

Civil War Talk: The Irish in the Civil War

Introduction

Irish immigrants to the United States faced hardship and bigotry. Many came to escape death from the Great Famine. Heavily poor and unskilled from rural Ireland and mostly Roman Catholic, they sought work, the men as laborers and the women as domestic servants. They spawned the Know-Nothing Party dedicated to expelling Catholic Irish. Politically, they were drawn to the Democratic party and its leader Stephen Douglas. At the outset of the Civil War, they were the second most immigrant group in Cleveland, behind the Germans.

Yet, when the war began, the Irish volunteered in large numbers. From around a million, an estimated 150,000 served in the Union armed forces. Many were recruited as they landed in Eastern seaports. The three most prominent Irish-Americans who urged support for Lincoln and the war were New York City Archbishop John Hughes and two Fenians – Michael Corcoran and Thomas Francis Meagher. “Fenians” were dedicated to the liberation of Ireland from British rule.

The first Union casualty of the Civil War was Irish. After the surrender of Ft. Sumter on April 14, 1861, the garrison was allowed to give a 100-gun salute to the fallen fort. On the 47th round, a cannon misfired and Irish immigrant Private Daniel Hough from Tipperary and the 1st United States Artillery Regiment died from the explosion. A second Irish immigrant soldier – Ed Galloway from Skibbereen, County Cork - later also died.

And marking one end to the Civil War, Lt. Edward Doherty, whose family emigrated from County Sligo and who served in Michael Corcoran’s Irish Legion, led the 16th New York Cavalry unit to the Garrett farm in Northern Virginia and the capture and death of Lincoln’s assassin, John Wilkes Booth

Units

North

8th Ohio (Company B, Cleveland’s Hibernian Guards)

In 1847, Cleveland Irish-Americans formed the Hibernian Guards militia. When the war came, they enlisted in the 8th Ohio Volunteer Infantry and became

Company B. Its first engagements were in (West) Virginia and the Shenandoah Valley in 1862. On September 17, 1862, at the battle of Antietam, the 8th Ohio attacked the Confederates in the Sunken Road that became known as Bloody Lane. Of the 32 members of Company B, 28 were casualties. For its bravery, the Corps commander Sumner named the brigade the “Gibraltar Brigade.” The 8th Ohio next distinguished itself on July 3, 1863, at the battle of Gettysburg. Reduced to only @ 200, half of whom were casualties, it turned back the far left of the Pettigrew part of the Pickett Charge, capturing hundreds of Confederates. Two of its members won the Medal of Honor. In 1864, it participated in Grant’s Overland campaign from the Wilderness to the siege of Petersburg. Its bloodiest engagement was the battle of Spotsylvania Court House. Thomas Francis Galwey (more about him later) described it;

“Nothing can describe the confusion, the savage blood curdling yells, the murderous faces, the awful curses, super human hardihood, and the grisly horror of the melee! Of all the battles I took part in, Bloody Angle at Spotsylvania exceed all of the rest in stubbornness, ferocity, and in courage. I cannot understand how any of us survived.”

During the war, the 8th OVI lost 132 in battle and 73 to disease. Company B suffered 45 casualties out of its total of 101 members. At its mustering out in Cleveland, only 97 men out of a total of 990 who served in the 8th OVI were present.

10th Ohio (“Bloody Tinth”)

This regiment was organized under the command of William Haines Lytle. It fought in (West) Virginia in 1861, including at the battle of Carnifex Ferry on September 10. It charged a Confederate camp ahead of the rest of the Union force and was beaten back. Lytle was wounded and his horse was killed. [Four color bearers were wounded]. In 1862, the Tenth Ohio was assigned to the Army of Ohio and participated in the battle of Perryville on October 8, 1862, where Lytle was again wounded (and captured but paroled). When he recovered from his wound, he became a brigade commander in Phil Sheridan’s division. It was assigned to Provost duty at the HQ of William Rosecrans’ Army of the Cumberland but saw action at the battle of Stone’s River (December 31, 1862-January 1, 1863) and participated in the Tullahoma campaign in 1863 leading up to the battle of Chickamauga in northern Georgia.

On September 20, 1863, the 10th Ohio was among the Union regiments that faced the breakthrough of the right wing of Rosecrans' army. Trying to rally Union troops of Phil Sheridan's division, William Lytle, the commander of the 10th Ohio, was killed. His corpse was protected by Confederates who had known him previously. Lytle was known nationally for his poetry. He came from a pioneer Cincinnati family. His last words were "Brave boys, brave boys". Where he died on the battlefield was named "Lytle Hill." James Garfield was a pallbearer at this funeral.

The 10th Ohio fought under Sheridan in the battle for Chattanooga, including Missionary Ridge on November 25, 1863. The 10th Ohio went on to fight in Sherman's Atlanta campaign through the battle of Resaca, Georgia on May 14-15, 1864.

69th New York/Irish Brigade

The genesis of the Irish Brigade was the 69th New York State Militia regiment, commanded by Irish Fenian exile Michael Corcoran. Corcoran gained renown in October, 1860, when he refused to allow this regiment to participate in a parade to honor the visiting Prince of Wales. For this, he was court martialed and jailed. He was defended by fellow Irish exile Thomas Francis Meagher. After the attack on Fort Sumter, the 69th voted to volunteer to defend the Union. The governor of New York then quashed Corcoran's court martial. The 69th left New York City for Washington City under its green silk regimental banner.

Assigned to the command of Ohioan William Tecumseh Sherman, at the first battle of Bull Run, it twice assaulted Confederates holding Henry Hill. It fought Irish-American dock workers serving with the Louisiana Zouaves under Roberdeau Wheat from New Orleans. During the federal retreat, Corcoran was captured and the 69th suffered 192 casualties.

In December, 1861, Meagher replaced Corcoran as commander. Joined by two other largely Irish-American New York regiments – the 63rd and 88th – this became the Irish Brigade of the Army of the Potomac. Father William Corby, a Jesuit from Notre Dame university, became its chaplain. The Irish Brigade was assigned to Israel Richardson's division.

The Irish Brigade fought in McClellan's 1862 Peninsula campaign and fought in several battles, suffering almost 500 more casualties. It was then reinforced by the 29th Massachusetts but this did not sit well with either the Irish or the New Englanders. Instead, the Irish 28th Massachusetts replaced the 29th after the battle of Antietam in western Maryland. The 9th Massachusetts was another Irish

regiment but was not part of the Irish Brigade. On September 17, 1862, the Irish Brigade charged Confederates entrenched in the Sunken Road known after as “Bloody Lane” and suffered 540 casualties out of the brigade’s 1,000 members and “Fighting Dick” Richardson was mortally wounded. Corcoran had been released earlier from captivity but did not return to lead the Irish Brigade. Instead, he formed an Irish Legion. After the battle of Antietam, the Irish Brigade was again reinforced, this time by the 116th Pennsylvania from Philadelphia, which contained many Irish. In the wake of the battle, Lincoln announced the issuance of the Emancipation Proclamation, which was opposed by many of the army’s Irish soldiers.

Lincoln replaced McClellan with Ambrose Burnside. He intended to outflank Lee’s army via Fredericksburg but a delay in obtaining the equipment to cross the Rappahannock River allowed Lee’s army to entrench. On December, 13, 1862, Burnside ordered repeated suicidal attacks against Confederates fortified in another sunken road behind a stone wall on Marye’s Heights. With sprigs of green boxwood in their caps, the troops of the Irish Brigade gallantly charged the Confederates without success, taking 545 more casualties (including 55 officers) out of its 1,200 number. One of the Confederate units behind the wall was the 24th Georgia, commanded by Robert Emmet McMillan, Sr., born in County Antrim. While not an Irish-American regiment, his younger son commanded an Irish company in that regiment. On January 16, 1863, a requiem mass was held at St. Patrick’s Cathedral in New York City to honor the dead of the Irish Brigade.

The Irish Brigade saw Meagher depart when he resigned on May 8 from the army because he was not allowed to leave to recruit replacements for the brigade’s losses. Thus, on the second day of the battle of Gettysburg, the Irish Brigade was commanded by Patrick Kelly of the 88th NY. Before entering the Wheat Field to confront the advancing Confederates, Father Corby famously stood on a rock to give mass absolution to the Irish Brigade. A memorial to him stands on that spot. Amid savage fighting, over 200 of the brigade’s 530 engaged were casualties. In December, Michael Corcoran died of an accident.

In Grant’s 1864 Overland campaign, the Irish Brigade lost about one-third of its number. This included two commanders – Richard Byrnes at Cold Harbor and Patrick Kelly at Petersburg. And at the battle of Sailor’s Creek, General Thomas Alfred Smyth, who had commanded the Irish Brigade at the battle of the Wilderness in May, 1864, was wounded and died on April 9, 1865, the day that Lee surrendered his army. At the surrender of Lee’s army at Appomattox, the re-organized Irish Brigade was commanded by Robert Nugent, originally with the

69th New York. During the course of the war, of the 7,718 who served in the unit, almost 1,000 were killed or mortally wounded in combat and another 3,000 or so were injured. Eleven members were awarded the Medal of Honor.

69th Pennsylvania

This regiment was recruited from several militia companies of Philadelphia composed of Irish immigrants. Its first battle was the disastrous Union defeat of Ball's Bluff on October 21, 1861. [Its attempt to join with the 69th New York was opposed by Pennsylvania Governor Andrew Gregg Curtin. Instead] It became part of the Philadelphia Brigade. It served in McClellan's Peninsula campaign, and then at Antietam. After that battle, Dennis O'Kane became its commander. At the battle of Fredericksburg, it was one of the units which futilely charged the stone wall on Marye's Heights. At Gettysburg, the 69th was the most heroic of the 2nd Corps defenders of Cemetery Ridge against Pickett's Charge. When other regiments defending the stone wall at the Angle retreated, the 69th held its ground in hand to hand combat. Colonel O'Kane was mortally wounded and during the battle the regiment lost over half of its number.

The regiment served in the army's 1864 Overland campaign[(with a member awarded the Medal of Honor at the battle of Spotsylvania Court House)], the siege of Petersburg, and the pursuit and capture of Lee's army. Of its original thousand enlistees, only fifty-six remained at the war's end.

90th Illinois (Chicago "Irish Legion")

In Chicago (in addition to Mulligan's 23rd Illinois), in 1862, Father Dennis Dunne of St. Patrick's Church, inspired the recruitment of Irish-Americans to form the 90th Illinois Volunteer Infantry, which came to be known as Chicago's Irish Legion. Owen Stuart (born in Armagh in County Tyrone), captain of the Emmet Guards Irish-American militia and Alderman Redmond Sheridan were important figures in the recruitment of Irish-Americans in and around Chicago and then served in the regiment. Its make-up was as follows: More than 70 percent were born in Ireland and two out of three officers were born in Ireland (Swan, p. 15). Recommended by Michael Corcoran, Timothy O'Meara (born in Tipperary) was from New York and fought and was captured at the battle of Ball's Bluff, where he helped many Union soldiers escape back across the Potomac River. O'Meara became the Colonel of the 90th Illinois (November, 1862).

Heading South, its first combat was a skirmish in Mississippi with Earl Van Dorn's command. On June 1, 1863, it sailed to join the siege of Vicksburg. It was sent to fend off a possible attack by Joe Johnston to relieve Vicksburg, which did not happen. It became part of the command of Hugh Ewing, brother-in-law of William Tecumseh Sherman. Sent to relieve the besieged Army of the Cumberland in Chattanooga, it was part of Sherman's assault on November 24-25, 1863, on Patrick Cleburne's troops defending Tunnel Hill on the Northern end of Missionary Ridge. Both O'Meara and Stuart (Lt. Colonel) were shot off their horses and O'Meara died. [The regiment suffered 117 casualties (14 killed)]. It was then part of Sherman's advance to Knoxville in support of Burnside's corps facing Longstreet.

In Spring, 1864, the 90th Illinois was part of Sherman's campaign to capture Atlanta. [At the battle of Resaca on May 13-14, it lost 19 casualties. At the battles of Atlanta (July 22) and Ezra Church (July 28), it suffered another 52 casualties. Finally, at the battle of Jonesboro on August 31, it suffered another 17 casualties before Hood evacuated Atlanta.] It totaled 90 casualties in four major battles of the campaign.

On November 15, 1864, 219 members of the 90th Illinois left Atlanta for Sherman's march to the sea through Georgia. Arriving outside Savannah, the regiment was part of Hazen's division which on December 13, 1864, attacked and quickly captured Fort McAllister guarding the approach to the coastal city. [The regiment suffered 3 killed and 14 wounded]. Beginning in January, 1865, it participated in Sherman's Carolinas campaign. [At the battle of Bentonville on March 19, the regiment was present but not engaged]. Before returning to Chicago, the 90th Illinois participated in the Grand Review of the Armies on May 24, 1865, in Washington City:

“It was indeed a proud day for the men of the Irish Legion as they marched in route step with the long, swinging gait of veterans down Pennsylvania Avenue in a twenty-file front under their new emerald green flag emblazoned with the golden harp, symbol of Ireland dating back to the seventeenth century...The elegance of their flag contrasted sharply with their worn uniforms and footwear, which showed the effects of hard service.” (Swan, p. 229)

The last service of the Irish Legion was to accompany the body of Father Dunne after his death on December 23, 1868, from his church to the railroad depot for his burial in Evanston, Illinois.

9th Connecticut

This Irish-American regiment (the “Irish Volunteers”) [from Connecticut cities like Hartford, New Haven, and Bridgeport] was organized under the auspices of Governor Buckingham. Its first major assignment was ditch digging for the failed canal that Grant had hoped would allow the U.S. Navy to bypass Vicksburg. On August 5, 1862, it participated in the defense of Baton Rouge, Louisiana and then in the defense of New Orleans until April, 1864. It then joined Sheridan’s Army of the Shenandoah as part of the 19th Corps and fought against Jubal Early’s surprise attack and in Sheridan’s victorious counter-attack at the battle of Cedar Creek on October 19, 1864. [It lost 253 soldiers to combat deaths and disease].

South (@ 20,000 Irish-Americans served)

6th Louisiana (“Tigers”)

At the outset of the war, Chatham Roberdeau Wheat organized a battalion of tough workers from the New Orleans waterfront, many Irish immigrants. In Zouave uniforms, it fought at the battle of First Manassas where Wheat was seriously wounded but survived. Then, they were with Stonewall Jackson in his 1862 Shenandoah campaign. They became known as the “Tigers.” Fighting in Lee’s Seven Days campaign against McClellan, their ranks declined from 500 to only 100. At the last battle at Gaines’ Mill, Wheat was killed. On August 9, 1862, the battalion was disbanded and the remaining Tigers were assigned to other Louisiana regiments (including the 6th), all of which shared the name “Tigers.”

At the battle of Antietam, the 6th suffered heavy casualties, including its commander, defending the West Woods. At Gettysburg on the second day, the Louisiana Tigers unsuccessfully attacked the Union defenders of Culp’s Hill. They were part of Jubal Early’s 1864 Shenandoah campaign. At the 1864 battle at Spotsylvania, the Louisiana brigade defended the Confederate salient (the “Bloody Angle”) against repeated Federal assaults.

10th Tennessee (“Sons of Erin”)

The 10th Tennessee Volunteer Infantry was called “The Sons of Erin” when it was organized because so many of its members from in and around Nashville were Irish-Americans. Its Lt. Colonel became Randal McGavock, the mayor of Nashville. Altogether, 720 men served in this regiment during the war. Its first assignment was to help construct Fort Henry on the Cumberland River to defend Nashville. [In a brief skirmish as it retreated from the defense of the fort, the 10th

supposedly got the name of the “Bloody Tenth.” Its biographer Ed Gleeson calls this a myth]. It prevailed in a skirmish on February 13, 1862, defending Fort Donelson against the Union attack of John McClernand’s corps. However, with the Confederate surrender of the fort to “Unconditional Surrender” Ulysses S. Grant on February 16, the 10th along with the other trapped defenders went into captivity: [the officers eventually to Fort Warren in Boston Harbor and] the enlisted men were sent to Camp Douglas in Chicago (whose commandant was Irish-American James Mulligan, commander of the 23rd Illinois). When the imprisoned members of the regiment were exchanged in September, 1862, only 383 rejoined the 10th Tennessee. The 41st Tennessee was added to it. And after the death of its first commander [German Adolphus Heiman on November 16, 1862], McGavock assumed command.

The 10th Tennessee was involved in the defense of Vicksburg and Port Hudson on the Mississippi against the first Federal attempts to liberate the river from Confederate control at Chickasaw Bluffs and Port Hudson but was not engaged in either battle. It was however engaged in the failed Confederate attempt at Raymond on May 12, 1863, to stop Grant’s invading army. Its commander McGavock was killed leading the consolidated 10th and 30th Tennessee regiments in an attack. Command of the 10th fell to its Lt. Colonel William (“Battlin Billie”) Grace. [The Tenth suffered 52 casualties out of 254 engaged]. On July 4, 1863, the 10th was not among the besieged Confederates under General John Pemberton who surrendered Vicksburg to Ulysses S. Grant.

The Tenth’s next battle would be among its most memorable and deadly – Chickamauga. On September 19, 1863, its sharpshooters battalion fought with a battery at Reed’s Bridge against the troops of Irish-born (County Mayo) Robert H.G. Minty of John S. Wilder’s “Lightning Brigade” of mounted infantry. On the second day, the Tenth participated in the Confederate breakthrough of the right wing of William Rosecrans’ Army of the Cumberland and ended the day joining in the attack against George Thomas’s defense of the left wing of the Union army on Horseshoe Ridge/Snodgrass Hill. [The Tenth’s position was in reserve at the South end of Steedman’s Hill at the South end of Horseshoe Ridge, only to be driven off by the 113th Ohio.] Its commander William Grace had his horse shot out from under him but he was grabbed by an Irish courier. Due to a back injury that incapacitated him for months and the death of two other officers, a 23 year-old became regimental commander. [The Tenth suffered 28 casualties out of 190 effectives].

With the defeated Army of the Cumberland besieged in Chattanooga, Grant arrived and replaced Rosecrans with Thomas (the “Rock of Chickamauga”). In November 25, 1863, the Army of the Cumberland unexpectedly and without orders climbed Missionary Ridge and routed Bragg’s army. Occupying a position in the center of the defense of that part of the ridge, the 10th was the last Confederate unit to retreat from the ridge as that part of Bragg’s army collapsed and fled. The 10th suffered 32 casualties (of whom 27 were captured) out of 104 effectives, leaving only 80 remaining. [Between May 12 and November 25, in three major battles, the Tenth saw 23 killed and 109 wounded or captured (or both)].

With its much reduced size, the 10th participated both in the 1864 campaign to prevent Sherman’s armies from capturing Atlanta and then in John Bell Hood’s disastrous invasion of Tennessee. At Dalton, Georgia, in their winter camp, the Tenth saw the arrival of Father Emmeran Bliemel, a German-American Benedictine monk, to become the chaplain of this Irish-American regiment. [During the long retreat of the Army of the Tennessee, the 10th was in four engagements without casualties until the very end at Jonesborough on August 28, when the final Confederate defeat forced Hood, to abandon Atlanta.] As the 10th’s commander Grace lay dying at the battle of Jonesboro, Father Bliemel administered the last Catholic rite to him, only to be beheaded himself by a cannonball. Bliemel was the first American Catholic chaplain to be killed on the battlefield in American military history. [Also killed was the long time color bearer of the Tenth. In addition, the Tenth suffered another 15 casualties]. Overall, of 69 effectives, 34 were casualties overall.

This left only 35 to serve with Hood against Schofield and Thomas in Tennessee. At the slaughter at Franklin on November 30, the Tenth suffered another 12 casualties and at the disintegration of Hood’s army outside of Nashville on December 16, 20 of the remaining 24 were captured.

The final sad chapter of the 10th Tennessee came at Bentonville, North Carolina on March 19, 1865 at Joe Johnston’s doomed attempt to attack a wing of Sherman’s advancing armies. Of the 4 remaining members of the Tenth, three (all officers) were captured, leaving only the lonely commissary sergeant Bernie McCabe to be at the Confederate surrender on May 1. Of the 254 who actually fought with the Tenth throughout the war, a total of 121 were casualties.

Individuals (12 – 10 military [5 killed] and 2 civilian)

North

Thomas Francis Galwey

Galwey's family emigrated from London to settle on a farm east of Cleveland. At the outset of the war, he joined Cleveland's Hibernian Guard, which became Company B of the 8th Ohio Volunteer Infantry (OVI) – at the age of 15. His Civil War diary has been published as *The Valiant Hours: Narrative of "Captain Brevet", an Irish-American in the Army of the Potomac*. I quote liberally from it in my book on *Cleveland and the Civil War*. During the war, Galwey was wounded at the battles of Antietam and Gettysburg. Galwey rose from Sergeant to Lieutenant commanding the regiment. His postwar career was incredible: he earned four academic degrees, including a Ph.D; he learned ten languages, including Latin and Greek; he became a lawyer, journalist, and educator.

Paddy O'Rorke

He was born in County Cavan, Ireland in March, 1837. When he was only one year old, his family emigrated to Rochester, New York. After his father's death, he became a marble cutter to support his family. He enrolled at West Point and graduated first in his class in 1861. He participated in the first battle of Bull Run and then in battles along the Southern Atlantic coast. In September, 1862, he became commander of the 140th New York infantry. [He led his regiment at the battle of Fredericksburg but at the battle of Chancellorsville he temporarily commanded a brigade, which included his own regiment.]

At the battle of Gettysburg on the second day, O'Rorke performed heroically on Little Round Top. As his regiment climbed the ridge, General Gouverneur Warren ordered it away from its assigned position and to meet the onrushing Confederate assault. O'Rorke led the way but was immediately mortally wounded. His killer was immediately killed with 17 wounds in his body. O'Rorke's courageous action helped to beat back the Confederate assault. A memorial to the 140th and O'Rorke stands on Little Round Top.

Dennis O'Kane

He was born in Coleraine, County Londonderry. At the beginning of the Civil War, O'Kane was a saloon keeper in Philadelphia. He recruited volunteers, who later became members of the 69th Pennsylvania Infantry with O'Kane its Lieutenant Colonel. In November, 1862, O'Kane was promoted to command of the regiment. He was mortally wounded on the third day of the battle of Gettysburg leading the

regiment in its tenacious defense of the Angle on Cemetery Ridge. Its monument on the battlefield stands where O’Kane was killed.

Thomas A. Smyth

He was born in County Cork. In 1854, he emigrated to Philadelphia. He joined William Walker’s ill-fated expedition to Central America and then returned to Philadelphia. He moved to Wilmington, Delaware, where he helped establish an Irish militia. In 1861, he enlisted in the 24th Pennsylvania volunteer infantry and then became a major with the 1st Delaware infantry. He was wounded at Gettysburg where the brigade that he commanded defended the stone wall at the Angle against Pickett’s Charge. At the 1864 siege of Petersburg, he commanded the Gibraltar Brigade (which included the 8th Ohio). On April 7, 1865, at Farmville in pursuit of Lee’s retreating army, he was shot by a sniper and died on April 9. He was the last Union general to die in combat in the Civil War.

James A. Mulligan

He was born in Utica, NY of Irish immigrant parents. He moved to Chicago, became a lawyer, and was an officer in the Chicago Shield Guards. He organized an Irish-American 23rd Illinois regiment when the war started. Mulligan is known for two battles: Lexington and Kernstown. On September 13, 1861, when Mulligan’s outnumbered small force was surrounded in Lexington, Missouri by the pro-Confederate Missouri National Guard under Sterling Price, he was forced to surrender. On September 19, 1864, at the third battle of Winchester (Second battle of Kernstown) in the Shenandoah Valley, Mulligan’s brigade, which included the 23rd Illinois, was being surrounded by Jubal Early’s army when Mulligan was mortally wounded. He ordered his men: “Lay me down and save the flag”. He died two days later,

Irish Medal of Honor Awardees

According to Niall O’Dowd, at least there were at least 146 Irish-born Union soldiers who were awarded the Medal of Honor. He singles out Michael Dougherty, a native of County Donegal, of the 13th Pennsylvania Cavalry (his battalion was known as the “Irish Dragoons”). His recognition came from an 1863 battle in Virginia. O’Dowd notes his survival (the only one from his regiment) from imprisonment at the Andersonville prison camp in Georgia and then his survival of the postwar explosion on the Mississippi of the steamship *Sultana* carrying Union veterans home.

Thomas Francis Meagher

Among Union Irish-American military commanders, Thomas Francis Meagher was among the best known and the most controversial. He was born in 1823 in Waterford City, Ireland. His grandfather was a successful businessman in St. John's Newfoundland, Canada, He sent his son Thomas to Waterford, where he too was a successful businessman and then a politician who became the twice-elected Mayor of Waterford and also a member of Parliament. Educated in England, his son Thomas Francis Meagher returned to Ireland in 1843 and became active in the "Young Ireland" movement led by Daniel O'Connell to repeal the Act of Union between England and Ireland. In his famous "Sword Speech", Meagher defied O'Connell by refusing to repudiate violence if necessary to liberate Ireland from British rule. In 1848, after an unsuccessful uprising, Meagher and others were arrested, tried and convicted of sedition and sentenced to death. But, in the face of international condemnation, instead Meagher and the others were exiled for life to Australia and the island of Tasmania[(Van Diemen's Land)]. In 1852, Meagher escaped and arrived via Brazil in New York City on May 27, 1852. There, he became a celebrated Irish nationalist orator and publisher (with John Mitchel) of the *Irish News* newspaper.

With the outbreak of the Civil War, Meagher recruited fellow Irish for the Union army in the 69th Infantry regiment, commanded by fellow Irish nationalist Michael Corcoran. In contrast, Mitchel sided with the South and his three sons fought for the Confederacy (two died). At the first battle of Bull Run, Corcoran was captured and Meagher succeeded him as commander of the 69th. He was commissioned as a Brigadier General and formed the Irish Brigade. After it fought in McClellan's Peninsula campaign in Spring, 1862, Meagher led it at the battle of Antietam on September 17, 1862, in attacking the "Bloody Lane", where it suffered 540 casualties. Meagher was toppled from his horse, leading to claims that he was drunk during the battle. At the battle of Fredericksburg on December 13, the 1,200 man Irish Brigade made a suicidal attack on the Confederates entrenched behind a stone wall on Marye's Heights, suffering enormous casualties. After the battle of Chancellorsville in May, 1863, Meagher's request to return to New York City to recruit for the Irish Brigade was denied and he resigned. He later briefly served in the West before he again resigned from the army. Despite his mixed military record, Meagher was still regarded as a hero by northern Irish-Americans.

After the war, Meagher was named the acting Governor of the Territory of Montana. On the evening of July 1, 1867, Meagher fell from a steamboat into the

Missouri river and drowned. Mystery surrounded the cause. His body was never recovered. He was memorialized by a statue erected in 1905 in Helena, the state capitol, by Irish-American copper miners and in 2004 another statue was erected in his honor in his hometown of Waterford, Ireland.

Phil Sheridan

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Phil Sheridan's birthplace (Ireland or New York) was debatable; his parents were from County Cavan, Ireland. He grew up in Somerset, Ohio. He was only 5 feet, 5 inches tall and was called "Little" Phil. As a West Point cadet, Sheridan was suspended for a year after fighting with a fellow classmate but was reinstated and graduated. His pre-war military service was in the Pacific Northwest.

At the beginning of the Civil War, Sheridan was a quartermaster but in May, 1862, he was appointed to head the 2nd Michigan Cavalry. He was promoted after successful combat in Mississippi in July, 1862, and afterwards was given a horse which he named "Rienzi."

Re-assigned to lead an infantry division at the battle of Perryville, Kentucky, Sheridan's aggressive action helped to compel a Confederate retreat. At the battle of Stone's River at the end of 1862, Sheridan's defense against a Confederate attack led by Patrick Cleburne's division stabilized the Army of the Cumberland and it prevailed the following day against Bragg's army.

At the battle of Chickamauga, Georgia, Sheridan's division was swamped by Longstreet's breakthrough on the second day. But, instead of retreating, Sheridan instead attempted to join George Thomas in his stubborn defense of the army's left wing. At the ensuing battle of Missionary Ridge, Sheridan saluted the Confederates atop Missionary Ridge only to receive fire in return. He then vowed:

"That's damned ungenerous! I shall take those guns for that!"

His troops then joined the unordered attack that routed Bragg's army.

When Grant took control of the Army of the Potomac, he brought Sheridan to take command of its Cavalry Corps, which Sheridan promised to become an aggressive force. During May, 1864, Sheridan led a raid on Richmond that while it failed to penetrate the city's defense, it did lead to the death of Lee's cavalry commander J.E.B. Stuart at Yellow Tavern.

While Sheridan's cavalry combat record during Grant's Overland campaign was mixed, nevertheless, Sheridan was picked, with Lincoln's approval, to lead an army to clear the Confederates, led by Jubal Early after his raid all the way to Washington City, from the Shenandoah Valley. After a slow start, Sheridan's Army of the Shenandoah routed Early's army in successive battles in Fall, 1864.

However, while Sheridan was away, on October 19, Early's outnumbered army routed Sheridan's army at Cedar Creek in a surprise attack. Learning of the battle, Sheridan famously rode Rienzi 20 miles from Winchester to the battlefield, where Sheridan rallied his army. Their ride was celebrated in a famous poem. That afternoon, inspired by Sheridan's arrival, the re-organized Union army routed Early's army and secured the valley (no longer the breadbasket of the Confederacy).

Sheridan returned to the Army of the Potomac. On April 1, 1864, he led the critical Union victory at Five Forks that forced Lee to pull his army from the defense of Petersburg and to evacuate Richmond. In its headlong retreat attempting to escape to join Joe Johnston in North Carolina, Sheridan was instrumental in preventing that, ending in Lee's surrender at Appomattox Court House.

In the postwar, Sheridan served in the Western frontier under Sherman, overseeing the last of the Indian wars. Little known was his important role in saving Yellowstone from development by private interests. In 1883, he succeeded Sherman as Commanding General of the U.S. Army, until his death in 1888,

Timothy O'Sullivan

Irish-American photographer Timothy O'Sullivan was employed during the Civil War by famous Union war photographers Matthew Brady and Alexander Gardner. His most famous photograph was "The Harvest of Death" depicting dead soldiers on the battlefield of Gettysburg.

South

Dooley Family

John Dooley emigrated from Limerick in 1832 and became a prosperous clothing manufacturer in Richmond, Virginia. He helped to organize the Montgomery Guards militia. He and his son John served in the 1st Virginia Infantry., which was

organized by Patrick Theodore Moore, born in Galway. The son was seriously wounded in the forefront of the regiment during Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg but survived to serve 21 months in captivity at Johnson's Island, Ohio before being paroled a few weeks before Lee's surrender in April, 1865. [After the war, Dooley entered the Society of Jesus at Georgetown University but died of tuberculosis in 1873 before he was ordained].

Dick Dowling

In 1863, the Union decided to invade Texas, in part to prevent the French-occupied Mexico from aiding the Confederacy. On September 8, 1863, an amphibious expedition of 22 vessels carrying 5,000 federal troops arrived at the Sabine River. A seven-vessel squadron proceeded upriver to attack Fort Sabine at Sabine Pass. It was defended by the 46 men, mostly Irish-Americans, of the Jeff Davis Guard from Houston and Galveston, commanded by Lt. Dick Dowling. Dowling's family emigrated from County Galway in 1846 to New Orleans. Dowling was a saloon keeper. The Guard had previously been involved in the first unsuccessful defense of Galveston and then its recapture on January 1, 1863. Fort Sabine had only six smooth-bore cannon but incredibly with those guns they fought off the invaders, capturing two Union ships and several hundred sailors and sending the rest of the Union fleet into retreat. The Davis Guard suffered no casualties.

John Mitchel (and Sons)

John Mitchel was born in County Londonderry in 1815. [His father was a Protestant minister]. Mitchel became a Connellite but broke with O'Connell. Mitchel published his own paper *The United Irishman* until it was suppressed by the British in 1848 and Mitchel was arrested. He was deported for imprisonment, first in Bermuda and next in Australia to the Tasmania penal colony with other Young Irelanders including Meagher in 1850. In 1853, like Meagher, he escaped and eventually found his way to New York City, where in January, 1854, he began to publish the *Irish Citizen*. However, Mitchel embraced white supremacy and slavery in the South, alienating him from other Irish patriots. [After traveling to Europe in 1859], Mitchel went to the South with the outbreak of the war. His three sons served in the Confederate army, with one killed at the battle of Gettysburg and another the following year.

After the end of the war, Mitchel returned to New York City but was arrested for his secessionist views and imprisoned at Fort Monroe, Virginia, where Confederate President Jefferson Davis was being held. He was released upon condition that he

leave the country. However, by 1867, Mitchel returned to New York City. In 1875, Mitchel was elected to a seat in the British Parliament from Ireland but Disraeli's government ruled him as ineligible as a felon. Re-elected, Mitchel died in 1875.

Patrick Cleburne

[INSERT: Irish in the Civil War (2008)[pp. 7-9]

Patrick Cleburne was born in Ovens, County Cork in a middle-class Protestant family. He was orphaned at age 15. Failing to pass his entrance exam to Trinity College of Medicine, he enlisted in the British army. He left after three years to emigrate with siblings to the United States. After a short stay in Cincinnati, he resettled to Helena, Arkansas, where he became a pharmacist. He later became a lawyer and joint owner with Thomas C. Hindman of the local newspaper. At the outset of the war, he joined the local militia (the Yell Rifles) as a private and soon became a captain. The regiment became the 15th Arkansas and joined William Hardee's force and fought at the battles of Shiloh and Corinth. In Fall, 1862, Cleburne (now a brigadier general) was wounded at the battle of Richmond, Kentucky but still fought at the ensuing battle of Perryville before Braxton Bragg's Army of Tennessee retreated.

At the battle of Stone's River, Cleburne's division successfully led the initial attack on federal troops (including the division of Phil Sheridan) on December 31, 1862. At the battle of Chickamauga, Georgia in September, 1863, Cleburne's division attacked the left wing of the Union army under George Thomas on the second day. At the battle of Missionary Ridge on November 25, 1863, Cleburne's greatly outnumbered division successfully defended the northern end of Confederate line against the attack of Sherman's force and then it became the rearguard of Bragg's defeated army, holding off Hooker's pursuing attack (which resulted in the deaths of two Cleveland colonels of the 7th Ohio at Ringgold Gap, Georgia. For his military leadership, Cleburne earned the title of the "Stonewall of the West."

In late 1863, Cleburne made an astounding proposal to his fellow officers: arm Negro slaves. Cleburne had concluded that the South could not defeat the North without additional manpower beyond white Southerners. For this, his proposal was silenced by Confederate President Jefferson Davis and he was never promoted.

During the Atlanta campaign of 1864, Cleburne and his division again performed well. But, when Cleburne was chosen to lead the Confederate attack at the battle of Jonesboro, it failed and this led to Hood's evacuation of Atlanta.

Cleburne and his division were then a part of Hood's much reduced army's invasion of Tennessee in Fall, 1864. Hood blamed Cleburne and other of his commanders for their failure to block the retreat of Schofield's Army of the Ohio at Spring Hill, Tennessee. The following day, Hood ordered a desperate attack on Schofield's entrenched army at Franklin, Tennessee. Cleburne and others opposed this as doomed but he said "If we are to die, let us die like men." On November 30, 1864, he led his division on foot after his horse was shot from under him until he was killed in front of the Union line. His former corps commander and friend William Hardee offered this tribute to Cleburne:

"Where this division defended, no odds broke its line; where it attacked, no numbers resisted its onslaught, save only once; and there is the grave of Cleburne."

Three Ohioans led the successful defense of Franklin – Jacob Dolson Cox, Emerson Opdycke, and James Casement.

Events

1863 New York City Draft Riots

While many Irish enlisted in the Union army, the Irish were mostly Democrats opposed to the Emancipation of Negroes. They feared for their jobs if the emancipated slaves headed North. With the creation of the military draft by the Lincoln administration, the Irish were also angry that the wealthy could buy their way out of the draft by paying for a substitute. With a renewal of the draft in Spring, 1863, these resentments boiled over in June, 1863, with Negroes replacing striking Irish stevedores and protected by the police in New York City. As the draft (headed by Robert Nugent, the former head of the 69th New York regiment and commander of the Irish Brigade) was announced, mobs of rioters attacked the draft office and the police. The rampaging rioters attacked and killed Negroes until order was restored with the arrival of Union regiments (including the 8th Ohio) following the Union victory at Gettysburg and the plea for the end of violence by Catholic Archbishop John Hughes, a supporter of Lincoln's draft, including of the Irish. The conscription law was temporarily suspended after which New York City and Brooklyn agreed to buy exemptions for those unable to pay the cost for them. It is noteworthy that the Mayor of New York City was himself a Peace Democrat opposed to Lincoln's war.

Postwar Fenian Invasions of Canada

During the Civil War, many Irish-American immigrant Union soldiers joined the Irish Brotherhood known as the “Fenians” dedicated to freeing Ireland from British rule. They intended to employ their Civil War combat experience for the cause. The Fenians decided to embark on an invasion of Canada, mistakenly thinking that the native Canadians (including the French Quebecois) would unite with them to drive out the British. Then, using Canada as their hostage base, the Fenians would force the British to restore Ireland to independence.

In May, 1866, the original plan to sail across Lake Erie was dropped in favor of a land invasion. On May 29, hundreds of Fenians of the Irish Republican Army left Cleveland by train for Buffalo. On June 2, 1866, they entered Canada but were met by Canadian forces and defeated in the battle of Ridgeway. 14 Fenians were killed, including 4 from the Cleveland Rangers, who were led by Irish-born John Grace, who served with the 34th Ohio Volunteer Infantry during the Civil War. 114 Fenians were captured. Undeterred, a wing of the Fenians met in Cleveland in September, 1867, and vowed to mount another invasion of Canada. On May 25, 1870, several hundred Fenians crossed the border at St. Albans, Vermont but were easily defeated at the battle of Eccles Hill. On May 27, 1870, a second smaller Fenian Force invaded Canada from Malone, New York. They were met by British regulars and quickly defeated at the battle of Trout River. Thus ended this quixotic North American adventure by the Fenians.

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