assistant adjutant-general in the campaign of 1812.

Campbell county takes its name from Col. John Campbell, a native of Ireland. He received a grant of four thousand acres of land, located near Louisville, and during life was one of Kentucky's noted men. Carroll county takes its name from Charles Carroll, of Carrollton.

Casey county derives its name from Col. Thomas Casey, who went from Virginia to Kentucky in 1779. Daviess county was named in honor of Joseph H. Daviess, who fell at Tippecanoe. He was born in Virginia, of an Irish father and a Scotch mother. "The warm heart, free and off-hand, and ready sentiment told in language 85plainer than words, that the blood of Erin flowed fresh in

his veins.”

Fleming county was named for Col. John Fleming, who was born in Virginia. Fulton county was named for Robert Fulton. Hart county derived its name from Capt. N. G. T. Hart. His father, Col. Thomas Hart, was from Maryland. Kenton county takes its name from the celebrated Simon Kenton. “His father was an Irishman, his mother of Scotch descent.” He was born in Virginia. His name is familiar to every reader of the early history of Kentucky.

Knox county was named for Gen. Henry Knox of the Revolution. He was born in Boston of Irish parents, and was a member of “The Irish Society” of that city. Logan county derives its name from Gen. Benjamin Logan. His parents came from Ireland. He was born in Pennsylvania. His is one of Kentucky’s great names. It is claimed that his son, William Logan, was the first white child born in Kentucky. McCracken county was named for Capt. Virgil McCracken, who was killed in the war of 1812. Meade county was named for Capt. James Meade, who was killed in the same engagement with Captain McCracken. Montgomery county derives its name from Gen. Richard Montgomery, who was killed at Quebec. Wayne county was named in honor of Gen. Anthony Wayne, who was born in Pennsylvania. His name appears on the roll of members of the “Friendly Sons of St. Patrick” of Philadelphia.

Another noted Kentucky family was that of the O’Haras. Kane O’Hara went to Kentucky in the latter part of the eighteenth century, and became in time one of its most distinguished educators. He was accompanied to this country by his father and two younger brothers. Of the two latter, Charles went to Georgia, where he followed the same profession; James remained in Kentucky teaching for some years, but later was admitted to the bar, and acquired the reputation of a profound lawyer and able advocate.

He was the father of Judge James O’Hara, Jr. Among the large number of pupils of Kane O’Hara who became famous after, were several of the Marshalls and Browns,—Major Croghan of the United States army, and President Zachary Taylor. When on his way to Washington to be inaugurated, General Taylor departed from his line of travel in order to visit his old teacher in Frankfort. “It was an affecting scene when the great soldier, then an old man, bowed himself in grateful homage before the venerable preceptor of his youth, and in few but earnest words, thanked him for the care bestowed on his early education, to which he attributed all the achievements of his after life.”

Col. Theodore O’Hara, poet, journalist, and soldier, was the son of Kane O’Hara. He was educated by his father with the greatest care, but received his collegiate finish, and graduated, at St. Joseph’s College, Bardstown, with the first honors of his class. His “Bivouac of the Dead” has made his name immortal:

“The muffled drum’s sad roll has beat

The soldier's last tattoo!
No more on life's parade shall meet
That brave and fallen few;
On fame's eternal camping-ground
Their silent tents are spread,
And Glory guards with solemn round
The bivouac of the dead.

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Rest on, embalmed and sainted dead!
Dear as the blood ye gave;
No impious footsteps here shall tread
The herbage of your graves;
Nor shall your glory be forgot
While Fame her record keeps,
Or honor points the hallowed spot
Where valor proudly sleeps."

A great and magnanimous government has had these verses, the composition of an ex-Confederate soldier, cast separately in bronze and set up in appropriate places in all the National cemeteries.

It is worthy of mention that a lady bearing a now historic name, at least in song, Mrs. Ann McGinty, brought the first spinning-wheel into Kentucky, and made the first linen in the territory. She is also credited with making the first butter there, and with bringing within its borders the first chickens, ducks and hogs. The first Catholic priest in Kentucky was Father Whalen, who was in Bardstown in 1787. There were then fifty Catholic families in the state. The first families to settle there were those of Daniel Boone, Hugh McGary, Thomas Denton and Richard Hogan. As has been mentioned, the first practising physician was Dr. Hart, and the first school teacher was Mrs. Coomes, both Catholics from Maryland.

Col. Matthew Lyon, mentioned elsewhere, is alluded to as the most remarkable character

among the public men of southwestern Kentucky. He was born in Wicklow county, Ireland, in 1746. His father, for being engaged in conspiracy against the English government, was tried, condemned and executed. To secure his passage, Matthew bound himself to a sea captain to work for twelve months after his arrival in America. The captain sold him to a Connecticut farmer for two bulls; he served his time faithfully and became a free man. His favorite by-word was forever after "By the bulls that bought me." It is worthy of record that Rudyard Kipling has put these words in the mouth of one of his recently created characters, without, however, giving Matthew proper credit. It is very evident that Colonel Lyon never forgot his father's execution, for he was, up to the day of his death, an inveterate hater of the English government.

After he gained his freedom, he made his home in Vermont. He founded the town of Fairhaven in 1783, where he built saw and grist-mills, an iron foundry, engaged in paper making from basswood, and a variety of other occupations. He served in the Vermont legislature ten years, and for some time was assistant judge. He served in congress from his adopted state. He was one of the first arrested under the alien and sedition laws, was convicted of a libel on the president, John Adams, fined one thousand dollars, and served a jail sentence in addition.

While in congress, on the thirty-sixth ballot he decided the protracted seven days' voting for president by casting his vote and that of Vermont for Thomas Jefferson, making him president in preference to Aaron Burr. Shortly after the beginning of the present century he went to Kentucky with his family. He served in the legislature of his newly adopted state, and from it, between 1803 and 1811, was in congress eight years.

Eighteen years after his death congress voted to refund with interest the amount of the fine inflicted on him in 1798. This was done on July 4, 1840. He had a son of the same name who was the father of Gen. H. B. Lyon. Col. Chittenden Lyon, Matthew's oldest son, represented his state in congress eight years, and was fully as impetuous and honest as his father. Of Matthew Lyon, Gov. John Reynolds, of Illinois, said, "His Irish impulses were honest, and always on the side of human freedom. His leading trait of character was his zeal and enthusiasm, almost a madness itself in any cause he espoused." This covered his zeal.

The opinion of the members of the first Continental congress, of the Irish in Ireland, and in the colonies, is well expressed in an address issued by that body in 1774. In part it said: "Your parliament had done us no wrong; you had ever been friendly to the rights of mankind, and we acknowledge with pleasure and gratitude that your nation has produced patriots who have nobly distinguished themselves in the cause of humanity and America. Accept our most grateful acknowledgments for the friendly disposition you have always shown towards us."

The record made by the men whose names appear in this paper, is evidence that they were worthy of the tribute paid in this address. What the feeling was in Ireland, a little more than a year later, was well described by Gen. Ethan Allen, who said that the people of Cork when they

found he was in the harbor, a prisoner on one of his majesty's vessels, sent him a plentiful supply of money, food, and clothing; that it aroused the ire of Captain Simonds, his keeper, who put an end to the contributions, saying that "the damned rebels of America should not be feasted by the damned rebels of Ireland."