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.

To continue reading articles contained in this latest e-news, please scroll through the following pages.
“Hi Dad! I’m sorry to bother you at work, but I need your advice. Can I come over on Saturday morning?”

Dave was secretly pleased. It wasn’t often that he had the opportunity to be a father to his children in their adult lives.

“Is Susan coming with you? Your mom wants to go shopping and I was destined to go with her. It can get me off of that hook if Susan would go with her.”

“I think Susan would love that. Mom doesn’t know Susan as well as she knows Maeve’s other friends. I think Susan would enjoy spending time with Mom.”

“Don’t forget to clue Mom in on our plans.”

“Michael, we’ve been married for forty years. Your mom has trained me pretty well.”

Michael then called Susan to see if her involvement in the plan would work out. Susan was delighted for the opportunity to spend time, especially shopping time, with Bridgid.

On Saturday, as the women pulled out of the driveway in the new and luxurious Volvo van, Dave, and his son, Michael, moved out to the backyard patio, armed with tall glasses of iced tea.

“What is troubling you,” asked Dave?

“Dad, I am having a problem being a lawyer. At the same time, I should love being a lawyer. I have a very successful practice. I have enough business to keep five lawyers fully occupied, two full-time paralegals, and two legal secretaries. I am the rain maker. I am out of the office part of almost every day at one function or another, shaking hands, doing some good, and more than my share of pro bono work. I can’t get excited anymore about traffic violations, juvenile delinquency issues, wills, elder law, contracts, minor scrapes with the law, and so forth. I only do a minor amount of legal work. I basically supervise my staff. Every Thursday I meet with them and go over every case. We can usually help the good guys and make sure justice is properly done for the bad guys.”

Dave let the silence settle in for a few minutes. The birds that were singing unheard all day were now noticeable.

“I follow you, Michael. I think all of us have had similar feelings during our careers. Part of it is burnout and part of it is dulling routine. I remember my first visit to a courtroom. It wasn’t anything like my TV model, Perry Mason. The experience made me want to consider doing something else.”

Dave continued, “I can’t say that I wasn’t interested in Law. I once was excited by it. I don’t know of anyone in Philadelphia that has a firm the size of yours at your age. You are far ahead of where I was at your age. Your mom and I struggled through those early days often with a baby in a bassinet in her office. In fact, that may have been your first introduction to the Law. Why did you choose to go into Law in the first place?”
“John and Brian went to Law school. By that time you had a big law firm. It was just natural that I follow the path that you guys made smooth for me. I wasn’t finished when Maeve started her first year. I was really excited by Law at that time and when I first opened a practice. That first year was a struggle for survival. Every month I made enough money to pay the rent and my secretary, with a little bit left over for me. Remember, you let me live at home rent free. After a while all of those shaken hands started to pay off, and I had enough business to hire another lawyer, contracted with two paralegals, I took on a large share of the legal work, but I still had to have visibility in the community. When I slowed down doing that, business would fall off. Now I have five attorneys, two full-time paralegals, an office manager, and the same secretary. I’m about to hire another secretary. I can pay all the bills and have enough left over to pay myself.”

“I’m sorry, Michael,” said Dave. “I don’t think I’m listening properly, so I’m not asking the right questions.”

“I’m the one that is floundering, dad. I don’t know what my problem is, other than boredom, which is the symptom, not the problem.”

“Could it be something other than Law? Is everything alright between you and Susan? Your semi-engagement is a unique plan.”

“Susan is one of the best things that ever happened to me. I think that loving her has wakened me to my discontent. She thinks I am having a mid-life crisis at thirty. We have a semi-engagement but a total commitment.”

“I’m listening Michael, but I am not hearing.”

Michael laughed, “And I am talking but I am not saying anything.”

“Have you thought of other areas of Law, for instance, teaching Law, or pursuing a judgeship? Then, of course, you could consider becoming a legislator. God knows, we need politicians with the honest conscience that you have.”

“Oh, I just thought of something that might just break up your malaise. Maeve has contracts with 35 companies in Indiana to train employees about sexual harassment issues. We have been providing trainers for her. Would you like to take on a couple of companies for her project? Each workshop takes two days. Some of the larger companies are requiring several workshops for groups of ten employees.”

“Really! I would love to do something like that. Maeve’s company keeps marching on.”

“She is still considered a small business, but financially, she has already moved into the big time. She has to hire an accountant. I function as her Chief Financial Officer.”

”Don’t change anything with your practice. Let’s see how you feel in about three months. I’ll call Maeve and tell her that you are interested.”

“Good, I’ll be with her tomorrow after Mass.”

Dave smiled to himself as he went into the kitchen to get the lunch that Bridgid had prepared for them. How many of his contemporaries have children meeting at Mass and spending Sundays together?

Not far from the Garvey home, a solid two-iron shot from the backyard, up the fairway, to the clubhouse where John lived, he and Theresa were still lying languidly in bed, each waiting for the other to get up and use the shower so they could roll over and get a little more sleep.
Suddenly, John sat up with a start. “Wow, I just had a dozing nightmare. I dreamed that the four Garvey’s were getting married together.”

“Well that is close to true.” said Theresa. “Maeve is marrying in December, Maria and Desmond, not Garvey’s, but Maria is as close as you can get to being a sibling, will be married in February and having a blessing in Philadelphia at the end of June. Michael and Susan will marry sometime in June, Brian and June haven’t set a date yet, and you haven’t even proposed yet, and by the way. I haven’t accepted.”

“Oh yeah, I forgot about that part. I was looking forward to making that special.”

“Great, I’ll deal with that when the time comes,” she said as she gently poked him in the ribs.

“You have a unique humorous side that I am just starting to appreciate.”

“Get used to it, buster. We’re going to be laughing for a long time.”

“And I am already embracing the future. I think I should call a Garvey meeting with the parents.”

“I don’t mind marrying late next year. I love our courtship. I can wait another fourteen months to get to know you better.

“We’ve known each other for almost your entire life.”

“Yeah, and there is that. Though the nagging feeling is that I am marrying my much older brother.”

“I’ll call dad later and set up a Saturday afternoon. We can discuss it with the siblings at brunch after Mass tomorrow.” He rose from the bed to take a shower. Theresa smiled, rolled over, and pulled his pillow over her head to catch that last half hour of sleep.

After Mass, the group retired to their Cherry Hill Italian restaurant for Sunday Brunch. After lunch was served, John raised the issues of the clustered family weddings. Brian and June had not yet discussed a date. Their wedding would take place at Gettysburg at June’s parent’s parish church. With June busy planning the year for the Jesuit Urban Ministry and soliciting gifts for the Gala Auction and Brian busy shepherding the cities’ constant flow of criminals through the justice system, they just hadn’t taken the time to identify the next steps for their personal lives. Michael and Susan hadn’t set up a specific date in June for their wedding as yet. Their nuptial will take place at St. Paul’s, the parish of their Sunday Mass gatherings.

Susan said she would talk with her parents and explore possibilities. John recommended a family meeting with their parents. He told the group about his dozing nightmare about the four Garvey siblings marrying together and quickly added that it wouldn’t be fair to June’s and Susan’s parents who would take great pride in seeing their daughters marry and being hosts for the wedding feasts. Meeting with Dave and Bridgid seemed like the right first step. John called his dad from his cell phone and set up a meeting at the Garvey home for the next Saturday afternoon.

That settled for the moment, they lounged over coffee and the remainder of the wine. Desmond was working but Maria spoke of their pending trip to Ireland in July. Desmond has two brothers and a sister and wanted Maria to meet and get to know them. Once settled in their marriage, they would visit more often. The discussion had set Maeve’s mind wandering to consider the possibility of honeymooning in Ireland. However, she also remembered being in Ireland in the winter with the extremely short days of daylight and the predictably stormy weather of winter. She would have to discuss possibilities with
Patrick and see what he would like to do. For her, all she wanted to do was spend time with him and see lots of ceilings.

Maeve and Michael teamed up to discuss presenting workshops for Maeve’s clients. Maeve brought along a file with the spiral bound book and a syllabus for the trainer’s manual. She assured him that she pays well and covers all expenses. Michael laughed. “I thought I was doing you a favor.”

“You are,” said Maeve. “I expect you to be comfortable because the work is a little harder than anticipated. Indiana is conservative and evangelical, but I think all that intense spirituality makes people horny. The problems these companies face are more significant than anticipated, given the culture. The way the male employees treat women is deplorable. Sexual harassment suits have cost companies millions of dollars. The companies we are working with are trying to avoid that and they are doting their ‘Is’ and crossing their ‘Ts’ with tightknit policies to avoid a financial disaster. I’ve worked with each company and their attorneys to set up what we hope are airtight policies that will protect them in court in the event of an episode. Each employee will have to sign a statement that they have taken the course and understood the issues of sexual harassment. If anything happens, the blame is on the perpetrator, and not on the company. A significant suit could bankrupt and even close a company. It won’t be easy because the employees don’t seem to take it seriously until you outline the logical consequences of bad behavior. Go through the manual and the trainer’s materials and we’ll discuss it on Wednesday afternoon, if that is alright with you, say at 2:00.”

“We have a deal Madame President. Didn’t Patrick and Fr. Paul go to school in Indiana?”

“Notre Dame is a Catholic oasis, but not without the same problems that all universities have. I visited with Paul while I was out there. He has an exciting program for Catholic identity. However, last year a St. Mary’s girl committed suicide over an affair with a Notre Dame football player that ended badly. I also read an article about seven girlfriends that went back to the school for a reunion. One of the women was the author of the article and was shocked to find out that each of her six friends had been sexually violated on campus, and each of the six kept silent about it, even from each other, for ten years until after the third glass of beer the night they arrived. They never reported it to anyone because they didn’t want to harm the reputation of the school. Paul is taking the lead on addressing the problem with the administration. I spoke with him about our work with companies in the region and he was excited about that. Universities are a little more complex to work with. There are several constituencies that have to be brought into the decision-making. It could become another lucrative project. I am working on a plan that Paul can use to pitch to the administration.”

“Great, I’ll be at your office on Wednesday at 2:00. Will Dave be there?”

“Absolutely, he is my quarterback.”

Susan and Michael had dinner with her parents on Tuesday evening to discuss the beginnings of wedding plans. They met at Bookbinders and Susan’s parents were very impressed that Desmond made such a fuss over them, including free drinks before dinner.

Dinner went well considering that Michael had just met the Boyds for the first time. They seemed aloof and distant, almost frightened to be in this meeting. Michael picked up on it immediately and decided to let the scenario play out.

“What kind of wedding are you planning,” asked Tom Boyd?
“We haven’t made any specific plans yet,” said Susan. “We thought we would wait until we met with you. We would like to marry at St. Paul’s Church. That is my parish. I attend Mass there on Sunday. I volunteer for projects there. I know the priests. It is also Michael’s parish.”

Her parents were startled. They didn’t know that Susan was religious. This was a new side of her that they didn’t expect to see. Though nominally Irish Catholics, the Boyd’s themselves were not church goers and never encouraged their children toward any religious involvement.

Susan started going to Church without any encouragement. She felt that there was something missing in her life, realizing this after a breakup with a boyfriend that she never should have started dating. Maeve was her boss and friend and she frequently spoke of St. Paul’s. Her relationship with Maeve was the encouraging factor for a spiritual life she never knew she had, though they seldom spoke of it in personal terms. Attending Mass seemed to restore her self-esteem. She listened to Maeve talk about St. Paul’s. When she connected with Maeve and her group, she really enjoyed the camaraderie of the group as well as the welcoming atmosphere and sense of community at St. Paul’s.

“I didn’t know you were going to Mass,” said Margaret, her mother.

“I started going to church at a parish near my apartment. Then I started joining a group of friends at St. Paul’s. Michael and I go together every Sunday.

“Susan tells us that you are a lawyer,” said Tom Boyd.

“Yes, Mr. Boyd. I have a firm that I manage, and I practice general law, the kind of things that small businesses and everyday folks need. My father, brothers, and my sister are also attorneys. My father, my brother, Brian, and I are the only ones that practice full-time, though.”

“Please call me Tom. You are family now. And call me Margaret added Mrs. Boyd.”

“Thanks Tom.” He was warming up now.

“What kind of a wedding did you have in mind?”

“We haven’t talked about it in detail yet,” said Susan. “It will be a nuptial Mass and Fr. Fred Milos, our pastor, will be the celebrant. Michael’s family owns a country club nearby that we might be able to use for the reception. I’m sure Michael can talk John into a discount.

“We are still strapped with tuition payments for you and your sister; we can barely make ends meet.”

“Susan and I will pay for the wedding,” said Michael. “I’m certain my father will want to help out because he has business social obligations. You don’t have to worry about the cost.”

“You can afford a wedding, Susan,” exclaimed her startled mom!

“Mom, I get paid very well. I have a nice bank account and savings in my investment portfolio. I also have a growing IRA through my job.”

“You have investments! How is that possible for a secretary?”

“I’m not a secretary, mom. I am the office manager for a firm that has a national clientele and generates millions of dollars a year. In fact, within the year, I’ll be a partner.”

“Glory be,” said Margaret. “I had no idea.”

“Nor did I,” said her dad.
“What we want to settle tonight is setting a date for our marriage. We are flexibly thinking of a Saturday next June.”

“Pick the middle Saturday,” said her dad.

“Done,” said Michael with his telephone screen open. “It happens to be June 15th. We’ll visit with Fr. Milos later this week and I’ll call my brother, John, to book the reception at the club.”

Desmond personally delivered a dessert they didn’t order, and announced it was a gift of the house.

“Mom and dad, I feel badly that we’ve drifted apart. I would like to visit with you more often. Hopefully you will have a flock of grandchildren to fawn over.”

“I would like that too, dear.”

“And so would I,” said Tom. “I really enjoyed meeting you Michael, and I really enjoyed this evening. I feel like it opens up a whole new chapter of life for us.”

On the way to Susan’s apartment, Michael mused, “I think we did something very good tonight.”

“I do too. And thank you. I never wanted to push you onto my parents. By the way, I’ve paid all my student loans. I had the sense that once my sister and I were emancipated, they were relieved to have us out of their lives. They showed no emotion when I called to tell them that we were going to be married. I never thought about it because that is the way they are, and tonight I realized that I have parents again. We’ll raise them to be good grandparents.”

“Can my sister be the Maid of Honor?”

“Of course. Our wedding should be a family event.

I’ll call John tomorrow and reserve the club for a reception, and I’ll let my dad know. If you will call Fr. Fred, see if you can make an appointment with him for Saturday morning. I’ll be in and out of town for a few weeks. I’m going to help Maeve with her Indiana project.”

“I coordinate that, so I’ll know where you are all the time.”

Michael’s three-hour meeting with Maeve and Dave on Wednesday went extremely well. Michael thought that Maeve’s presentation of Sexual Harassment and the Law was better than anything he had heard on the subject in Law school and the afternoon session was as intense as anything he had done to prepare for the Bar Exam. Maeve had all the essentials written down in the presenter’s manual. He would start at a company in Indianapolis. Susan would arrange for flight, hotel, and car rental. He would do this two days a week for the next six weeks. Michael was genuinely excited about this new role in the practice of Law.

On Saturday, the siblings and their significants gathered at the Garvey home to seek parental advice. Michael and Susan arrived early, immediately following their appointment with Fr. Fred. He told his dad about the meeting with Maeve and how excited he was to be involved in the project.

John led the meeting with his concern that all of these weddings, all at once, would put too much pressure on their parents.

“Not a problem at all,” said Dave. “I just show up where your mother tells me to be.”

“Well Maeve and Patrick will marry the Saturday after Christmas, December 28th. Maria and Desmond will marry on February 10th. She will receive her Doctoral diploma in May, and they will have a local blessing and reception in June. I presume that most of us will be going to the Florida wedding as well.
Michael and Susan will marry on June 15th. Brian raised his hand. He and June were looking toward an October wedding and they plan on meeting with her parents on Sunday. That leaves Theresa and me. If we pick Christmastime, that should cover everything.”

“When did you get engaged,” asked his mother?

“Well, it is a foregone assumption,” said John.

“I haven’t agreed to anything yet,” said Theresa.

“Well it is the last one, whenever it is,” said Dave.

“So there is actually no problem.” said John. “What have we been fretting about?”

“You’re the one that dragged us down here in a state of panic,” laughed Maeve.

“I just wanted to make sure that our parents are ok with all of these arrangements.”

“We’ll show up wherever we are expected to be.” said Bridgid.

“Alright, then we can have lunch.”

“It is too late for lunch. We’ll just have snacks,” said Bridgid.

“Maria and Desmond get to have more fun than the rest of us. They get to have three parties,” said Maeve.”

“And a trip to Ireland, besides. I was thinking of having a farewell party at the airport,” laughed Maria.

As Michael and Susan were leaving, Bridgid walked with them to their car.

“I just wanted to tell you, Susan, how much I enjoyed shopping and having lunch with you. It is so special to have a daughter-in-law who is also a friend. I have known Theresa and June since they were teenagers, and Maria since she moved to Philadelphia. I never would have dreamed that all of you would be marrying my boys.”

Susan hugged her. “Thank you. Your friendship will mean a great deal to me. I loved our day out as well, and I look forward to going out with you again. You are really a lot of fun. Maybe I can arrange for you to meet my mother and we can all go out and pick out my wedding dress.”

Maria looked out the window as the plane caromed down the runway at Philadelphia’s International Airport. Once again, she was going to a new country, this trip a lot more comfortable than the first. There was a comfortable silence as the wheels left the ground and the engines roared the plane into a steep climb. This was a wonderful experience for Maria, not so much for Desmond. As often as he had taken this flight to Ireland on Aer Lingus, even on this same plane, named for St. Brendan, the Irish monk who had sailed to America a thousand years before Columbus, he was always a little nervous. After more than twenty trips to Ireland, he wasn’t exactly a bad flier. He just liked to be in control of his destiny and now that destiny was in the hands of the pilot who had already assured them of a smooth flight across the wild Atlantic ocean. Passing over Cape May, NJ, the plane banked for its turn toward the north, toward Greenland, the first landmark on the trip to the old world.

For Maria, there was the excitement of a new adventure and she was looking forward to it. They left Philadelphia at 10:30 PM and would land at Shannon Airport just after sunrise. She planned on a long nap.
Desmond gently wakened her as the out Islands of Ireland began to appear. He wanted her to see for herself the forty shades of green. She saw it with astonishment and wonder that brought a beaming smile to her face. When they drifted over the mainland she saw squares and patches of land each one a different shade of green. The sun rising in the east hadn’t yet reached the western shores of Ireland. She hugged him tightly as if it was she who was returning home. The plane was flying quite low as the pilot fixed on the runway at Shannon Airport.

Shannon Airport was a disappointment to Maria. She was used to the huge terminals at the Miami and Philadelphia Airports. They were very quickly checked through customs and picked up the English Ford rental that was arranged by Desmond. Maria kept those feelings to herself. After all, Ireland was a very small country.

They drove for a little more than an hour, turned onto a narrow road and drove through an open gate. The road way was an uphill drive and on the crest of the hill was a large mansion. Maria was amazed at the beauty of the home and the way it profiled against the clear sky. Desmond’s family, two brothers and a sister rushed out to greet, them along with spouses and children.

“I thought you told me that you lived in a cottage and you helped in the kitchen of the great house,” said Maria.

“That we did,” replied Desmond. “Before the last Paradine passed on. He contacted me through his barrister, as the oldest child. When we met at the barrister’s office, I was presented with the deed to the property. It turned out that the property originally belonged to my family and the British illegally usurped it two centuries or so ago. The Paradine family built this huge estate. When Edmund Paradine passed away, the estate ownership was transferred to my family. I worked with the barrister through the legal entanglements. We’ll talk more about it later. Let me introduce you to my family.”

Desmond’s brothers Sean and Rauri who were married to Mary and Cecilia. His sister was Nora and her husband was Richard Connolly. There were eleven children, six girls and five boys who were delightful, full of fun, and overjoyed to meet the woman who would be their new American aunt.

After dinner, the children retired to the TV room and the game rooms. Maria was bewildered by the elegance of the furnishings, all of which came with the house. It was an antique dealers paradise, but it is now Desmond’s family home.

Sean, Rauri, and Richard are excellent carpenters and own a construction company together. Their first task was to rebuild and repair a 200-year old house and bring a home that hadn’t been upgraded in over 50 years up to standard. The result was a magnificent home, solid enough for another 200 years. They described the travails of upgrading plumbing, electricity, and sewage systems. There was rotted wood in unexpected places that required replacement. They hired locals to paint the place, inside and out. They replaced all the windows with double-paned glass with screens, more than 80 of them. The brilliance of the furnishing was restored with careful attention to restoring the extensive wood craft without damage or painting. They mentioned that Desmond financed most of the project.

They have a small staff from among the tenant farmers and the staff are free on weekends. In their spare time, the boys are restoring the tenant's cottages.

“That is why we didn’t have an elegant feast prepared for ‘yis’, “ said Nora.

Rauri mentioned that they have a delightful little community as well as excellent relations with the villagers.
“We host a number of festivals during the course of the year and it’s great fun, good craic,” said Cecilia. “We raise money for the local hospital, the school and the parish, and for various charities. We do that with games of chance, don’t ya know.”

After dinner Nora invited Desmond and Maria to go to see the sunset over the lake adjacent to their property.

“This is such a relaxing atmosphere,” said Maria.

“Aye, it is that,” said Nora. “Sometimes I come out here just to say my prayers. We are so fortunate to have all of this compared to our childhood. I can’t thank the Lord enough. I remember so well when Desmond took us all up here and told us that this was our home now. The little ones will all have a chance for an education and a great start in life.”

“Did you know that Desmond graduated from Villanova University, asked Maria?

“Glory be…he never said a word.”

“For all his accomplishments, he never wants to appear more important than the least person in the room.”

Thus began three weeks of festivity, relaxation, a look at a world she never knew existed, and she delighted in it. Desmond took her to Galway City, Achille Island out in the ocean by Piper Cub, to the Lakes of Killarney, and up into Donegal to the Rosses, the most beautiful spot she had ever seen. They went shopping in Dublin and attended a play at the Irish Repertory Theatre. There was a big feast for the entire village to welcome the soon to be bride that Desmond brought home. For everyplace they went Desmond had a story, and she never tired of listening to them through his lilting brogue. Like everyone who has visited Ireland, Maria couldn’t get over how nice and accepting the people were wherever she went. She wasn’t a stranger to anyone because everyone had Desmond in common with her.
Life in the 19th century in New York City could be brutal for a child. A magnet to immigrants in search of a job it was also a haven for alcoholics, drug addicts, thieves and murderers. The loss of a job, addiction, injury or death of a parent on the job and the absence of a social safety net often meant it was the children who suffered the most.

In the pre-Civil War era when 12,000-15,000 orphans slept in alleyways and sewer pipes the American Female Guardian Society (AFGS) were the first to come to their aid, establishing schools, dormitories, food and an infirmary.

Contrary to the depiction of AFGS workers being saloon bashing hysterical women, they gave aid and comfort when there was no welfare, food stamps or other government assistance.

The women established homes for unwed mothers and battered women, and orphanages. Some of the children in the homes were orphans, and some were surrendered by parents who were unable to take care of them.

Over twenty years ago, I discovered in a hayloft, 26 milk crates holding hundreds of record books belonging to the AFGS. The names, dates and dispositions of 35,000 children – at least 10,000 of whom had Irish names, were listed.

Dating back to 1832 the books are a recorded a history of the efforts of the AFGS to aid destitute children inhabiting the Five Points area of Manhattan – then the most notorious urban slum of the western world.

Already densely populated the Five Points, became insanely so during the Famine years, when an estimated 75 percent of the Irish coming to America landed in New York. Over crowded tenements with no running water were breeding grounds for disease, infant and child mortality, and the area was rife with prostitution, unemployment and crime.

When Charles Loring Brace, a Connecticut minister came to NYC he was appalled at the conditions the children were living under and with Theodore Roosevelt Sr. and other philanthropists established the Children’s Aid Society, which worked with the AFGS.

Sending children by rail across America was Brace’s answer to solving the homeless crisis in New York City. As the author of The Dangerous Classes he was concerned revolutionary fever could overtake NYC and that the answer to homelessness was “was the clean air, industriousness of the American farmer and their Christian values.”

This led to the “free-home-placing-out” of over 200,000 children between 1854 and 1929. The first Orphan Trains left Grand Central in late 1853 for Dowagiac, Michigan. The trains continued to run for 75 years. The last official train ran to Texas in 1929.
Ideally, the children were to be taken in groups of 10 to 40 under the supervision of at least one agent who would plan a route, and send flyers to towns along the railroad line. To help the agent(s) in the placement process a screening committee was set up. The agent asked the committee, which usually included the town doctor, clergyman, newspaper editor, store owner and/or teacher, to select possible parents for the children and approve or disapprove on the day the children arrived.

When a child was placed, a contract was signed between the Children’s Aid Society and the guardians taking the child. A typical contract stated:

**Terms on Which Boys are Placed in Homes**

Applications must be endorsed by the Local Committee.

Boys under 15 years of age, if not legally adopted, must be retained as members of the family and sent to school according to the Educational Laws of the State, until they are 18 years old. Suitable provision must then be made for their future.

Boys between 15 years of age must be retained as members of the family and sent to school during the winter months until they are 17 years old, when a mutual arrangement may be made.

Boys over 16 years of age must be retained as members of the family for one year after which a mutual arrangement may be made.

Parties taking boys agree to write to the Society at least once a year, or to have the boys do so.

Removals of boys proving unsatisfactory can be arranged through the Local Committee or an Agent of the Society, the party agreeing to retain the boy a reasonable length of time after notifying the Society of the desired change.

If the child had to be removed from the household for any reason, the Children’s Aid Society did so at their own expense. It cost the new family nothing.

In a process that often resembled a cattle auction, children were paraded across a stage or in some cases a railroad platform and farmers would pick among the hardiest, farmhands.

One of the saddest components of the Orphan Train era was when children from one family were separated from their brothers and sisters. Members of

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Letters Left with Children at New York Foundling Hospital

**December 1, 1875**

Dear Sister,

Alone and deserted, I need to put my little one with you for a time. I would willingly work and take care of her but no one will have me and her too. All say they would take me if she was 2 or 3 years old, so not knowing what to do with her and not being able to pay her board, I bring her to you knowing you will be as kind to her as to the many others who are under your care, and I will get work and try hard to be able to relieve you of the care when I can take her to work with me. She is only 3 weeks old and I have not had her christened or anything.

No one knows how awful it is to separate from their child but a mother, but, I trust you will be kind and the only consolation I have is if I am spared and nothing prevents and I lead an honest life that the father of us all will permit us to be united.

*A Mother, Brooklyn, Nov. 23, 1869*
the family member not picked, would get back on the train for the next stop, possibly in another state and the children would never to see siblings again. This happened countless times and in my research I was only able to verify four of the hundreds of requests I received as to the whereabouts of family members.

In the 1870's, the Catholic Church became concerned that many Irish Catholics were being sent to Protestant homes and were being inculcated with Protestant values. They began operating their own Placing Out program via the railroad sponsored by the New York Foundling Hospital.

Priests in towns along the railroad routes were notified that the Foundling Hospital had children in need of homes. The priest would make an announcement at Sunday mass and adults could sign up for a child, specifying gender and preferred hair and eye color. The Foundling selected the requested children believing if a family got a child that “fit in” everyone would be better served. One such request was for a boy with red hair because the farmer had five red haired daughters and no sons. The boy was not only delivered, he later inherited the family farm.

An “Indenture” form was used to place the children. It was a legal document that gave the Foundling legal recourse with-

Orphan Train Rider Stories

I rode the train to Missouri and lived a happily ever after life.

By Jean Sexton

In Brooklyn, New York in 1912, an Irish carpenter, who was the father of five children, died as the result of an industrial accident. Six months later, a sixth child was born to the thirty-five year old widow who was working hard to keep her family together. When the baby boy was eleven months old, his mother died. The grandparents were unable to care for the six orphans, so they were taken to the Children’s Aid Society.

In 1914, along with other homeless children, they boarded an Orphan Train to find new homes in the Midwest. I was the fifth child, three years old, and was separated from my sister and brothers when I was adopted in southwest Missouri.

My foster parents were Walter and Margaret Landreth, a childless couple who lived twelve miles east of Neosho, Missouri. They soon became Mama and Daddy because I did not remember my biological parents. Daddy was a farmer and I was a tomboy. I loved going with Daddy whether it was to feed the cattle or gather walnuts. Daddy wanted me to have a pony, but Mama objected, saying that she was afraid I would get hurt. They finally compromised and I was soon riding a beautiful new bicycle. I would have had fewer black and blue marks if I had been riding a pony.

In 1918, one of Daddy’s nieces, Mary, came to live with us after her mother died during the flu epidemic leaving ten children. Mary was six months younger than I and we grew up together as sisters, sometimes, mistaken for twins. With Mama’s help, we had many parties for our friends with taffy pulls and parlor games. An aunt and uncle joined in the fun by helping with decorations and entertainment.

Mr. J. W. Swan of Sedalia, Missouri, a very kind and considerate agent for the Children’s Aid Society, visited often, but Daddy did not appreciate his visits. He did not want anyone doubting his care of his little girl. Once, when Mr. Swan arrived during a rainstorm, Daddy remarked, “Hump! Fine weather for swans.”

When I was sixteen, Mr. Swan came for his last visit and gave me the address of my brother, who lived in Colorado. My brother and I soon found our sister and baby brother, who had been adopted by Mr. and Mrs. Stoneberger of Auburn, Nebraska. The following summer, the three of them came to Missouri and we had a wonderful reunion. After that, we kept in touch and had many good times together.

After graduating from high school, I attended business college in Tulsa, Oklahoma, finishing there in the height of the Great Depression. Then I met and married the tall, dark, handsome man of my dreams. We struggled through the depression with few luxuries, but high hopes. During the thirties we bought our first home for eight hundred dollars, and had two sons. We worked at many different jobs, until the economy finally improved, and we were able to secure permanent positions. My husband worked for city and county government, and I went to work for Skelly Oil Company, retiring in 1973.

My older son, Harold, is retired from state government and my younger son, Clark, has been in the ministry since 1965. They are both upstanding citizens and have been a blessing to me, always showing their love and respect in every way. I have also been blessed with four grandchildren and five great grandchildren.

Mama died after a stroke in 1981 at the age of 97. Daddy suffered a fatal heart attack in 1952.
out going to court, should the placement not be satisfactory and the child had to be removed.

Often called an early form of adoption, it was not adoption as we know it today, because the indentured children that were not thereafter legally adopted were ineligible to inherit unless the adults left a will specifying the child be given an inheritance.

Despite the best intentions of those involved, things did not always work out for the best.

“Many children fell through the cracks; they were mistreated, malnourished, and overworked,” says writer and researcher Marilyn Holt, author of the book, The Orphan Trains: Placing Out in America. “On the other hand, for at least half, it was a good experience. They had opportunities they would not have had if they stayed where they were. They may not even have survived childhood.”

Brothers William and Thomas ages 11 and 9 were put on the Orphan Train in 1880 by the New York House of Refuge. William found a good home. Thomas was exploited for labor, abused and desperate. The brothers returned to New York in their adult years and reunited.

Dear Sisters,

By the love of God be so kind as to take this poor orphan child in and if she should die, please to bury her for me and I will be very happy. You must not think that I have neglected her. I have worked very hard to pay her board but I can’t afford to bury her.

So, by the love God, take this little child in. May God Bless you all for your kindness to all the little sufferers. This little child has suffered since she was born and I have paid debts but I have not paid all but I shall. My husband is dead and I have nobody to help me. Be kind to my little lamb. May the great God receive her into Heaven where she will be loved by God.
While some were overworked, ran away or resorted to crime, Seventy-five percent of Orphan Train Riders became productive American Citizens. Two became Governors, 20 were elected to Congress and tens of thousands served in America’s wars.

A Judge in Indiana took in a young boy called John Brady, who later went to Yale and became Governor of Alaska. Andrew Burke was sent to Indiana, ran away from a farm and joined the Civil War. He later became Governor of North Dakota.

Michael Jordan, who was born in Ireland and was orphaned when both his parents died on the voyage to America, was sent to Indiana on an Orphan Train. He became a doctor and willed the Children’s Aid Society five thousand dollars upon his death. Dr. Michael Flynn taught at Indiana University. He was an Orphan Train Rider.

So many children were sent to the Midwest – over 200,000 between 1854 and the early 1930s – that it is estimated one in four Iowans can trace their ancestry to an Orphan Train Rider.

Approximately only 200-300 of those who rode the rails as children alive today. We owe them an opportunity to tell their story. As the 160th anniversary of the first Orphan Train approaches, it is time for New York State commemorate the children’s journey. Kansas, Louisiana, Missouri, Iowa and Minnesota have all established museums to keep alive a story. Louisiana’s legislature has even set aside almost a quarter of a million dollars to erect a museum.

New York State where the Orphan Train Era began and from where 273,000 children were transported by rail, has yet to memorialize the children’s journey. It is said that 2,000,000 Americans are descended from Orphan Train Riders. Are you one of them?

In 1962 Nebraska Orphan Train Riders held their first annual reunion in Grand Island. Two nuns and a priest from the New York Foundling Hospital attended.

Dear Sister,

I now sit down to write to you a few lines but I hardly know what to say, for when I inform you that I am the mother of the child left on Thanksgiving night between the hours of 8 and 9 o’clock without even a slip of paper to tell you the name of the child left in your care, my heart aches so much I cannot tell, but I knew that I was leaving her in good hands.

Although I have been unfortunate, I am neither low nor degraded and am in hopes of one day of claiming my child. Her name is Jane … born on 5 of October 1869 between the hours of 3 and 4 o’clock in the morning … she had a piece of canton -- flannel tied around her head and a little blue and white cloud around and little red and white socks on her feet – and if the prayers of an unfortunate creature like myself will do any good, offered to -- the mercy of God in heaven – for you know that every night on my bended knees I pray for you.

I am very sorry that I having nothing to send you this time but I am in hopes there will be a day when I shall be able to pay you for all your trouble.

This two Dollars is to have this child christened Willie. Do not be afraid of the sores on its face; it is nothing but a ringworm. You’ll remember this badge. (Included with cloth badge that reads, “General Grant our Next President “)

Credits: Quote from Marilyn Holt if from an article in The Register Star by Julie Snively. Terms on Which Boys are Placed in Homes; letters from the archives of the Foundling Hospital, and also the letters from the orphans, are courtesy of the National Orphan Train Complex based in Concordia, Kansas. The organization is dedicated to keeping the story of the Orphan Trains alive by hosting events, exhibitions, reunions and aiding in genealogical research. The record books that Tom Riley found in the hay loft are now part of the complex’s archive.

For more information on the National Orphan Train Complex see: http://orphantraindepot.org/ Phone: 785-243-4471 Email: info@orphantraindepot.org

To learn more author Tom Riley http://tomrileybooksandart.com/tomrileybooksandart.com.
ON THIS DAY IN IRISH HISTORY - AUGUST

1st
1906 - The Catholic hierarchy rule out mixed education at Trinity College, Dublin.
1915 - Funeral of Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa, at which Patrick Pearse gives an oration.
1969 - A huge rally outside the GPO in Dublin protests events in Northern Ireland.
1980 - Eighteen people die in the Buttevant Rail Disaster.

3rd
1916 - Roger Casement hanged for treason.

5th
1969 - Severe sectarian rioting in Belfast.

7th
1957 - A war memorial in Limerick is blown up.
1986 - Peter Robinson, deputy leader of the DUP, is arrested for illegal assembly after a Loyalist mob takes over a village in County Monaghan.

8th
1980 - Ten people die in a hotel fire at Bundoran.

9th
1971 - Internment without trial is introduced in Northern Ireland.
11th
1927 - Fianna Fáil TDs join the Dáil for the first time.
1950 - At a meeting of the European Consultative Assembly in Strasbourg, Irish representatives vote against the European army proposed by Winston Churchill.

12th
1898 - James Connolly publishes the first copy of the Workers' Republic newsletter.
1946 - A plane carrying 23 French Girl Guides crashes in the Wicklow Mountains.

13th
1931 - Business resumes in the Four Courts following damage caused in the Civil War.
1969 - The Taoiseach Jack Lynch says on television that Ireland 'can no longer stand by' given the situation in Northern Ireland.
1995 - Gerry Adams tells a rally in Belfast that the IRA 'haven't gone away'.

14th
1903 - Wyndham Land Act passed, offering incentives to landlord to sell their estates.

15th
1838 - Government introduces relief work and a reduction in tithes for the poor.
1843 - Repeal meeting at Tara.
1969 - A night of violence and arson in Belfast. Sinn Féin calls for UN intervention and the boycott of British goods.
1998 - Real IRA bomb at Omagh kills 29 people.

16th
1879 - Land League of Mayo founded at Castlebar.
1969 - British soldiers are deployed in Belfast.
1982 - The Attorney General Patrick Connolly resigns after a wanted killer is found at his house.
17th
1922 - Dublin Castle is formally handed over to the IRA by the British.
1969 - Northern Ireland protesters clash with the Garda Síochána in Dublin.

18th
1911 - The British House of Lords loses its veto power beyond two years, making Home Rule possible.

19th
1989 - 10,000 people march in Dublin calling for Britain's withdrawal from Northern Ireland.

20th
1888 - Christian Brothers College founded in Cork.

21st
1962 - Former US President Eisenhower arrives in Belfast.
1970 - The Social Democratic and Labour Party is founded in Northern Ireland.

22nd
1922 - Michael Collins is killed in an ambush at Béal na Bláth.

23rd
1921 - Stormont Castle agreed as the Parliament building for Northern Ireland.

27th
1928 - Ireland becomes a signatory of the Kellogg Peace Pact.
1969 - The B-Specials begin to hand over their guns. British Home Secretary James Callaghan visits Belfast.
1979 - The IRA kill Lord Mountbatten, his grandson and the grandson's friend; on the same day, an IRA ambush at Warrenpoint kills 18 British soldiers.

28th
1835 - St. Vincent's Ecclesiastical Seminary opened at Castleknock.
1930 - Rembrandt painting found in an Irish cottage is authenticated.

31st
1994 - IRA announces a ceasefire.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What drink is the major product of the fruit orchards of Waterford and Tipperary?</td>
<td>Cider</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the name given to the hilly glacial landforms that form a characteristic part of the landscape in Counties Monaghan, Mayo, Cavan, Fermanagh, Antrim and Down?</td>
<td>Drumlins</td>
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<td>What is the massive reservoir in the Mourne Mountains of County Down that supplies water to the City of Belfast?</td>
<td>Silent Valley</td>
</tr>
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<td>What lough in Northern Ireland is the largest in Ireland?</td>
<td>Lough Neagh</td>
</tr>
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<td>What is the famous limestone 'hill' in Tipperary, the site of an ancient metropolis?</td>
<td>The Rock of Cashel</td>
</tr>
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<td>What Irish place name translates as Black Pool in English (although that is not its Irish name?)</td>
<td>Dublin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the Irish name of the City of Dublin?</td>
<td>Baile Atha Cliath</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Clanrye River forms part of the border between County Down and what southern Irish county?</td>
<td>County Louth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the name of County Clare's massive limestone 'pavement'?</td>
<td>The Burren.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What refers to itself as 'The Rebel City' and 'The Real Capital' of Ireland?</td>
<td>Cork City</td>
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<tr>
<td>Which famous river runs through Dublin?</td>
<td>River Liffey</td>
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<tr>
<td>What is the most northerly county in Ireland?</td>
<td>Donegal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Where is the 'lake isle of Innisfree'?</td>
<td>On Lough Gill, Sligo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Which C is the river on which Galway stands?</td>
<td>The Corrib</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the most southerly county in Ireland?</td>
<td>Cork</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the largest county in Ireland?</td>
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<td>Louth</td>
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