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The Irish community in antebellum Richmond, 1840-1860

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THE IRISH COMMUNITY IN ANTEBELLUM RICHMOND, 1840-1861.

Kathryn Lynn Mahone

Master of Arts in History

University of Richmond

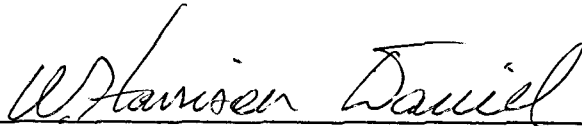
1986

Dr. W. Harrison Daniel

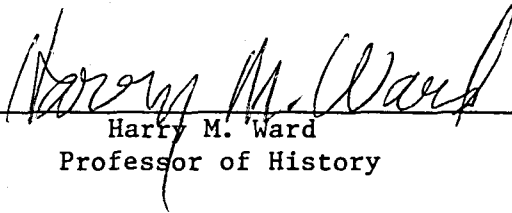
The purpose of this paper was to investigate the Irish immigrants experience in antebellum Richmond, Virginia. Their journey to America and the various reasons for migrating south were also included in the study. The neighborhoods and occupations of the Irish were described as well as the immigrant's role in Richmond's antebellum society. The Catholic church, benevolent groups and militias were reviewed in order to understand how Irish helped fellow immigrants adjust and prosper in their new home.

The paper was based on information from the census records of 1850/1860, and from various city directories. Personal property and death records were also used in obtaining information on the Irishman's life in Richmond. Lastly, Richmond's industrial structure and the demand for unskilled labor was researched. Many Irish were found working for the iron industry. Other Irish owned small businesses and stores and managed to acquire wealth and prestige in Richmond, but the majority were unskilled laborers.

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THE IRISH COMMUNITY IN ANTEBELLUM RICHMOND, 1840-1860

By

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B.A., Mary Washington College, 1981

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty

of the University of Richmond

in Candidacy

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THE IRISH COMMUNITY IN ANTEBELLUM RICHMOND, 1840-1860

Table of Contents

Introduction	1
I. Migration to America	5
II. Life in Antebellum Richmond	15
III. Irish Involvement in Richmond's Antebellum Society . . .	37
IV. Virginia Politics and the Irish	61
V. Irish Involvement in Business and Industry	74
Conclusion	86
Bibliography	88

INTRODUCTION

Who would have thought diseased potatoes would have contributed to changing the history of two nations? The potato blight of 1845 and the resulting famine did that to Ireland and the United States. The consequences touched the lives of people in both continents for an entire century. This thesis examines the growing Irish experience in Richmond, Virginia between 1840 and 1860.

Other reasons for the Irish migration included poverty and disease, which were the results of famine and poor farming techniques. Financial support in the form of tithes and taxes, placed upon Irish Catholics for the Anglican church, angered and intensified the Irish' mistrust and hatred towards the British authorities. As a result, many Irish left their homeland in search of religious freedom, prosperity and a better life. ¹

Many immigrants came to America during the antebellum period. After 1835, and except for 1838, 30,000 Irish came to America annually. In 1812 there were 92,000 arrivals from Ireland to the United States, ² 1846 showed a slight increase to 92,484 Irish arrivals in America. The number climbed to 196,224 the following year, and in 1849 had reached 204,771 per year. ³ Richmond was not the logical destination for many Irish. They arrived and

¹ Carl Wittke We Who Built America (Cleveland, Ohio: Case Western University, 1939), 137.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid., 131.

disembarked in major seaports such as New York, Boston, Baltimore, and New Orleans. As a general rule, the South was avoided by Irish immigrants. In fact, Bishop John England, of Charleston, South Carolina, advised and published warnings to Irish laborers to avoid the South, because of poor treatment and low wages paid to the Irish in that area.⁴ The sections of the country that concentrated on a single crop such as tobacco in Virginia, and cotton and sugar in the deeper South, were avoided by the Irish. They had grown and depended on one crop in Ireland and the results had been disastrous. Secondly, competition with slave labor resulted in fewer available jobs for the immigrants. Lastly, the south had few urban areas and cities, in which unskilled laborers could find work.⁵ Most of the factories and industries that required unskilled workers were located in New England. Since most of the immigrants arrived in north-eastern ports, many remained where they were and found work there.

Virginia was a mid-Atlantic state. It shared characteristics with the northern industrial states, but also depended heavily on southern types of revenue such as tobacco and used slaves for labor. Urban growth in Richmond corresponded with the growth of Irish in Richmond during the ante-bellum period. Because of the flour and cotton mills, tobacco warehouses, and iron works, employment for unskilled laborers was available in large demand. Slaves were used for some factory jobs, but towards the mid-nineteenth century, there were not enough slaves available. Irish and German immigrants moved into the capital city and filled the vacancies.

⁴ Ibid., 137.

⁵ Ibid., 107.

By 1860, a substantial number of Irish lived in Richmond. The city's population was 37,968,⁶ of which 6,358 were of foreign birth.⁷ Forty-five percent of the foreigners were Irish, which brought Richmond's total to 2,244.⁸

The purpose of this study is to investigate the Irish experience in antebellum Richmond. The journey to America and the immigrant's reasons for migrating south are also included in this study. What they did in terms of employment and where they lived are determined. Finally, the thesis will describe the social life of antebellum Richmond, and the role Irish immigrants played in the city's development. The Catholic church, benevolent societies, and militias are reviewed in order to understand how Irish helped fellow immigrants adjust and prosper in their new home, as well as creating close knit communities of Irish within the city of Richmond.

Information on antebellum Richmond and the Irish for the years 1840-1860, was obtained principally from sources in the archives of the Virginia State Library. The 1850-1860 census records and the naturalization records of Richmond's Hustings Court were used to determine who was Irish by birth. Personal property and tax records, local newspapers, and church records

⁶ David R. Goldfield Urban Growth in the Age of Sectionalism (Louisiana State University: University Press, 1977), 65.

⁷ J.C.G. Kennedy, editor. Population of the United States in 1860. Book Number One; The Eighth Census of the United States. (Washington, D.C.: Printing Office, 1864).

⁸ Michael Chesson Richmond After the War, 1865-1890. (Richmond: Virginia State Library, 1981), 121; United States Census, 1860, City of Richmond, Free Inhabitants, Population Schedule.

were also helpful. Cross-referencing names with places, wages, and general information on Richmond's population gave insight into Irish immigrant life in the antebellum period. Although sources and materials are limited, a general conception of the immigrants' life did emerge.

CHAPTER ONE
MIGRATION TO AMERICA

The story of people moving to new locations in hopes for a better life for themselves and their children has re-occurred throughout history. Repeatedly, there came a time when moving seemed to be the best way to prosper and gain freedom from oppression and unhappy situations. For most Irish, the decisions to move occurred between 1830 and 1860. The most common reason for migrating from Ireland was poverty and starvation. Throughout the 1840's, Ireland was subjected to a series of blights that resulted in the potatoes (a staple crop), failing. July of 1845 brought a long rainy season which resulted in a blight, or diseased potato crop in September. The following winter was as harsh as the summer had been wet. As a result, the under-developed, agricultural based country was left in desperate straits. The population was more than the countryside could support; there was not enough food to feed everyone.

News of crop failures and famine in Ireland prompted some in America to engage in relief measures. In 1847, Richmond's mayor, General William Lambert, organized an Irish relief fund in the city council to collect money and foodstuffs for Ireland. In April of that year, the ship "Bachelor" sailed to Ireland loaded with several thousand dollars worth of flour, meal, corn, rice, bacon and clothing. The following year, Robert C. Scott called on various Richmond citizens to help fight for Irish independence from England. In Odd Fellows Hall on August 23, 1848, Robert Scott announced that the public meetings' purpose was to "assist the

Emerald Isle, not with food or clothing as before, but in efforts to obtain her freedom from England." A committee of forty-five persons was appointed to raise funds and promote Irish freedom.¹ The public meeting became the nucleus for a public committee known as the "Friends of Ireland;" various representatives were chosen from each city ward to participate in raising funds for the Irish.²

Immigrants of the antebellum period came to the United States seeking work in any area other than farming. They were ready to find a more reliable occupation. The memories of farming failures were vividly recalled in most of the immigrants minds. There were other reasons for staying away from farms; many Irish arrived in America penniless. They were unable to travel west and purchase land for farming as they had spent everything they had in order to sail to America. The lure of wages as laborers also tempted and convinced many immigrants to remain in the city rather than travel west.³

Few of Richmond's Irish came directly from Ireland; most landed in northern ports and then migrated to Richmond. Patrick Moore went to Canada first, and only later came to Richmond. The same was true for John Dooley, who arrived in Baltimore, moved to Alexandria, Virginia, and finally came to Richmond, where he remained permanently. The cities of

¹ W. Asbury Christian Richmond, Her Past and Present. (Spartanburg, South Carolina: Reprint Company, 1973, originally published 1912), 160.

² Richmond Enquirer, April 23, 1848.

³ Wittke, We Who Built America, 146.

Baltimore, New York and Boston received the most immigrants. New Orleans also received an enormous amount of Irish during the first half of the nineteenth century.*

The financial and physical condition of many immigrants left much to be desired. Their poor state of health and appearance left a negative impression with many Americans which remained permanently. Majorie Fallows stated that in 1847 and 1848, the majority of those immigrants that arrived were either sick or destitute, or both. Most immigrants brought few resources and little money to make a new start in America.⁴ Other accounts claimed that the foreign born residents were paupers, and that one out of every three hundred became a public charge.⁵ The immigrants faced not only a new and unfamiliar land, but in many cases, met with hostile receptions from natives. The large numbers of immigrants that came to the United States left many Americans afraid of being completely over-run by the predominantly Catholic foreigners. Between September 30, 1829 and December 31, 1855, approximately 1,747,930 Irish immigrants landed in the United States.⁶ The second largest number of persons were from Germany, they numbered 1,206,087;⁷ England ranked third, and was followed by France in number of arrivals.

⁴ Majorie R. Fallows Irish Americans, Identity and Assimilation (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1979), 20.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ William J. Bromwell History of Immigration to the United States, Exhibiting the Number, Sex, Occupation and Country of Birth. (New York: 1856), 18.

⁷ Ibid.

*For specific numbers of arrivals to American ports, see the chart at the end of the chapter.

The journey to America was as grueling for the Irish, as it had been for the black African slaves. In fact, many immigrants came across the Atlantic on ships that had been originally designed for the slave trade, but were "renovated" for the transporting of immigrants.⁸

Liverpool was the main port of departure, just as New York, Baltimore, and Boston were the logical places for the arrival of Irish immigrants. Although immigrant ships did sail from Ireland, they were less frequent and passage cost more than from Liverpool. The immigrant and his family usually walked, or if they were attempting to take large possessions, used a wagon to transport their goods to the Irish coast; from the coast they went by ferry to Liverpool.⁹ In 1846, more than 90,000 Irish were in Liverpool and prepared to sail to America. The next year, 300,000 more Irish followed them to the United States.¹⁰ The immigrants chose Liverpool over Irish ports throughout the nineteenth century. It offered more regular services at a lower price. Passage from Liverpool to New York without food cost seven dollars, with food provided the cost rose to ten dollars.¹¹

⁸ Robert Scalley "Liverpool Ships and Irish Immigrants in the Age of Sail" Journal of Social History, (Fall 1983), 16. Loyd's of London registered those ships with a classification of "C" which meant "suitable of cargoes, not subject to sea damage."

⁹ William Forbes Adams Ireland and Irish Immigration to the New World from 1815 to the Famine (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale Historical Publications, 1932), 229.

¹⁰ Scalley, "Liverpool Ships and Irish Immigrants," 17.

¹¹ Adams, Ireland and Irish Immigration, 229. The passages from Irish ports were more expensive, except for the port of Sligo, where the fare to America was actually less expensive than those which left Liverpool.

Some Irish immigrants from America's eastern ports filtered south to Richmond, and by the early 1850's, the foreign born in the capital accounted for more than one-fourth of the white males in the city. Immigrants composed sixty-five percent of the laborers and forty-seven percent of the craftsmen in the free labor force.¹² Richmond's industries increased during the antebellum period and as the demand for laborers increased, so did the number of immigrants into the city.

Thomas McGhee analyzed the southern Irish immigrants' history as being vastly different from the northern counterparts. He claimed that:

these states from their tropical situations and their earliest origin being cultivated chiefly by slave labor, have not attracted a very numerous Irish emigration of the Irish settlers is rather a series of family anecdotes, than a various record of a widely diffused population.¹³

Most Irish of the antebellum period were unskilled. They competed with the slaves, but left few if any records of their life and occupations during that period.

There were two prominent immigrants in Richmond's early history. One was John B. Martin; a painter and engraver, who came to New York in 1815. After studying art there for two years, he moved south to Richmond. He advertised as a seal cutter and engraver. Martin also did engravings, etchings and portraits; his best known work was of Chief Justice John

¹² David R. Goldfield and Blaine Brownell Urban America, from Downtown to No Town (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1979), 125.

¹³ Thomas D'Arcy McGhee A History of the Irish Settlers in North America (Baltimore Genealogy Publishing Company, 1980; originally published 1852), 171.

Marshall. The painting hung in the Supreme Court Building in Washington, D.C. for many years. ¹⁴

Edward Walls was another Irishman who came to Virginia early in the state's history. He is mentioned in Virginius Dabney's Richmond, The Story of a City, and was described as a poor boy who made a large fortune and left it to the Female Humane Association. That charitable organization began in 1805, and was designed to support and educate destitute females and orphans. It used the money left by Walls to pay teachers, maintain the organization, ¹⁵ and build the Associations' first building. ¹⁶ The charity's school was erected near the poorhouse and received financial assistance from the city for the continuation of services. ¹⁷

New business, mills and factories, kept employment high and the job market competitive. Richmond was also the state capital; the General Assembly met there annually and contributed to its social and business diversity. As early as 1830, it was the twelfth most populous city in the nation. ¹⁸

¹⁴ _____ Richmond Portraits (Richmond: Valentine Museum, 1949), 119.

¹⁵ Henry Howe Historical Collections of Virginia (Charleston, South Carolina: Babcock and Company, 1845), 312.

¹⁶ Christian, Richmond, 147.

¹⁷ Margaret Meagher Education in Richmond (Richmond: WPA, 1939), 96.

¹⁸ Goldfield, Urban America, 32.

In 1850 the state of Virginia had a total population of 1,421,661 of which 22,985 persons were foreign born.¹⁹ Ireland had the largest number of immigrants with a total of 11,643,²⁰ which was slightly more than half of the total sum. The Irish had a total of 961,719 persons in the United States. In total, 11.1 percent of the United States population had been born outside the country in 1850.²¹

Ten years later, in 1860, Richmond had grown to 37,968 persons with 27.1 percent of the population being foreign born.²² The city was divided into 23,635 whites; 2,756 free blacks, and 11,699 slaves.²³ Richmond's foreign born had reached 6,358.²⁴ Across Virginia the foreign born numbered 16,501, and almost one-half were Irish.²⁵ In Richmond 2,244 Irish constituted forty-five percent of all the cities' foreigners in 1860. The Germans were the second largest foreign population.²⁶ With such large numbers of immigrants in the city, it was certain that they influenced both the economic and social life of Richmond.

¹⁹ United States Census, 1850, City of Richmond, Population Schedule (microfilm copy of manuscript in Virginia State Library, Richmond, Virginia).

²⁰ Richard Edwards Statistical Gazetteer of the State of Virginia (Richmond: State Printing Office, 1855), 24.

²¹ DeBow's Review (Washington, D.C., February 1853, Vol. XV, No. 2), 128.

²² Goldfield, Urban Growth in the Age of Sectionalism, 65.

²³ United States Census, 1860, City of Richmond, Population Schedule, (microfilm copy of manuscript in Virginia State Library, Richmond, Virginia).

²⁴ Kennedy, Population of the United States, 166.

²⁵ Chesson, Richmond After the War, 120.

²⁶ Ibid.

The census' records of 1850 and 1860 provide source material concerning the Irish immigrants in Richmond. By examining families, places of birth, and the age of children, often accurate estimations of the length of residency in Virginia can be obtained. For example, the Donathy family was listed on the 1860 census; according to the record, William and his wife, Susan, were born in Ireland. Their eldest children, Dorothy age four, and Mary age three were both born in Maryland. Their youngest daughter, ~~Malinda~~, was born in Virginia and was just a year old. From this data, it is assumed that William and Susan had been in America for at least four years.²⁷ It appeared that the Donathy family had stayed in Maryland prior to their arrival in Richmond. Since William was a porter, obviously unskilled or semi-skilled, more than likely he moved his family to Richmond in search for better work and pay.

The 1860 census is more informative than the 1850 census, since it separated personal property from real estate values. Notably there were more women listed as having occupations. Women were observed as being servants and washerwomen. Some operated or owned private businesses. Most women, such as Anne Marrier, (age sixty-seven), and Catherine O'Brien, (age fifty-six),²⁸ were old enough to have inherited their business from husbands. Some women were found to run grocery stores throughout Richmond as well as millinery and bonnet stores. Elizabeth Manning, at age twenty-eight was single, Irish by birth, and owned her own store.²⁹ Whether she began the business or inherited it was not revealed. Few women began their

²⁷ United States Census, 1860, City of Richmond, Population Schedule.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

own businesses during the antebellum period, according to city directories and personal property records.

NUMBER OF EUROPEAN IMMIGRANTS TO SELECTED PORTS

BETWEEN THE YEARS:

1840-1855 ³⁰

YEAR	MALES	FEMALES	TOTAL	PORT
1840	23	15	38	Alexandria, VA
	152	95	247	Norfolk/Portsmouth, VA
	37,867	22,742	60,609	New York City, NY
	4,440	2,381	7,271	Baltimore, MD
	8,157	2,928	11,085	New Orleans, LA
1844	19	13	32	Alexandria, VA
	9	1	10	Norfolk/Portsmouth, VA
	* 118	69	187	Richmond, VA
	33,951	25,811	59,762	New York City, NY
	2,858	2,148	5,006	Baltimore, MD
2,489	1,410	3,899	New Orleans, LA	
1850	14	3	17	Alexandria, VA
	13	4	17	Norfolk/Portsmouth, VA
	107,866	77,016	184,882	New York City, NY
	4,406	3,178	7,584	Baltimore, MD
	42,127	11,979	34,080	New Orleans, LA
1855	1	2	3	Alexandria, VA
	2	1	3	Norfolk/Portsmouth, VA
	3,692	3,138	6,830	Baltimore, MD
	97,724	63,766	161,490	New York City, NY
	11,741	8,647	20,388	New Orleans, LA

*The list of ports used was inconsistent throughout Bromwell's book. Richmond was listed infrequently, as was Norfolk and Portsmouth, Virginia.

The statistics listed occupations for the immigrants, but did not separate them according to state.

The origin of birth was listed; however, Ireland was combined with Great Britain, thus the exact number of Irish was not known.

³⁰ Bromwell, History of Immigration to the United States, 105, 121, 145, 169.

CHAPTER TWO

LIFE IN ANTEBELLUM RICHMOND

When the Irish arrived in Richmond, many were poor, unskilled, and illiterate.¹ Sometimes friends or relatives were there to greet them, but usually that was not the case. During the 1850's the public's conception of poverty contained the notion that pauperism had little impact on the business community. Thus the poor and the immigrants were virtually ignored. Most native Americans "believed that poverty and immorality were synonymous, so public assistance would be contradictory."² As a result public aid for the poor was minimal at best.³

Richmond's city council appointed an Overseer of the poor who supervised the almshouses throughout the city. Those houses, one per ward, provided firewood in the winter and general assistance to those people who needed shelter, food and clothing. Each of the city's three wards had an Overseer who reported directly to the city council and the city auditor. Soup houses were maintained during the winter months. They furnished soup, meat, bread, and vegetables to those unable to purchase food for themselves. According to state statistics, a total of 5,118 paupers were "relieved and supported by the state" in 1854.⁴ Of that total, 4,932 were native born

¹ United States Census, 1850, City of Richmond, Population Schedule.

² Goldfield, Urban Growth in the Age of Sectionalism, 153.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Edwards, Statistical Gazetteer, 115.

and only 185 were registered as foreign born.⁵ David Goldfield claimed that only the elderly and the immigrants used the poorhouse. "Poor people usually fared better by begging in the street than by submitting themselves to . . . voluntary incarceration."⁶

Throughout the antebellum era, Richmond recorded the number of paupers in the almshouses. Unfortunately, those statistics were divided between blacks and whites, and not between native and foreign born. In 1850, statistics were generalized in the Overseer of the Poor's reports. Only the number of persons in the houses and the amount of money spent during the year was recorded. In 1855 the format was more informative. The person's name, age, sex, and the amount of time spent at the almshouse was listed. In addition, reasons for the aid were documented alongside the total amount of dollars spent.⁷

According to the chart below, pauperism steadily increased throughout the 1850's, despite prosperity and economic stability. It was unfortunate that natives and foreign born were not separated in the document, for a better idea of how the Irish survived Richmond could have been obtained.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Goldfield, Urban America, 182.

⁷ Auditor of Public Accounts for the City of Richmond. Returns used were from 1850, 1855, and 1860, (Archives Division of the Virginia State Library, Richmond, Virginia).

NUMBER OF PAUPERS IN RICHMOND ⁸

1850	217	49	266	\$ 5,605.52	99
1854	---	--	---	---	128
1855	389	46	435	\$ 9,634.92	141
1859	---	--	---	---	157
1860	386	26	415	\$10,544.35	133

	Whites	Blacks	Total Persons	Total Cost	Daily Average of Persons in Poorhouses
--	--------	--------	------------------	------------	--

A family in Richmond during the 1850's usually had two children and rarely more than six. The youngest child was three, the oldest, ten. There were age differences between husbands and wives of approximately five years, the husbands were usually the eldest. ⁹ One-half of the houses sampled by David Goldfield had boarders who rented rooms and lived with the owners family. Often that occurred when a woman was the head of the household. Two-thirds of the survey's householders were widows. According to Goldfield, the boarders "represented necessary income to that hard pressed group." ¹⁰ The 1860 Census clearly shows that most Irish immigrants shared the same address with others, usually as either boarders or household servants who lived with their employer. ¹¹

Hardships were plentiful during the antebellum period not only for immigrants but for others as well. Few persons obtained wealth, but many

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Goldfield, Urban Growth in the Age of Sectionalism, 67.

¹⁰ Ibid., 68.

¹¹ Ibid., 46.

struggled for existence. An Irish journalist traveled through America and kept a journal of the various incidents and the people he came across on his journey. As he walked through an abandoned church-yard in Petersburg, Virginia, just south of Richmond, he began examining the headstones on various graves. He discovered that:

by far the greatest number of these decent dwellings of the dead were inscribed to Europeans chiefly from Ireland and Scotland: very few were dated past the middle age of life, the majority were indeed young men--enterprising adventurers who had wandered hither to seek fortune. ¹²

Examples of Irish fortitude in Richmond included Mrs. B. Finny. In 1860, the United States census listed her husband as a forty-three year old dry-goods merchant. When Ferslew's city directory was published later that year, it recorded Mr. Finny as dead and his wife proprietor of the store. Financially, they had done quite well since they had arrived from Ireland. Their real estate was valued at \$2,500.00 ¹³ and they owned four slaves. ¹⁴ Mrs. Finny was exceptional, since few immigrants were that affluent. Some women rented rooms, and took in boarders, while others continued the various businesses begun by husbands and fathers.

¹² Tyrone Power Impressions of America, Volume 2, (London: Richard Bently Press, 1836), 87.

¹³ United States Census, 1860, Population Schedule, City of Richmond.

¹⁴ Personal Property Tax Records, 1859, City of Richmond. (Archives Division, Virginia State Library, Richmond, Virginia). The Finny's were also taxed for a \$50.00 piano and a clock.

Poorer Irish women, such as maids, washerwomen and servants were always in demand. Some tobacco factories by the 1850's had begun experimenting with female workers in the factory. ¹⁵

The Irish lived together in various areas of the city, such as Oregon Hill, Gamble's Hill and Rocketts. They worshipped in the same churches and remained near those of the same culture and backgrounds as their own. Other immigrants from Europe also participated in that trend. Marriages were usually between close families who had known each other for years. James Bailey traced his origins to Ireland and published his family history. ¹⁶ The results give insight into the Irish of the antebellum south. From this study, it appears that Irish immigrants tended to marry others also from Ireland. St. Peter's Church was the one predominantly used by the Irish in Richmond. The first generation of Irish married other first generation descendents. Children, at least in Bailey's family, went to schools taught by other Irish. The trend continued throughout his family's history. ¹⁷

Richmond's neighborhoods spread outward from the capital building which was located in the center of town. The largest middle-class

¹⁵ Freeman Hunt "White Girls in Tobacco Factories," Merchant Magazine and Commercial Review, (New York, 1859), 522.

¹⁶ James Bailey Descendents of William Fenton (Richmond: privately published, 1855).

¹⁷ Ibid.

neighborhood during the 1850's was Church Hill. It was east of the capital square and surrounded St. John's Church. Most of the houses were new during the antebellum period and were built by upper-middle class and middle class families.

The wealthier citizens drastically changed their residences in the mid-nineteenth century in Richmond. Systematically, they moved west out of the center of town and opted for flatter, more elite sections on Grace and Franklin Streets. Fifth Street was also considered an enviable and most elegant location in which to live. According to the 1850 city directory, Grace, Franklin, and Fifth Streets had:

some of the handsomest and most costly private residences to be found in any of the Atlantic cities . . . Many of these cost thirty, forty, and some indeed as much as fifty thousand dollars. ¹⁸

Immigrant and Irish neighborhoods were usually on the edge of the central business districts, and preferably near where they worked. Because of uncertain tenure with many factories, immigrants lived towards the center of town, where if laid off from one factory, they could easily walk to other businesses in search for new work. ¹⁹

Irish immigrants' neighborhoods were spread out across Richmond. Some lived in the eastern portion of the city known as Rocketts, which was near the deep water terminal on the James River. Other Irish lived adjacent to the factories and mills where they worked. Bordering many

¹⁸ Montague, Richmond Directory, 1850-1851, 19.

¹⁹ David Ward Cities and Immigrants (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), 106-107.

mill such as Tredegar Iron Works and Armory Iron Works were the neighborhoods of Gambles Hill and Oregon Hill.²⁰

Gambles Hill was situated on a bluff and overlooked Tredegar and the James River. Oregon Hill, northwest of Tredegar was adjacent to Gambles Hill, and housed predominantly working class and Irish laborers. The 1856 directory listed 118 persons or residents on Oregon Hill. They included puddlers and moulders for Tredegar and the Armory Iron Works. Carpenters, city guards, and stone cutters were also listed as residents on Oregon Hill.²¹ According to the 1850 and 1860 census, those occupations corresponded with those of Irish immigrants. For the laborers who lived on Oregon Hill, there was a school for the neighborhood children run by the Gates' family. It was begun by James E. Gates in 1851; and after his death was run by his wife. Eventually it became known as Mrs. Gates' school.²²

One example of an Irishman on Oregon Hill was Brian Flaherty. According to the 1860 census and the city directory, Flaherty was born in Ireland, emigrated to America and secured a position at Tredegar Iron Works.²³ His address was listed as Oregon Hill,²⁴ but the census

²⁰ Henry K. Ellison Business Directory and Almanac, 1856. (Richmond: 1856, microfilm copy at the Virginia State Library, Richmond, Virginia).

²¹ Mary Wingfield Scott Old Richmond Neighborhoods (Richmond: Whittet & Shepperson, 1950), 210.

²² Montague, Richmond Directory, 1850-1851, 48.

²³ United States Census, 1860 Population Schedule, City of Richmond.

²⁴ Eugene W. Ferslew Directory of the City of Richmond, 1860 (Richmond: W. Wirt Turner, 1860, microfiche copy in Virginia State Library, Richmond, Virginia).

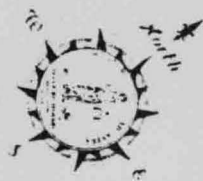
omitted to specify his exact job at Tredegar. He had managed to accumulate personal property worth twenty-five dollars,²⁵ which was a fair amount of money for that era. There was no mention of a wife or children, like many Irish, Flahirty seemed to have come to America alone.

Most Irish boarded with others in private homes and boarding houses. One such boarding house was located just west of today's Oregon Hill and near Gambles Hill. It had been, at one time, William Byrd's plantation, Belvidere. Once a showplace of Richmond, the house had been owned by various people throughout the nineteenth century. As a result the plantation lost much of its original beauty. In 1836 it was used as a school house. During the 1850's it had deteriorated into a sort of rooming house for iron workers, probably the Irish or Welsh mechanics imported to work at the Tredegar.²⁶ One Irish immigrant remembered the Old Belvidere Mansion and working at Tredegar. He too, recalled that the mansion had been in a deplorable state throughout the 1850's.²⁷

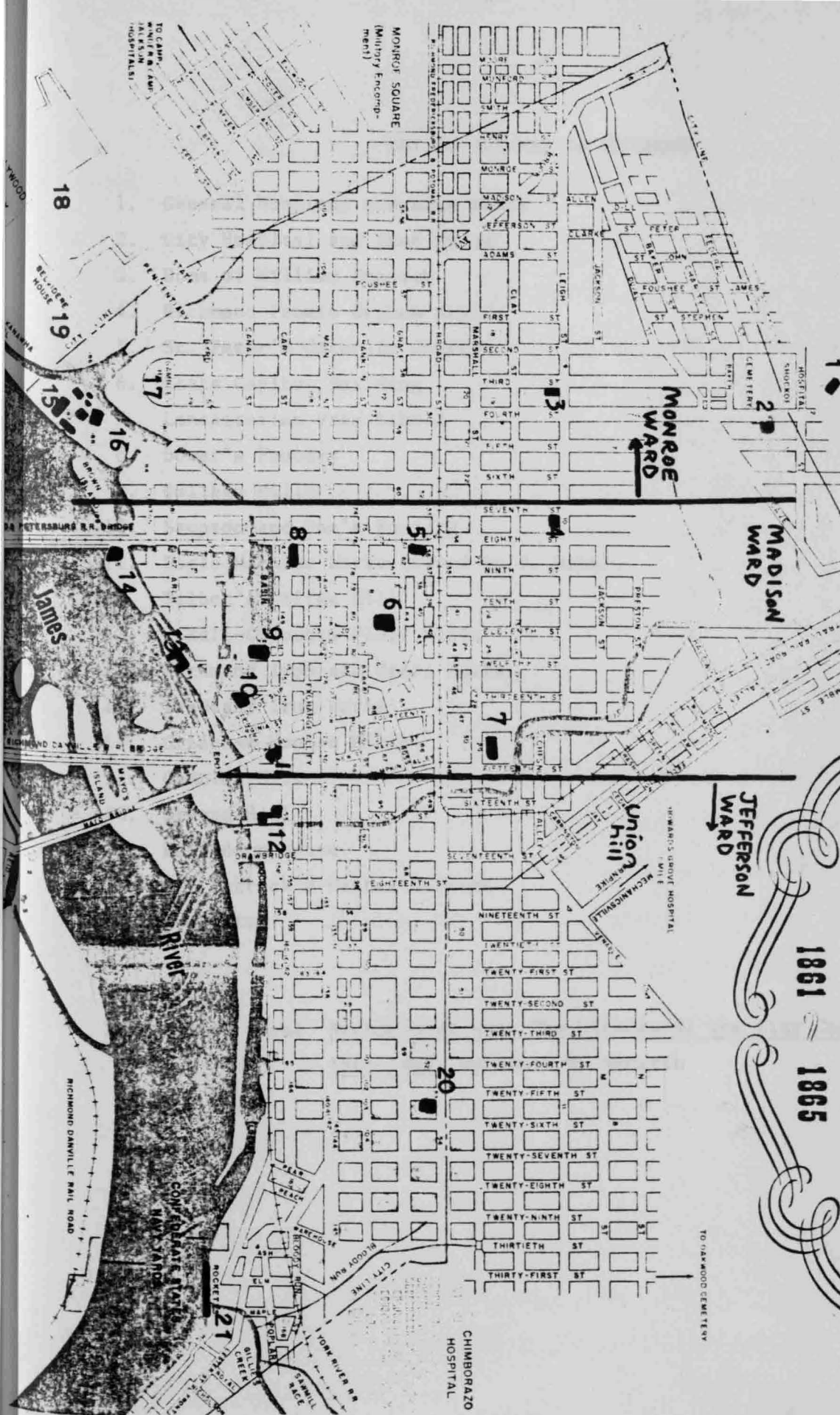
²⁵ United States Census, 1860, Population Schedule, City of Richmond.

²⁶ Mary Wingfield Scott, Old Richmond Neighborhoods, 213.

²⁷ Edward Ryan "Belvidere" Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, (April 1931), 139.



MAP
of the city of
RICHMOND, VIRGINIA
1861 - 1865



TO CAMP
 WHITE MOUNTAIN
 ALKONIA
 HOSPITALISTS

MONROE SQUARE
 (Military Encampment)

JEFFERSON
 WARD

Union
 Hill

CHIMBORAZO
 HOSPITAL

TO GARMWOOD CEMETERY

KEY TO THE MAP OF RICHMOND

1. General Hospital and Alms House
2. City Hospital and Poor House
3. Home of William English
4. Richmond Female Orphan Asylum
5. St. Peter's Catholic Church
6. State Capitol Building
7. Lancasterian Free School
8. Bower's Foundry
9. Gallego Mills
10. Sampson and Pae's Foundry
11. Eagle Machine Works (owned by P. Rahm).
12. Talbot's Coffee Mill
13. Hexall-Crenshaw Flour Mills
14. Richmond Iron and Steel Works
15. Tredegar Iron Works
16. Crenshaw Woolen Mills
17. Gambles Hill
18. Oregon Hill
19. Belvidere House
20. St. Patrick's Catholic Church
21. Rocketts

Information from: Richmond at War, The Minutes of the City Council,
1861-1865, by Louis H. Manarin

The Shockoe Creek, James River areas, and Rocketts retained immigrant laborers and semiskilled inhabitants. A new slum area, Fulton Bottom, adjacent to the Rocketts area, grew following the Civil War.²⁸ Other Irish strongholds such as Oregon Hill, Gambles Hill and Sidney Hill kept their reputations as areas for stone cutters and iron workers with Irish and German ancestry. Jefferson Ward, which was considered one of the poorer neighborhoods of Richmond, grew also. Traditionally, it had housed many of the city's immigrants;²⁹ for eighteen years it was represented on City Council by John Higgins, an Irish grocer.³⁰

The city of Richmond was controlled by an eighteen member City Council during the 1850's.³¹ The city government was unicameral in structure and differed from other southern cities such as Norfolk and Alexandria, which had a bicameral style government. Richmond's legislative power was concentrated in the City Council, while Norfolk, for example, used a two house system. Norfolk used a Select Council and a lower house of appointed officials, who together directed city government. Richmond depended on a single council and Mayor for its leadership.³²

Until 1852, Richmond's City Council followed the Constitutional

²⁸ Ibid., 123.

²⁹ Ibid., 107.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ellyson, Busienss Directory, 1856, 251.

³² Goldfield, Urban Growth in the Age of Sectionalism, 140.

Charter of 1782. The Mayor, Recorder, and four Aldermen, together were the Hustings Court and elected in general elections. Six more elected councilmen were the city's legislative body; they enacted the various ordinances passed by the council.³³ All members of City Council held three year terms, except the Mayor, whose term was just one year. The Mayor, until 1852, could not be elected for two consecutive terms, but was forced to leave office for a year before running for re-election.³⁴

In 1852, the General Assembly amended Richmond's charter. The most important change was in voting and suffrage rights. All males aged twenty-one, regardless of land or property ownership, were allowed to vote for city, state and national officials. The new charter also enlarged the ward system from three to five wards and allowed better representation for the growing city's population.³⁵ General William Lambert was re-elected Mayor in 1852 and served until his death the following year. Joseph Mayo replaced Lambert and remained in office until after the Civil War.³⁶

The police "force" was small and limited in its ability to protect the city. It consisted of a day force and a night watch. Each officer

³³ Louis H. Manarin, editor, Richmond at War, The Minutes of City Council, 1861-1865 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1966), 1.

³⁴ Ibid., 2.

³⁵ Virginus Dabney Richmond, The Story of a City (New York: Doubleday, 1976), 150.

³⁶ Ibid.

or watchman was nominated by the Mayor, and approved by the City Council.³⁷ In 1856, there were five men and one Superintendent on the day watch. The night watch was significantly larger.³⁸ The entire police force consisted of those two squads.

The night watchmen patrolled the business districts and left residents to defend themselves for the most part. Urban crimes consisted mostly of burglary, theft, and assault. Civic leaders were most concerned about crimes against property because of the negative impressions such problems created in business and abroad.³⁹ Throughout the antebellum period, it appeared that the "amount of police protection afforded to Virginia's cities seemed to be directly proportionate to the concern of the business community over the safety of their residential and business districts."⁴⁰

Some businesses resorted to hiring private watchmen for complete protection of their companies and factories. They were unhappy with the inadequate service provided by the city's guards. In 1849, the City Council changed its procedures and appointed officers to specific wards. The change worked well and five years later, in 1854, the plan was permanently adopted by council.⁴¹ However, police protection was still

³⁷ Manarin, Richmond at War, 4.

³⁸ Ellyson, Business Directory, 1856, 251.

³⁹ Goldfield, Urban Growth in the Age of Sectionalism, 143.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Mary Dudley Chappellen "A History of the Fire and Police Department," (Richmond: 1952; reprinted pamphlet in the Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Virginia), 72.

insufficient due to the lack of watchmen; it remained understaffed until after the Civil War.

The State Penitentiary was located in Richmond and the inmates were listed on various census records along with the age, sex,* previous occupation, and the crime of which they were convicted. In addition, it also registered the place of birth. Twenty Irish criminals were registered in the census records of 1860 at the State Penitentiary. The average age of these was 33.7 years old. The two most frequent crimes were "misdemeanors" and larceny, with six persons arrested for each charge. There were four Irish convicts that had been charged with second degree murder, and one arrest on "assault with the attempt to kill;" two persons were imprisoned for rape, and one for "felony."⁴² The majority of felons were Americans, the foreigners made up only a small percentage of the total number of inmates.⁴³ Apparently, the Irish, as well as other immigrants attempted to remain out of trouble and concentrated on securing a prosperous home for their families.

Throughout the seventeenth century, the fire department consisted primarily of volunteer bucket brigades that were active whenever a fire broke out in the city. That method proved unsatisfactory to both city officials and business owners. During the 1850's, the fire department

* Catherine Powell was the only woman registered on the 1860 Penitentiary census.

⁴² United States Census, 1860, Population Schedule, Virginia State Penitentiary, (microfilm copy in Virginia State Library, Richmond, Virginia).

⁴³ Ibid.

had become an organized part of the city service. It was controlled by the Richmond Fire Association, and contained seven fire companies and five engine and reel houses, located throughout the city. In order to give more protection, the association had ninety fire plugs installed and routinely checked for disorders and problems.⁴⁴ All members of the fire companies were mandatorially made share holders in the Richmond Fire Association. Its capital stock was valued at \$170,000.00 and paid twenty dollars per person per share, with a remaining surplus of \$50,000.00.⁴⁵ Each fire company elected annually a foremen and two assistants. The executive power of the association rested with the President, Vice-President, Principal Engineer, and the Board of Directors who were also elected annually.⁴⁶ Despite such organization, there were still problems with the fire department.

In 1853, a series of fires alerted the City Council to the desperate need for more efficiency. During that year, a Shockoe warehouse, the Gallego Mills, and the Virginia Woolen Mills all burned to the ground. Haxall's mills were severely damaged during the Woolen Mills fire. That fire alone resulted in a \$180,000.00 loss of property.⁴⁷ City Council reacted quickly and donated four new engines, a new hose, and two hook-and-ladder trucks to the department.⁴⁸ By 1858, the City Council

⁴⁴ Montague Richmond Directory, 1850-1851, 20.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Goldfield, Urban Growth in the Age of Sectionalism, 148.

⁴⁸ Chappellman, "History of the Fire and Police Department," 185.

abolished all volunteer companies and allowed only companies that were members of the Richmond Fire Association to remain in the city. In 1860, Richmond had a completely professional and paid fire department. It was one of the first southern cities to have such an organization.⁴⁹ With such a large number of industries and factories throughout the city, Richmond had no choice but to effectively provide the necessary services.

Education was an individual family concern during the antebellum period. Free public schools were scarce and mandatory education did not exist. The decision for education depended upon parental agreements with their children and the ability to either pay school masters, or qualify for financial aid to area schools, and not contribute to the family income. The wealthier citizens sent their children to boarding or finishing schools and hired private tutors for their children.⁵⁰ From 1821 until 1852, one of Richmond's best private schools was William Burke's school for boys. Burke, who was born in Ireland, gained respect among the city's citizens as an outstanding teacher and strict disciplinarian.⁵¹

No schools were directly supported by the state government in Virginia. State aid, however, was available for those children who were considered too poor to pay for their education.⁵² Money for the aid came from a literary fund established by the state for such children. The Lancasterian

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ John S. Wise The End of an Era (Cambridge, 1900), 64.

⁵¹ Dabney, Richmond, 147.

⁵¹ Ibid.

style school was structured towards economy and efficiency. One teacher supervised large numbers of students,⁵³ and it grew continuously throughout the antebellum period. By 1847, there were 456 pupils, and in 1854, the school had grown to 600. They were supervised by only four teachers.⁵⁴

Two other schools were located near the iron factories. The Armory school was supported by private citizens and was located near the Armory Iron Works.⁵⁵ Lastly, Tredegar supported a school which was described as an "Auxiliary Protestant Episcopal Society in Virginia for the promotion of Evangelical Knowledge." It was founded by Joseph Anderson and Mrs. T.H. Ellis; like other schools in the city, it was supported largely by private donations and a trust fund from wealthy philanthropists.⁵⁶

St. Peter's and St. Mary's Catholic churches also had schools. They taught primarily Catholic children the same ideals that had been taught their parents in Ireland and Germany. Montague's directory listed a number of school's, but those located near Irish neighborhoods only included Miss Parr's school at 3534 East Rocketts, and Mrs. Gates' school on Oregon Hill.⁵⁷

Higher education was available in Richmond, also. The Medical College taught medicine and related topics of interest. Richmond College was begun as a Baptist Seminary, but by 1840 had become a liberal arts institution

⁵³ Meagher, Education in Richmond, 102.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 103.

⁵⁵ Montague, Richmond Directory, 1850-1851, 17.

⁵⁶ Meagher, Education in Richmond, 103.

⁵⁷ Montague, Richmond Directory, 1850-1851, 48.

known as Richmond College.⁵⁸ For women there was the Richmond Female Institute founded in 1854. To the average Irishman, higher education was only a dream for the future. Richmond College cost \$130.00 annually for board and tuition.⁵⁹ Obviously, money of that amount was not readily available to the Irish, who in many instances were illiterate. However, some did see that their children learned to read and write, according to the various census records of that period.

Health care was primitive in the antebellum era. In the South, the greatest fear was of cholera and various fevers. When a city was quarantined with cholera, its moral reputation as well as business and financial support suffered drastically. Richmond generally benefitted by being inland away from the ocean and open ports. Norfolk, however, suffered repeatedly throughout the antebellum period with many outbreaks of "fevers."

Richmond experienced cholera outbreaks during 1832, 1834, 1849, and 1854.⁶⁰ In 1849, the state legislature left Richmond and reassembled in Fauquier County in order to escape the outbreak of cholera.⁶¹ In 1854, newspapers such as the Daily Dispatch denied that cholera had broken out in Richmond. Despite the fact that it was one of the worst outbreaks, the paper minimized the dangers of the contagious disease.⁶² Periodic

⁵⁸ Dabney, Richmond, 137.

⁵⁹ Montague, Richmond Directory, 1850-1851, 15.

⁶⁰ Todd L. Savitt, Medicine and Slavery, (University of Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1978), 227.

⁶¹ Goldfield, Urban Growth in the Age of Sectionalism, 155.

⁶² Daily Dispatch, Richmond, Virginia, July 19, 1854.

examinations of the number of burials and the causes of death were printed, and "proved" that no significant increase of deaths had taken place. Such statements were difficult to believe, as cures and anecdotes for cholera victims increased notably in the paper's advertisements. Even after announcements of outbreaks increased, newspapers continued to minimize the problem. ⁶³

During outbreaks of cholera and typhoid, accusations and guilt were placed on everyone. Whites claimed that immorality helped spread the diseases. They attempted to prove those theories by pointing out that blacks, who were thought to be immoral, suffered most from cholera and other contagious fevers. ⁶⁴ Others, more correctly, claimed that blacks and immigrants suffered and died more often because of poorer nutrition, poverty, and inferior living conditions. Many lived near the James River where raw sewage was dumped directly into the water. By living near such filth, the mortality rates increased repeatedly. ⁶⁵

In 1854, the Daily Dispatch reported that it was mostly "poorer class, children and servants" that died of cholera. ⁶⁶ Two days later, the paper claimed that "the greatest mortality thus far was from negros (sic.) eating spoiled fish, crab and stale vegetables." ⁶⁷ The paper stressed the

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Savitt, Medicine and Slavery, 227.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 229.

⁶⁶ Daily Dispatch, June 12, 1854.

⁶⁷ Daily Dispatch, June 14, 1854.

importance of a balanced diet and emphasized that intestinal problems should not be labeled as cholera. ⁶⁸

The most devastating cholera epidemic in Virginia's history began in Norfolk in 1854. It quickly spread across the state to Richmond where reports claimed that the disease was confined to Rocketts and the Eastern suburbs of the city. It was proven fatal only among the poorer classes who fared badly when well, and of course were much worse when sick. ⁶⁹ Richmond's Catholic population was buried just outside the city limits in Bishop's cemetery, on Mechanicsville Turnpike. ⁷⁰

There was no effective way of preventing or containing those epidemics and contagious diseases. Newspapers gave implausible theories for curing and preventing cholera. One account, in 1854, claimed that the combination of red peppers and salt in lukewarm water, and eaten by the person would cure him of cholera. ⁷¹ The most logical solution was cleanliness and quarantine. If a ship originated from a port that was infected, then the cargo and crew waited a period of twelve days before unboarding and unloading. During that twelve day period, if any outbreaks occurred among the crewmen, they were prohibited from entering the city. Merchants were not satisfied with the ruling and often complained that the method was ineffective and slowed down business transactions and trade. ⁷²

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Daily Dispatch, August 22, 1854.

⁷⁰ Chesson, Richmond After the War, 18.

⁷¹ Daily Dispatch, July 15, 1854.

⁷² Goldfield, Urban America, 175.

According to Richmond's death records for 1854, during one of the city's most devastating cholera epidemics, 177 persons died. The majority of those deaths, 144, were from cholera, 18 from unknown ailments, and 15 from assorted illnesses such as pneumonia and consumption. Others surely died from cholera, but only 177 names were placed on the city register.⁷³ According to those death records, Irish immigrants died primarily of consumption and pneumonia; other causes of death included dropsey, heart disease and fever.⁷⁴

⁷³ Death Records, City of Richmond, 1853-1873. (Archives Division, Virginia State Library, Richmond, Virginia).

⁷⁴ Ibid. Unfortunately, the records were incomplete. Between 1853-1859, there were seven Irish immigrant deaths from consumption and pneumonia. Total numbers of Irish deaths numbered only thirty for the entire six years which further proved the records to be unreliable and incomplete.

CHAPTER THREE

IRISH INVOLVEMENT IN RICHMOND'S ANTEBELLUM SOCIETY

Richmond's Irish inhabitants came together in various organizations, clubs, and societies. The Catholic Church was the center of their social life and a vital link in community unity. It played an important role in the immigrant's adjustment to a new environment. The understanding of the church and organizations to which the Irish belonged, provided an insight to their lives and involvement in the Richmond community. The history of the Catholic diocese in Richmond, not only portrayed the growth of Catholicism in the southern capital, but also an expansion of the Irish in the city. Carl Wittke studied the Irish and their relationships with the church. He wrote that:

The Catholic Church in America became essentially an immigrant church in the 1840's and continued for decades to receive its strongest additions from abroad. To the poor Irish immigrant, his Church gave him a measure of dignity at a time when he was often made to feel that he was a lower breed of humanity. It became the role of the Catholic Church to make law-abiding citizens from schools for the nurture of their religion, to dispense charity in many forms.¹

On July 11, 1820, Pope Pius VII created a new diocese in Virginia, with its see in Richmond. The first Bishop to come to Richmond was from Ireland, the Reverend Patrick Kelley, President of St. John's Seminary, from Birchfield County, Kilkenny Ireland. He arrived in Richmond in 1820,

¹ John H. Cary and Julius Wienburg, editors, The Social Fabric (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1978), 237.

and began organizing the diocese.² There was no church building so he rented a room in the eastern portion of the city, known as Rocketts. That area was located near the James River water terminal and the "church" served not only a regular congregation but also many sailors who passed through the area. In 1825, they moved to a small building at Fourth and Marshall Streets.³

Father Timothy O'Brien arrived in 1832, and began the building of a permanent church for his congregation almost immediately. In 1834, St. Peter's Church was completed.⁴ The consecration of St. Peter's was not just the sanctification of a new church, but the birth of a focal point for the city's ever-growing Catholic population. On May 25, 1834, the church was dedicated. The President of Georgetown University, Mr. Meledy, and Bishop Eccleston assisted Baltimore's Archbishop Whitefield in the consecration. Although the Irish were not named specifically in the newspapers' records, large crowds attended both the morning and evening services.⁵

Timothy O'Brien then turned his attention from building churches to schools. In 1834, he invited the Sisters of Charity of St. Joseph's to create a new school in the city. They accepted his invitation, and the first private Catholic school was begun, along with an orphanage.⁶ Ten

² James H. Bailey, II. A History of the Diocese of Richmond (Chancery Office, Diocese of Richmond, Richmond, Virginia, 1933), 123.

³ Dabney, Richmond, 68.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Richmond Enquirer, May 27, 1834.

⁶ Bailey, History of the Diocese, 70

percent of the Irish immigrants were found to be illiterate, according to the 1850 census takers. However, when children of the immigrants were present, most if not all had been taught to read and write.⁷

In 1850, Father O'Brien retired and left Richmond to join his brother in Lowell, Massachusetts. He had been loved and respected by his congregation, and the entire city for his dedication and service. Evidence of the congregation's support and growth during O'Brien's residence in Richmond could be financially proven by the examination of the 1850 census reports. The census stated that Timothy O'Brien's personal estate was worth \$17,000.00,⁸ it combined church property and his personal estate, as was the custom of that era. The Catholic Church had been transformed from one room to a large successful church in a short eighteen years.

In 1837, Reverend Richard Whelan was named Bishop of Richmond. He remained Bishop of the diocese until 1855 when he was promoted and the Right Reverend John McGill took his place. After O'Brien left Richmond, the Very Reverend John Teeling stayed at St. Peter's throughout the antebellum period.⁹

The Catholic population in Virginia grew throughout the early 1800's, and by 1855 there were seventeen Catholic Churches and a total membership of 7,930 persons.¹⁰ Richmond's Irish remained at St. Peter's, but other Catholic immigrants planned new churches. On June 8, 1851, the cornerstone

⁷ United States Census, 1860, Population Schedule, City of Richmond.

⁸ United States Census, 1850, Population Schedule, City of Richmond.

⁹ Bailey, History of the Diocese, 112.

¹⁰ Edwards, Statistical Gazetteer, 24.

was laid for St. Mary's Catholic Church. The congregation consisted of German immigrants who had come to work on the Kanawa Canal project.¹¹

In 1859, another Irish congregation formed a Catholic church in Richmond. Named after Ireland's patron saint, St. Patrick's was built on Church Hill and overlooked the city and the James River. The church, located at Twenty-fifth Street between Broad and Grace Streets was in a neighborhood of predominantly white, middle class during the 1850's and 1860's. The pastor, Father Teeling, remained the Priest at both St. Peter's and St. Patrick's. When the Civil War broke out, he became a chaplain in the confederate army, leaving Archbishop Whelan responsible for the two churches and the diocese.¹²

In a letter celebrating the one-hundredth anniversary of St. Patrick's, the Auxilary Bishop of Richmond, Most Reverend Joseph Hodges, wrote that "the spirit of the Irish who made up the majority of the congregation brought forth a flourishing parish."¹³ The Daily Dispath in 1859 recorded that the new church was built,¹⁴ but did not mention the Irish by name. On November 11, 1860, the church was consecrated by Bishop McGill. The newspaper praised the services as well as the building, but again omitted acknowledgement of the Irish constituency and its involvement with the church.¹⁵

¹¹ Bailey, History of the Diocese, 81.

¹² James P. Gacquin "St. Patrick's Church, Centennial Anniversary" (Richmond: 1969), pamphlet in Virginia State Library, Richmond, Virginia.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Daily Dispatch, June 14, 1859.

¹⁵ Daily Dispatch, November, 1860.

Although the Catholic church was not entirely Irish in composition, it was the common bond that linked the Irish together. That tie gave them a place to worship, a place to renew old friendships, and revived customs and traditions from the homeland. It was the one place that the foreigners felt welcome and comfortable. In church, the newest arrivals were assisted by the older immigrants who had come before them, while friendships and alliances were made. Businesses had new customers and the newest immigrants had assistance in where to live and where to find work. The church thus assisted in the retainment of Irish traditions, but hindered the assimilation process of changing immigrants of one society to citizens of the American society.

Catholic schools had begun early in the Richmond diocese's history. The first school of any success was St. Joseph's School and Orphan Asylum, which was run by the Sisters of Charity. It began in November 1834, when Father O'Brien requested that three nuns from Emmitsburg, Maryland come to Richmond and open both a school and orphanage. In 1839, the orphanage had grown out of the original building. A new location and larger building was soon found.¹⁶

The school, by 1850, had grown to ten boarders, fourteen orphans and ninety students. The staff, still furnished by the Order in Maryland, had increased from three nuns to six. In 1857, the school increased to 130 students in the free school, 125 students in the private academy, and sixty-five orphans.¹⁷ Unfortunately, the record of those students who attended the school were not preserved. St. Mary's church organized and

¹⁶ Bailey, History of the Diocese, 70.

¹⁷ Francis Joseph Magri The Catholic Church in the City of Richmond (Richmond: Whittet and Shepperson, 1906), 77.

created a small school for boys and girls in the church's basement, and was run by the Sisters of Notre Dame. ¹⁸

There were two Irish related organizations that met at St. Peter's during the 1850's and 1860's, that aimed to assist Richmond's immigrants and paupers. The first was the Young Catholics Friend Society which met in St. Peter's basement every Sunday afternoon. The society was directed by its President, John Dooley, and was established for the sole purpose of clothing poor children and encouraging Sunday school attendance. ¹⁹ The second club was Saint Vincent's Catholic Beneficial Society. Its patron Saint, Vincent, had been the founder of the Sisters of Charity and the Order of the Sisters of the Visitation; both orders had missions or convents in Richmond. They were designed to assist the unfortunate orphans and paupers in the city. St. Vincent's society also met in St. Peter's basement, but only once a month, on Wednesday evenings. ²⁰

There was in 1860, recorded in the city directory, a Hiberian Society of Richmond. It began sometime after 1856, but there were no exact dates recorded. The Officers in 1860 were: William Payne, President; Patrick Moore, Vice-President; and P.G. Cogan, Secretary. ²¹ The original Hiberian Society was founded in New York City in 1836 by a charter from Ireland. The club quickly spread throughout the eastern and southern

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ferslew, Directory of the City of Richmond, 1860, 47.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

portions of the United States where large numbers of Irish lived. Its purpose was to "give aid to their members in sickness and distress, and to celebrate national festivals."²² Records of such acts were either lost, never kept, or discarded, thus they left no record of what occurred in Richmond. The Hiberians, however, did not meet at St. Peter's, but instead met at Odd Fellows Hall, on the corner of Franklin and Mayo Streets. They reportedly met throughout the year and participated in various events in Richmond's celebrations and festivals.²³

Two public committees were developed in the mid-nineteenth century for assisting the Irish who remained in Ireland during the famine. The Irish Relief Committee was organized by Mayor Lambert in April 1847. Fry & Company accepted the challenge of accumulating food, money, clothing, and blankets for the Irish. The ship "Bachelor" transported the aid to Ireland in May 1847, while acknowledgements of the various gifts of money and food were printed in the newspapers.²⁴

The second public committee was called the Friends of Ireland, and was organized one year later, in April 1848, by Robert Scott. He announced at the meeting in Odd Fellows Hall that between 50 and 60 Irish immigrants in Richmond had already raised \$463.00 for Ireland's fight for independence. The meeting was to help those men in their quest for more aid and support in the fight for freedom. Each of the three city wards was given representatives and John Dooley was named treasurer. By the end of the meeting,

²² Clement Eaton The Growth of Southern Civilization, 1789-1860, (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1961), 251.

²³ Ferslew, Directory of the City of Richmond, 1860, 47.

²⁴ Richmond Whig, April 14, 1847.

\$266.00 more was donated, and the Friends of Ireland had a hopeful start. ²⁵

One of the few traceable organizations closely linked with the Irish immigrants in Richmond was the Montgomery Guards. That group of approximately seventy-five men formed a city militia that was as much a social organization as it was military. Although they were connected with the military in composition and dress, the company fought only when the Governor directly requested them to assist. Such was the case when John Brown created havoc at Harper's Ferry. For the most part, the Montgomery Guards were similar to an exclusive club, with membership being a coveted privilege. ²⁶

In a military sense, the company fiercely defended its solidarity in culture and heritage. Ella Lonn noted that prior to and during the Civil War the Irish preferred fighting alongside other Irish. Their fondness for fighting in their own companies was explained through the Irish belief that they fought better when shoulder to shoulder with other Irishmen as comrades. ²⁷

The Montgomery Guards were Company C of the First Virginia Regiment Infantry. The company was established in September 1849 by Thomas August, who at that time was a Colonel of the First Virginia. On July 10, 1850,

²⁵ Richmond Enquirer, April 23, 1848.

²⁶ Ella Lonn Foreigners in the Confederacy (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1940), 96.

²⁷ Ibid.

Patrick T. Moore, an Irish immigrant, was named Captain of the Company, and remained at that post until 1860, when he was promoted to Colonel of the First Virginia. ²⁸

One of the first mentions of the Montgomery Guard was in the city directory of 1850-1851. It claimed that:

two other companies are now being formed, one composed of Irish citizens, and called Montgomery Guard, and a Scotch Company, nameless, we believe as yet. In each one of the companies, are found many of the most respectable and highly esteemed citizens of the city . . . ²⁹

The Montgomery Guards had begun as a military organization, but quickly became involved in Richmond society. One of the more famous galas of the 1850's was the Grand Civic and Military Ball. It took place annually and in 1855 was staged in Corinthian Hall. Refreshments, dancing to Ruffin's Cotillion Band, and supper was provided. Ladies were admitted free, however mens' tickets sold for two-dollars and fifty cents. ³⁰

The tickets were purchased at John Dooley, Patrick Moore and Sergeant Collin's stores. The ball was even mentioned in the newspaper by the editor. He encouraged "our readers to attend the Ball as it promises to be the most pleasant of the season." ³¹

The standard uniform for the Montgomery Guards consisted of a single breasted green coat, which had three rows of brass buttons on the front,

²⁸ Louis Manarin and Lee Wallace, Jr. editors. Richmond Volunteers (Richmond: Official Publication No. 26, Richmond Civil War Centennial Committee, 1969), 165. See also John C. Weckhert and Henry G. Dickerson "The 'Old First' Virginia Infantry," The Rattlesnake, (Richmond, 1933).

²⁹ Montague, Richmond Directory, 1850-1851, 20.

³⁰ Daily Dispatch, January 8, 1855.

³¹ Ibid.

and more buttons on the collar. A buff colored cassimere collar and cuff slashings were included with gold lace. In the winter, sky blue pantaloons with the same buff stripes were worn; the summer uniform consisted of plain white pantaloons. The hat was green with another buff cassimere band. The shield or metal piece on the cap contained the letters M.G. circled with a shamrock and eagles. White feathers tipped in green and a white patent leather belt, with a brass M.G. stamped buckle completed the outfit. ³²

By 1859, the Montgomery Guards were firmly established in Richmond. One of the larger holiday celebrations in Richmond was February 22, George Washington's birthday. The annual celebration took place on Capitol Square around the Washington statue. The various state militias assembled at 10:00 a.m. and paraded through the city. ³³ Prior to the celebration of 1859, the Daily Dispatch noted that the Montgomery Guards were "never at a loss for celebrating the 22nd, or the 4th of July, will doubtless find some means of keeping alive the occasion when the fatigues of the march are over." ³⁴ The parade must have been successful, for the next day the paper reported again on the company.

The Montgomery Guard made a handsome turnout, and exhibited a marked improvement in their drill and march. Capt. Moore, Lieut. Dooley and others have been increasing in their efforts to maintain and build up the Guard and have now placed it upon such footing that its future success is beyond peradventure. ³⁵

³² Manarin and Wallace, Richmond Volunteers, 168.

³³ Daily Dispatch, February 21, 1859.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Daily Dispatch, February 23, 1859

The Montgomery Guards were best described in the Daily Dispatch on April 23, 1861, prior to the company's departure for Manassas and the first battle of Bull Run. The newspaper stated that:

The Montgomery Guard under Captain John Dooley is composed mainly, if not entirely, of citizens of Virginia of Irish birth, who have espoused the cause of their adopted state with devoted earnestness characteristics of the generous-hearted people of which they are representatives. As a general thing, no where located, the South has ever found true friends in the Irishmen. ³⁶

Many members of the Guard were traced through the census lists of inhabitants and Richmond's city directories. Two of the most prominent members were also officers. They were Major John Dooley, and Brigadier General Patrick T. Moore. Other persons could only be traced to their family. Unless the immigrant was successful financially or politically, little knowledge was available.

John Dooley was an Irish immigrant from Limerick, Ireland, who arrived in America in 1836. On the voyage he had met his future wife, Sarah, also from Limerick, Ireland. When they arrived, in Baltimore, they continued traveling to Alexandria, Virginia. During the same year, 1836, they married, and moved to Richmond. ³⁷ John found work as a clerk for a mercantile firm, but eventually opened his own hat and furrier business. ³⁸

³⁶ Daily Dispatch, April 23, 1861.

³⁷ Charles M. Caravati Major James Dooley (Richmond: 1978), 1.

³⁸ Ibid., 2.

The business was located at number Eighty-one Main Street and advertised as a "Southern Hat, Caps and Fur Emporium."³⁹ By 1850, John Dooley was listed on the census, along with his wife and seven children. His estate was worth \$4,000.00.⁴⁰ He owned four slaves, one fifty dollar carriage, a seventy-five dollar piano, and two gold watches.⁴¹ In 1860, he had three employees working in the store with him. Two men, John Joyce and William Hutchinson were members of the Montgomery Guard.⁴² Michael Connor, the third employee was a member of another Richmond based Irish militia, the Emmet Guards.⁴³

John Dooley had been a member of the Montgomery Guards for several years, when in 1861 he was promoted to Captain. That position had become vacant when Captain Patrick Moore was promoted to Colonel of the First Virginia Regiment. By the beginning of the Civil War, John Dooley was promoted to Major; he remained with the Montgomery Guards throughout the war.⁴⁴

Major Dooley was one of the exceptional Irish immigrants. Not only had he done well for himself financially, he had also become popular and influential in Richmond's society. His children did equally well for themselves. The three daughters, Mary, Florence, and Josephine, each married

³⁹ Edwards, Statistical Gazetteer, 118.

⁴⁰ United States Census, 1850, Population Schedule, City of Richmond.

⁴¹ Personal Property Tax Records, 1849, City of Richmond. Dooley was taxed for two clocks of unknown value also.

⁴² Ferslew, Directory of the City of Richmond, 1860, 101. Manarin and Wallace, Richmond Volunteers, 172.

⁴³ Ferslew, Directory of the City of Richmond, 1860, 3. Manarin and Wallace, Richmond Volunteers, 221.

⁴⁴ Caravati, Major Dooley, 4.

businessmen. One daughter, Alice, remained single and at home. The youngest daughter, Sarah, became a Visitation nun and the Superioress of the Visitation Convent in Richmond. All of the Dooley's were devoutly Catholic and faithful members of St. Peter's church. Two other children, a boy and a girl, both died during their childhood. ⁴⁵

Dooley's two sons, John (Jr.), and James, were also members of the Montgomery Guards. John was wounded at Gettysburg, taken prisoner, and sent to Johnson's Island prison. He remained a prisoner for twenty-one months. After the war, John returned to Georgetown University with the intentions of becoming a priest. Unfortunately, prior to graduation, he died of tuberculosis. ⁴⁶ He kept a journal throughout the war; it was published in 1945 by the Georgetown University Press. ⁴⁷ James Dooley, the youngest son of the immigrant, also fought in the Civil War. He was wounded in a battle near Williamsburg and almost lost his right arm. It was saved, but he was deformed and had little use of the arm for the rest of his life. He was imprisoned at the Rip-Raps Federal camp and released in 1862. ⁴⁸ Upon returning to public life after the Civil War, he became an attorney and leading figure in Richmond's legal and business society. He was elected to the Virginia Legislature in 1870.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Joseph T. Durkins editor, John Dooley, Confederate Soldier, His War Journal (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1945.

⁴⁸ Caravati, Major Dooley, 7.

A second immigrant who did equally as well as Dooley, was Bragadier General Patrick Theodore Moore. Born in Galway, Ireland, on September 22, 1821; Patrick Moore traveled to Canada when he was fourteen years old. He remained there until 1843, when he moved to Richmond.⁴⁹ Moore, like Dooley, owned his own business. The P.T. Moore and Company were "importers and dealers in Foreign and Domestic Hardware, Cutlery, Guns and Edge tools," and was located on Number Twenty-four Pearl or Fourteenth Street.⁵⁰ After the Civil War, Moore switched occupations, and was recored as selling insurance in Richmond.⁵¹

Although there was no record of Moore being married, he evidently had been at one time. In January 1855, he and his housekeeper, Judy Hamilton were arrested for assault. According to the Daily Dispatch Patrick Moore's housekeeper attacked his mother-in-law when she came to the house looking for Patrick. Mrs. Mary Moore had come to ask for some money she had loaned him, when Judy Hamilton attacked her, set her bonnet on fire, and then proceeded to throw the hat out the door. Timothy Sullivan happened to be near by and heard the commotion, and recognized Judy Hamilton as his estranged wife who, he claimed, had left him to live in "open adultery" with Patrick Moore. The incident ended with Judy Hamilton (Sullivan) being required to pay \$150.00 bail. Patrick Moore reportedly would be charged and fined for "familiarity with a married lady."⁵²

⁴⁹ Durkins, John Dooley, Confederate Soldier, xviii.

⁵⁰ Montague, Richmond Directory, 1850-1851, 16.

⁵¹ Richmond Whig, February 21, 1883.

⁵² Daily Dispatch, January 4, 1855.

Patrick Moore's military record was more respectable than his personal one. On July 10, 1850, he was commissioned Captain of the Montgomery Guards. Later he was promoted to Colonel of the First Virginia Regiment. In 1862, at the first battle of Manassas, he was severely wounded and returned to Richmond. Moore declined the offer of re-election as Colonel and remained in the capital city. During the latter half of the war, he served in the Confederate government in Richmond. In 1864, Moore was made Brigadier General and defended the city from the attacking Union army. After the war, in 1871, he began serving on the City Council as City Sergeant and retained that post until his death in 1883.⁵³

There was a second military organization formed in Richmond that consisted of primarily Irish immigrants. Company F of the Fifteenth Virginia Infantry was organized on May 1, 1861, under the command of Captain William Lloyd.⁵⁴ It assumed the title of Emmet Guards and concentrated on preparing for the approaching war with the North. The men had not enlisted into an elite militia, but instead had joined to defend the state of Virginia and the Confederacy. One year later, the company had disbanded and was no longer in service.

The Emmet Guards claimed that they were exempted from further service through the conscription act of 1862. They used a particular clause in the act that allowed for discharge of all non-domiciled residents. It prevented them from having to re-enlist after their one year duty was

⁵³ Richmond Whig, February 21, 1883.

⁵⁴ Manarin and Wallace, Richmond Volunteers, 220.

over.⁵⁵ On June 20, 1862, the Adjutant and Inspector General's Office had disbanded the company. Those who wished to remain fighting were transferred to other companies.

Even though the company did not finish in glory, it certainly began with high expectations and pride. Both the Montgomery Guards and Emmet Guards fought for their adopted country fully expecting to win. They had not attempted to ignore the war, but instead joined in the fight. According to the Daily Dispatch:

A number of companies attached to First Regiment paraded under P.T. Moore clearly demonstrating that the war fever had permeated the ranks and that each individual soldier was ready and eager for the fray come when it will.⁵⁶

The occupations of the Montgomery Guardsmen and Emmet Guardsmen were not completely discovered. However, by using both 1850 and 1860 census reports and city directories, some members were fully researched. Thirty-five Montgomery Guardsmen were examined; there was no single income level, nor any common occupation for them all. Of the thirty-five men discovered, only six were professionals, the rest were skilled or semiskilled laborers.

There were six clerks, six grocers, and two manufacturers. Other trained and educated men included Colonel Moore, a merchant, John Dooley, the hatter, John Dove, a physician, and James Dennis, a confectioner.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 169.

⁵⁶ Daily Dispatch, April 23, 1861.

Captain William English was born in Mitchelstown, Ireland, County Cork, in 1819. He migrated to America and landed in New York City where he became an apprentice tailor. In 1841, he left New York and came to Richmond where he worked for Beers and Poindexter.⁵⁷ In 1850, his personal property was worth \$1,311.00.⁵⁸ By 1860, he had changed occupations and was a merchant, with an increased value of \$4,000.00 in personal property and real estate.⁵⁹ His store was located at the southeast corner of Third and Leigh Streets. His family resided in the upstairs portion of the store.⁶⁰ He remained a loyal member of the Montgomery Guards throughout the 1850's and rose in rank to Captain when John Dooley was promoted to Major. English remained in the company until April 26, 1862, when he was wounded at Manassas. He returned to Richmond and commanded a cavalry unit in the city until the end of the war. After the war, in 1870, he was appointed to City Council by Governor Walker and represented the Monroe Ward until his death in 1876. English was a member of St. Peter's, and had participated in the Catholic Beneficial Society and the Society of St. Vincent de Paul along with John Dooley. His sons were well educated and successful in private business also. One son moved to New York City and was a dentist, while the other son, Edgar, remained in Richmond and became an attorney.⁶¹

⁵⁷ Montague, City Directory, 1850-1851, 72; Richmond Whig, March 17, 1876.

⁵⁸ United States Census, 1850, Population Schedule, City of Richmond.

⁵⁹ United States Census, 1860, Population Schedule, City of Richmond.

⁶⁰ Ferslew, Directory of the City of Richmond, 36.

⁶¹ Richmond Whig, March 17, 1876.

Sergeant Patrick Rankin was a grocer. His store was located between Fourteenth and Fifteenth, on Cary Street, near Rahm's business, the Eagle Machine Works.⁶² At that particular factory, two other members of the Montgomery Guards worked also. The remainder of skilled workers included stone cutters, tailors, boiler makers, and a shoemaker. Porters and laborers were also traced to the various businesses in the city.*

Through the observations of those jobs held by the men of the militia, the majority of persons seemed to be in the middle to lower class income bracket, sprinkled with a few wealthy men. The statistics drastically conflict with common notions of the entire unit being a wealthy society club of well-to-do Irish immigrants.⁶³ Instead, the impression was that the group of immigrants involved with the militia, were still holding on to their past culture by remaining together as a group.

The Emmet Guards were similar to the Montgomery Guards in terms of occupations and income levels. Most of their members were not tradesmen but laborers. The only skilled laborers found consisted of a blacksmith, two carpenters, and a finisher. Two members, Michael Sullivan and moulder William Burke, worked for Tredegar Iron Works. Daniel Driscoll worked for another iron company, the Eagle Machine Works.⁶⁴

* For the complete list of members and their occupations, see the end of the chapter.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Lonn, Foreigners in the Confederacy, 92.

⁶⁴ Ferslew, Directory of the City of Richmod, 1860, 37.

There were no professionals found in Company F; Michael Dugan and Captain William Lloyd seemed to be the most prosperous of the Emmet Guardsmen. Dugan owned a confectionary and fruit store in Richmond.⁶² Captain Lloyd's profession is unknown. The only information found revealed that in 1854 he was a twenty-three year old clerk, who took an oath in Richmond and renounced his Irish citizenship for that of America.⁶³ Five years later, he was taxed for three slaves, one watch, clock, and a piano. His personal property was valued at \$150.00.⁶⁴

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Richmond Hustings Court Records, 1854, City of Richmond.

⁶⁷ Personal Property Tax Records, 1859, City of Richmond. The watch was worth \$45.00; the clock was worth \$5.00; and the piano was valued at \$15.00.

Whittaker, Joseph
Williams, A.L.
Williams, Abram
Woods, Joseph
Woods, Patrick
Wormack, Castine
Worrell, William
Wright, E.A.
Youell, Robert

EMMET GUARD

CAPTAIN:

**William Lloyd (clerk in 1854)

LIEUTENANTS:

Adams, John
Coen, Fin
Collins, James
Mason, Jeffrey

NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICERS
AND PRIVATES:

Bayne, Thomas
Bolan, John
Burke, Anthony
*Burke, William (Tredegar moulder)
Burns, James
Burnes, Patrick
Burrows, Charles
Byrnes, James
Clary, Dennis
Cole, John
Collins, Henry
Connor, Michael (worked for
J. Dooley)
*Costelo, Patrick
Cronin, John
Danahy, Daniel
**Disney, John (porter)
Dorain, Philip
Driscoll, Daniel
Dugan, Michael
Farley, Patrick
Feeney, Michael
Finton, Joseph
Flaherty, John
Flaherty, Peter
Ford, John (blacksmith)
Freeney, Michael
Galvin, John (finisher)

Gillespie, Andrew
Glancey, John
Graham, Cornelius
Griffen, Patrick
Haden, John
Harrington, Michael
Heffy, Patrick
Hurley, William (land warrant
officer)
James, George (carpenter)
Keenan, James
Kelley, Daniel
Kelley, John
Kelley, William
Keyton, Patrick
Kirk, Nicholas
Lillis, John (porter)
Logan, James (musician)
Lynch, John
Mahony, James
**Manning, Dennis
Martin, Maurice
Maughan, Patrick
McCave, John
McDonald, James
McDonough, Michael
McGuire, John
*Murphy, John
*Murphy, John
*Murphy, Daniel
O'Callahan, James
O'Niel, John (owned bookstore)
Parke, George
Phillips, John
Russell, James
Sculley, Bartley
Slattery, Michael
Sullivan, John
Sullivan, Michael (laborer,
Tredegar)

+ denotes death in Civil War

* denotes Irish immigrant according to the United States Census

** denotes Irish immigrant according to Richmond City Hustings Court

List of members from Richmond Volunteers, by Louis Manarin and Lee Wallace

Sullivan, Owen
Tierney, Edward
Tracey, Michael
Walker, Charles (rolling mill,
Tredegar)

Williams, James
Williams, Patrick
Williams, Robert

CHAPTER FOUR

VIRGINIA POLITICS AND THE IRISH

Virginia's Irish were not politically strong enough to alter the elections of the antebellum period. As a group, they lacked the organization and determination needed to succeed in the political arena of Virginia. Most had not become naturalized citizens and therefore could not vote. For the few who had become citizens, their votes were insignificant and did little to change the outcomes of state and local elections.

Irishmen usually voted Democratic,¹ but Richmond was a city dominated by Whigs² which made their vote less important to the elections outcome. Throughout the antebellum period, in all of Richmond's elections, all three city wards voted for Whig and American party candidates. Jefferson Ward also voted for the Whigs; that ward was considered one of the city's poorest neighborhoods and the home of many immigrants.³ One of its representatives, John H. Higgins, was an Irish grocer and member of City Council for over eighteen years.⁴ Jefferson Ward encompassed all of Richmond east of Fifteenth Street.⁵

¹ Wittke, We Who Built America, 156.

² Barton H. Wise The Life of Henry Wise (New York: MacMillan Company, 1899), 176.

³ Chesson, Richmond After the War, 107.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ellyson, Richmond Directory, 1856, 36.

To become powerful, the Irish had to organize, become united, nominate or support one candidate and then have him elected to office. Prior to that, the right to vote was necessary, and in order to vote, they had to become naturalized citizens. All women, free blacks, slaves and aliens were denied the right to vote. During the 1830's, only property owners or leaseholders were allowed suffrage in Virginia. That law remained unchanged until the mid-nineteenth century.

In the state convention of 1829-1830, Robert Taylor proposed uniform suffrage across the state, but it failed to pass. The split between the eastern and western halves of the state prohibited a compromise on the issue.⁶ At the Virginia state convention in 1850-1851, suffrage rights were granted to adult white male citizens across the state regardless of property owned or taxes paid.⁷ The new ruling declared that :

Every free white male citizen of the age of twenty-one years, who has resided two years in the state, and one year in the county, city, or town where he offers his vote shall have the right of suffrage.⁸

⁶ F.N. Boney John Letcher of Virginia (University of Alabama: University Press, 1966), 36.

⁷ William P. Hambleton A Biographical Sketch of Henry Wise, with a History of the Political Campaign in Virginia, 1855. (Richmond: J.W. Randolph, printers, 1856), 36.

⁸ William Maxwell, editor, "Various Intelligence" Virginia Historical Register, Volume IV, (McFarlane and Fergusson publishers: 1851), 231.

Naturalization and suffrage laws changed throughout the United States history. Laws for aliens or immigrants were controversial and debated nation-wide, throughout the antebellum period. No drastic changes were made in the naturalization process. In Congress, the laws for citizenship were usually tied in with immigration restriction legislation. The South as a whole, usually favored restrictions on immigration mainly because the immigrants tended to settle in northern free states.⁹

The national laws for admittance to the United States as a citizen stated that any alien, being a free, white person, could become a naturalized citizen, if various measures were taken.¹⁰ The first requirement was an oath of affirmation before a United States Court two years prior to his admittance as a citizen. The immigrant claimed his intent on becoming a citizen, and renounced all allegiances to foreign princes or states. Two years later, the oath was repeated, again in a United States Court, with proof that the immigrant had lived in the United States for at least five years, and at least one year in that particular state or territory. Secondly, the alien had to prove that he was a man of good moral character, usually via witnesses who testified for him before the court.¹¹ Lastly, the immigrant said another oath renouncing all titles of nobility, heredity or otherwise, and was declared a citizen. No oaths from the alien concerning the length of residency were allowed. The final requirement was that

⁹ Darrel W. Overdyke The Know-Nothing Party in the South (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1950), 5.

¹⁰ Hambleton, Biographical Sketch of Henry Wise, 17.

¹¹ Richmond Hustings Court Records, 1854-1857, (microfilm of records, Virginia State Library, Richmond, Virginia).

the immigrants homeland had not been involved in war with the United States during the period of application for citizenship. Children of naturalized citizens became United States citizens at the age of twenty-one. ¹²

Virginia's politics centered around two political groups during the 1840's and 1850's; the well established Democrats and the Whig party. "For social, historical and practical reasons, most Irish became members of the Democratic Party" in Virginia and across the nation. ¹³ According to Darrell Overdyke, the word "democrat" was more appealing than the word "whig" which influenced some immigrants to vote democratic. ¹⁴ The word 'whig' originated with the English, and many Irish rebelled against everything British. The Democrats were supposedly, more in touch with the common people and favored reforms, which appealed to many Irish. ¹⁵

The Richmond Whig claimed that "the Democratic Party had long held the unenviable record of petting, pampering these foreigners, most of whom were 'insincere, corrupt, bigoted, and ignorant.'" ¹⁶

Only in general terms could lines be drawn between the Whigs/Know-Nothings and the Democrats of Virginia. ¹⁷ Throughout the years 1840-1860, the Democrats controlled the General Assembly except for 1845; and they occupied the governor's mansion from 1843.

¹² Hambleton, Biographical Sketch of Henry Wise, 17.

¹³ Robert Francis Hueston The Catholic Press and Nativism, 1840-1860. (New York: Arno Press, 1976), 42.

¹⁴ Overdyke, The Know-Nothing Party, 8.

¹⁵ Ibid., 48.

¹⁶ Ibid., 65.

¹⁷ Philip M. Rice "The Know-Nothing Party in Virginia, 1854-1856" Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, (LV, 1947), 70.

The opposition to both the majority of the Irish and the Democrats to 1854, was the Whig party. After the 1852 presidential election, when the Whig candidate General Winfield Scott lost to President Franklin Pierce, the party declined in importance.* The Kansas-Nebraska Bill of 1854 completely disrupted the Whig party and it splintered off into various directions.¹⁸ In the North, a new party was formed known as the Republican Party. In the South, most joined with the Know-Nothings, but finally joined the southern Democratic Party after the American Party declined.

Nativist movements and campaigns had been in force since the 1830's, but it was not until the early 1850's that a national political organization was formed. The American Party's primary objectives was to limit the number of foreigners admitted into the United States and prohibit them from obtaining public office.¹⁹ By 1854, they had established branches of the society across the eastern seaboard of the United States known as the American or Know-Nothing Party. The first American Party unit in Virginia was founded in Charlottesville in July 1854. Richmond quickly followed suit, and established a branch a few months later. The Whigs became an important element of the new American Party in Virginia. After the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act, many southern Whigs became disillusioned with the Whig Party which was slowly failing; the American party gave them a chance to continue in politics and oppose the Democrats.

¹⁸ Barton Wise, The Life of Henry Wise, 166.

¹⁹ Rice, "Know-Nothings in Virginia," 62-63.

* Richmond voted overwhelmingly for General Scott in the Presidential election of 1852.

Across Virginia, Know-Nothings gained influence by recruiting ex-Whigs to join their party. They never became powerful enough to challenge the Democrats successfully state-wide, even though they used the reputations of old Whigs to encourage people to vote for the American party. The Democrats were too strong and much better organized than the newly developed American Party; that advantage helped Democrats win most of the states' elections. ²⁰

Thomas Flournoy was the American Party candidate for Governor against Henry Wise in 1855; both he and Wise were former Whigs. In that election, Wise won by 10,180 votes. ²¹ A few years after the election of 1855, the American party disappeared in Virginia. Former Whigs either adopted the term "opposition" or voted for Democrats.

In some areas, Irish and German Catholics were direct victims of the nativist attacks. However, Richmond's immigrants did not seem to be attacked or bothered by the city's inhabitants, as there were no records of such activities or feelings in the newspapers. Virginia's Catholics reacted to the Know-Nothings quietly. They did not desire public attention, unlike their northern neighbors who rioted and fought nativists in bloody confrontations. The Bishop of the Virginian Diocese at St. Peter's, Bishop McGill, gave a memorable message involving nativistic threats on Catholics. He claimed that the oath of obedience was to be given to the Pope "only as head of the Church," it did not pertain to all aspects of the Catholic's life. ²²

²⁰ Overdyke, The Know-Nothing Party, 91.

²¹ Barton H. Wise, Life of Henry Wise, 121.

²² Overdyke, The Know-Nothing Party, 217.

In the history of the diocese, only one Catholic church was recorded as being damaged by Know-Nothings. On December 7, 1856, St. Patrick's Church in Norfolk burned to the ground. Although the fire had begun nearby in a private home, it spread quickly to the church. It was a complete loss, but the building and organ had been insured. The fire, according to some accounts "was no accident" but no proof of arson was ever found. ²³

The city of Richmond frequently supported Whig/American candidates throughout the antebellum era. In the presidential campaign of 1844, Richmond gave Henry Clay (Whig) 841 votes and James Polk (Democrat) 246 votes. ²⁴ Earlier that spring, Richard Stanard the Whig candidate was elected over Henry Brooke by 76 votes to the State Senate. ²⁵ In the House of Delegates, another Whig, Robert T. Daniel, won over Charles Hyde by 434 votes. ²⁶ The situation had not changed by 1845, when James Seddon was elected to Congress over John Botts. In Richmond the results were opposite, Botts, the Whig, won by over 300 votes and carried all three wards. ²⁷ The presidential election of 1848 finally gave Richmond's Whigs something to celebrate. They voted overwhelmingly for Zachary Taylor and against Lewis Cass. Taylor received 1,068 votes; Cass, only 345. The state's electors voted for Cass, but the final victory went to the

²³ Bailey, History of the Diocese, 121.

²⁴ Richmond Enquirer, November 8, 1854.

²⁵ Richmond Enquirer, April 25, 1844.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Richmond Enquirer, May 25, 1845.

the Whig candidate, Zachary Taylor.²⁸ The spring elections of 1849 "passed off most quietly Most of the old members (City Council) were re-elected."²⁹

By 1852, a few changes had begun to occur in the city's elections. Democrat John A. Meredith, a member of the State Senate, was elected circuit court judge over Robert Stanard by 1,039 votes.³⁰ Stanard had been successful in city politics since the early 1840's, but in 1852, he suffered an unprecedented defeat. Joseph Johnson, a Democrat, became the first popularly elected Governor in Virginia. Richmond, however, was still dominated by the Whigs. General Winfield Scott was supported strongly by Richmond in the presidential election of 1852. Scott carried Richmond by 842 votes over the ultimate winner, Democrat Franklin Pierce.³¹ Whigs were once more elected to represent Richmond in the state's Senate and House of Delegates. In 1853, the Richmond Enquirer boasted that there were 2,500 Whigs in the city, and only 1,000 Democrats.³² For the Democrats in Richmond, they often came close to winning local elections but rarely succeeded.³³

²⁸ Richmond Enquirer, November 10, 1848.

²⁹ Richmond Enquirer, April 5, 1849.

³⁰ Richmond Enquirer, June 1, 1852.

³¹ Richmond Enquirer, November 15, 1852.

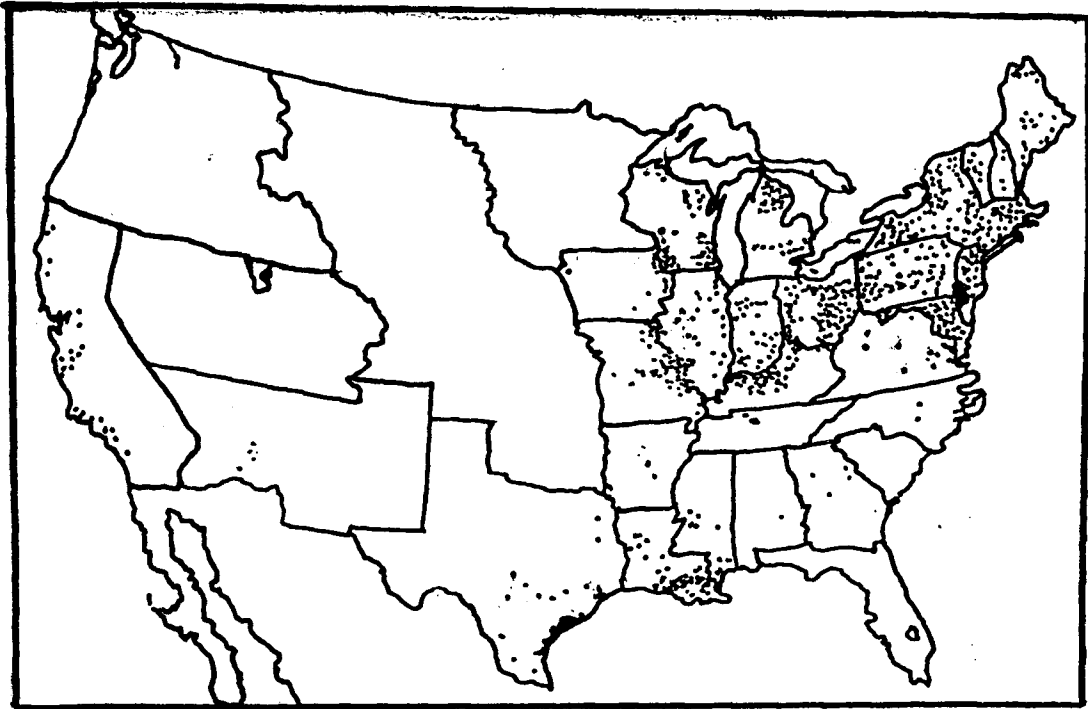
³² Ibid.

³³ Richmond Enquirer, May 26, 1853. Newspapers such as the Richmond Enquirer and Richmond Whig printed the results of city, state, and national elections immediately after each election. Between 1844 and 1860, Whigs won almost all the city elections.

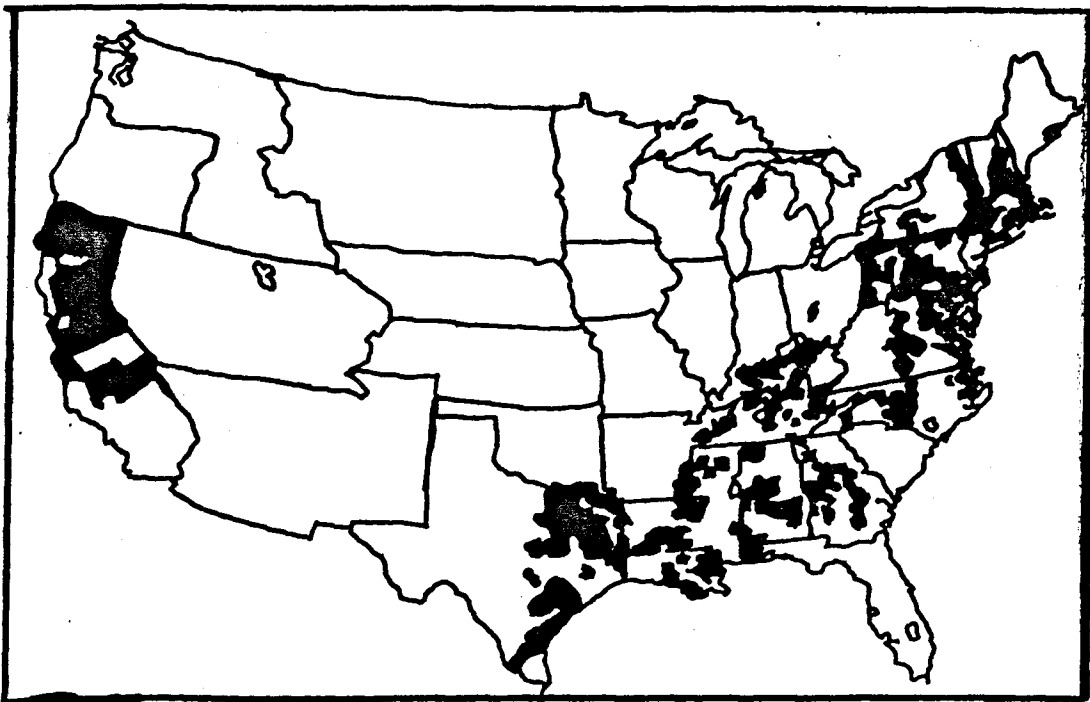
In the 1860 election, William Goggin, a former Whig Congressman, represented the "opposition" to the Democratic Party in the gubernatorial election. He lost to Democrat John Letcher by 5,569 votes. The final tally was William Goggins, 71,543; John Letcher had 77,112.³⁴ The Democrats won the ominous task of directing Virginia through the Civil War.

The Irish of Richmond seemed to be in the eye of the storm during the antebellum period. They were rarely seen or mentioned in Richmond's political processes and elections. Around the nation, controversies raged over the growing numbers of Catholics and immigrants that infiltrated the land. The Irish, in Richmond, kept to themselves and avoided attention. The American party never achieved success in Virginia. Few records were left by the Irish or their contemporaries concerning their political involvement in Richmond. Evidence (what little there was) led to the belief that the Irish were not involved in political matters during the antebellum period. Instead, they concentrated on making a living, supporting their families, and educating their children.

³⁴ Boney, John Letcher, 87.



Roman Catholic Churches in America, 1850 Each dot is one church



Know-Nothing Areas in Congressional and State Elections, 1855

Information from: The Protestant Crusade, R. A. Billington (402, 404).

Naturalization Records for Irish in Richmond, 1854-1855

	<u>Took oath to become citizen</u>	<u>Granted Citizenship</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Occupation</u>
January	Michael Dreslin		28	Day laborer
		James Dimond		
		James Phalen		
	Bernard Tracey		23	Publisher
	Michael Dolan		25	Laborer
February		Michael McCormick		
April	William Lloyd		23	Clerk
		Joseph Johnston	27	Druggist
	Maurice Gallagher		23	Bricklayer
	Michael Drunes			Grocer
June	John Tyndal		21	Shoemaker
	Martin Sullivan		23	Tailor
	James Dooley		28	Clerk
August		George Nellis		
	Patrick Reiley		32	Laborer
October	William Butler		26	Painter
	Thomas Nicholson		40	Shoemaker
	Patrick Colbert		30	Shoemaker
	Peter Doyle		22	Iron Worker
		George Dowden		
<u>1855</u>				
January	Michael Eagan		40	Laborer
	Patrick Coffee		32	Laborer
	Simon Coffee		35	Laborer
	John Roacke		35	Laborer
	James Roacke		27	Laborer
	Dennis McGrath		27	Laborer
	Robert Kerse		27	Laborer
	Michael Whelan		24	Laborer
	Richard Garman			
	Thomas Heayes			

Information from: Richmond Hustings Court Records, 1854-1855.

Naturalization Records for Irish in Richmond, 1855-1856.

	<u>Took Oath to Become Citizen</u>	<u>Granted Citizenship</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Occupation</u>
February		John Kearney		
		Michael Cunningham	23	Hatter
	Patrick Norton	ham	23	Laborer
	James Blake		25	Laborer
	James Nowland		20	Stonecutter
March	Robert Graemeo		35	Gardener
		Patrick Cain	26	Machinist
		Michael Green		
		Daniel Kent		
		Maurice Casey		
April	Philip O'Niel		24	Laborer
	John Hagan		28	Merchant
		Daniel Ryan		
		Charles Melvin		
		John Goldin		
		John Doyle		
		Robert McNamer	23	Butler
May	John Ghelin		20	Blacksmith
<u>1856</u>				
July		John Kinnina		
		Timothy O'Connor		
		James J. McMahon		1st oath taken in New York City
		Charles Mackey		
		John Cunningham		
September		Michael Dolan		
October		Patrick Reily		
		Patrick Thomas		
		Michael Downs		
		Michael Ryan		
		Peter Quinn		
		Thomas Mason		

Information from: Richmond Hustings Court Records, 1855-1856.

Naturalization Records for Irish in Richmond, 1859.

	<u>Took Oath to Become Citizen</u>	<u>Granted Citizenship</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Occupation</u>
February		Dennis Manning		
		Patrick Cosetello		
		Charles Dugan		
		Patrick McCarthy		
		John Tyndal		
		John Disney		
April	Joseph Mitchell		21	Laborer
		Bernard Neagle		
May		John Henderson		
	Robert Mason		20	Merchant
		Timothy Sherkin		
		David Sheehy		1st oath taken in New York City
		Humphrey Sullivan		
		James Smith		
		John McVoy		
	William Rankin		28	Day laborer
	Patrick Rankin		23	Porter
June		James Casey		
September	Michael Murphey		25	Storekeeper
	Nicholas M. Court		33	Laborer
	Miles McMahan		29	Laborer
		Timothy Kelty		
		Cornelius Swyer		
October		Stephen Houghes	23	Clerk

Between the months of November and December 1859, there were no Irish presented to the Hustings Court in Richmond for citizenship.

The years of 1857-1858 contained incomplete records for the Hustings Court in Richmond.

When becoming a citizen, the person must have lived in the United States for five years, and in the city of Richmond for the past one year before obtaining citizenship.

Information from: Richmond Hustings Court Records, 1859.

CHAPTER FIVE

IRISH INVOLVEMENT IN BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY

Richmond was a financial center of the upper south and had a diversified economy, which involved industry, commerce, and transportation. Most southern cities in the antebellum period were small and had little industry. Charleston and New Orleans depended on their harbors as the major source of revenue. Products grown inland were shipped to the port cities and sold to other markets. A harbor was an advantage that drew businesses to the city. Railroads and ships were the fastest and largest modes of transportation during that era. Richmond benefitted with the Kanawha Canal, James River, and railroad stations; all centered within its boundaries.

Although Richmond was not a major port city, it did have a deep water terminal on the James River. It was also the state capital, and the annual influx of legislators assuredly kept the city in step with national trends and ideas. As a capital, it drew many persons to the city in search for better opportunities and jobs. Economically, the city was stable with its three major industries centered on the river. All three industries: tobacco, iron and machine works and flour milling, demanded large quantities of laborers. Immigrants, unskilled workers, and free blacks were all able to find work in Richmond. Irish immigrants worked primarily in the iron industry. Slaves were either bought directly by the manufacturers or hired by the companies from the slave's master to work for them in the factories.

The first major industry to become established in Richmond was the flour milling business. The Gallego Mills were the largest; and produced flour which was sold world wide. Second in size and annual production was the Columbian Mills, better known as the Haxall Mills, managed and owned by the Haxall brothers.¹ By 1860, Gallego's flour had become a sizable trading commodity. Brazilian coffee was exchanged successfully for the flour through the 1850's and 1860's. By 1860, Richmond had the largest coffee market in the United States.²

The second major industry involved tobacco products. In 1850, there was a total of forty-three tobacco factories and they employed 2,388 persons.³ Slaves were an effective source of labor for the planting, growing, and harvesting of tobacco. But in factories, owners and managers were more creative in solving labor shortages. Immigrants and hired slaves were used; however, during the 1850's women were used for the first time as laborers in the factories. The useage of women:

increased from 10 percent in 1850 to 17 percent by 1860. That ratio varied widely in the several manufacturing centers. By 1860, women in Richmond factories made up only one percent of the hands . . .⁴

¹ Montague, Richmond Directory, 1850-1851, 13.

² Chesson, Richmond After the War, 8.

³ Montague, Richmond Directory, 1850-1851, 13.

⁴ Hunt, "White Girls in Tobacco Factories," 522.

According to the 1860 census records, "Richmond manufactured nearly five million pounds of tobacco--more than any other city in the world."⁵

Two Irish immigrant families were found to be involved in tobacco. The first was Richard Holland and his family. He and his wife, Hannah, had been born in Ireland and emigrated to the United States, and by 1853 were residents of Richmond. Both of their daughters were also born in Virginia, Mary in 1853, and Sarah, in 1850.⁶ Holland was the manager of A.W. Taylor & Company which manufactured tobacco.⁷

John F. Allen was the second immigrant found to be involved in tobacco. Born in Wexford, Ireland in 1815, Allen migrated to Richmond in 1820 with his father. The family succeeded in business and Allen was a classmate of Edgar Allen² Poe at the University of Virginia. After the Civil War, he began the tobacco business of John F. Allen & Company.⁸ In 1875, Allen teamed-up with Lewis Ginter who invented the "cigarette" made of Virginia tobacco. The company expanded rapidly with its new product, until the single office of Richmond had become three, one in London, Paris, and Berlin.⁹ In 1878, Allen retired, however, Ginter continued manufacturing cigarettes until his death.

⁵ David Goldfield, "The Triumph of Politics Over Society, 1851-1861," (doctoral dissertation, University of Maryland, 1970), 30.

⁶ United States Census, 1860, Population Schedule, City of Richmond.

⁷ Ferslew, Directory of the City of Richmond, 1860, 125.

⁸ Edward Alvey, Jr. "John F. Allen and Lewis Ginter: Richmond Cigarette Pioneers," The Richmond Literature and Historical Quarterly (Vol. VII, No. 3; Winter, 1984), 39.

⁹ Dabney, Richmond, 246.

Most Irish immigrants found work in the iron industry. In the 1850 and 1860 census records, two dozen were found to work specifically in the iron and machine works. The iron industry demanded large numbers of laborers as did the tobacco and milling industries. Some of the iron manufacturers in Richmond included the Armory Iron Works, which employed 140 persons in 1850, and manufactured railroad iron. When the Irish immigrants of Tredegar went on strike in 1861, it was the Armory Iron Works that offered them employment with better pay.¹⁰

Other foundries in the city included Talbott & Brothers, which employed 100 persons, and two other foundries, Burr, Pae, and Sampson Company and the Barnes-Phoenix Foundry.¹¹ These businesses were smaller, but were still important to Richmond's industrial base. Most of the companies were located as near the James River as possible, in sight of other foundries and mills on the river.

The Tredegar Iron Works was the most famous of the iron works. Over 700 free whites were employed during 1860 in the mill. Total employment consisted of northern and foreign born artisans, for the most part. The foreign laborers consisted primarily of Irish and German immigrants and formed the bulk of Tredegar's working force. Those positions called for skilled and unskilled labor throughout the mill.¹² In 1860, one-half of all Richmond's iron workers were employed at Tredegar.¹³ The total

¹⁰ Tredegar Journals and Letterbook, Anderson to Burton, September 18, 1861.

¹¹ Montague, Richmond Directory, 1850-1851, 12.

¹² Charles B. Dew Ironmaker to the Confederacy (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1966), 31.

¹³ Chesson, Richmond After the War, 214.

number of city iron workers was 1,659 men in 1860 and they were employed in over sixty different foundries. Tredegar had over one-million dollars worth of sales during 1860; while total sales for Richmond's works was 2.3 million for the same year. ¹⁴

The occupations acquired by the Irish were often unrecroded or described as "laborer" or "iron worker." If the census was specific, the most common description was "puddler." A puddler was someone who manufactured bar iron by changing molten pig iron into wrought iron, by mixing hot liquid iron with oxidizing substances inside iron furnaces. A second description of a puddler was a skilled laborer who possessed both brawn and good judgment. Puddlers performed the first step of removing impurities from the iron. They were also observed as jealousy guarding their skills and positions in the various rolling mills. ¹⁵

Tredegar's journals mentioned quarrels and disputes between Irish workers and management in 1861. It was the only time such a labor dispute was discovered between Irish iron workers and their employers. It began on September 18, 1861, when the Irish workers threatened to strike against Tredegar. They were angered at President Joseph Anderson's decision to employ slaves as puddlers at the armory furnace. The Irish refused to work with the slaves; and notified Anderson that new jobs awaited them at another nearby armory, and included higher wages. Since slaves had been used at the armory previously, the significant issue must have been wages. Anderson agreed to the Irish demands and paid them higher wages, in order

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Dew, Ironmaker to the Confederacy, 28.

to prevent the strike. However, there was no mention of the slaves, nor of whether they remained or left the puddling process at Tredegar.¹⁶

Many Irish immigrants were listed on the 1860 census as working in Tredegar, but only four were able to be completely researched. One family that was successfully traced was that of William Burke. In 1860, he and his wife, Catherine, also from Ireland, lived in Richmond with their four year old daughter, Catherine.¹⁷ William was a moulder at Tredegar,¹⁸ and had another relative living with him. His relative did not work at Tredegar, but instead was a bricklayer.¹⁹ They had all been in Richmond for at least four years, and William had enlisted in the Emmet Guards, where he served as a private.²⁰ As a moulder, Burke supported his family (his wife did not work) and accumulated \$25.00 taxable income.²¹ Although they did not live in luxury, they were at least self sufficient.

Another family that emigrated from Ireland to Richmond was the Doyle family. There were many Irish Doyles' in Richmond during the antebellum period. Attempts to clarify who was a member of which family proved frustrating. For instance, one Peter Doyle was listed in the Richmond Hustings Court records in 1854 as being twenty-two and worked in the iron industry. On October 13, 1854, he declared an oath to the United States

¹⁶ Tredegar Journals and Letterbook, Joseph Anderson to James Burton, September 18, 1861.

¹⁷ United States Census, 1860, Population Schedule, City of Richmond.

¹⁸ Ferslew, Directory of the City of Richmond, 1860, 59.

¹⁹ United States Census, 1860, Population Schedule, City of Richmond.

²⁰ Manarin and Wallace, Richmond Volunteers, 172.

²¹ United States Census, 1860, Population Schedule, City of Richmond.

and declared his intentions to be come a citizen.²² Peter and Isabelle Doyle were also found to be Irish immigrants, but were from separate families, as the ages of the two Peters did not coincide correctly with the census records and Hustings Court records.

Peter and Isabelle Doyle came to America with Peter's father, Thomas, between 1853 and 1857. By 1860, they were in Richmond and had two children, Julianna, age two, and a one-month old son, Nicholas. The family shared the same house and lived in the vicinity of other iron workers and puddlers. Thomas presumably worked to help support his son's family. They held no personal property nor any real estate.²³

In antebellum Richmond, sixty-five percent of the laborers and forty-seven percent of the craftsmen were Irish.²⁴ Other statistics revealed that in Richmond, in 1860, nearly thirty percent of the Irish were unskilled. Six percent were found to be domestic servants; and one-half of the Irish worked in service related occupations.²⁵ Those workers not only helped fill the vacancies and demand for labor, but when considered as one unit, became a significant portion of Richmond's society. They rarely had prestige, wealth, or influence, but much of the labor was performed by the Irish. Not all immigrants worked in factories and mills; some professionals and skilled tradesmen also migrated to the United States.

²² Richmond City Hustings Court Records, October 13, 1854, 304.

²³ United States Census, 1860, Population Schedule, City of Richmond.

²⁴ Herbert Gutman "The World Two Cliometricians Made" The Journal of Negro History, (January, 1975), 101.

²⁵ Chesson, Richmond After the War, 120.

Those immigrants who began their own businesses were much easier to find than those who worked as laborers. Several independent businessmen have already been discussed, such as William English and Patrick Moore, however, they were not the only immigrants to succeed in Richmond.

James Murphey migrated to Richmond and opened a soap and candle factory in the early 1850's.²⁶ By the age of forty, he and his family lived comfortably on Franklin Street,²⁷ which was one of the more affluent neighborhoods of that period. Murphey's real estate was valued at \$2,000.00²⁸ and he owned a slave.²⁹ He was also a member of the Montgomery Guards and fought as a private during the Civil War.³⁰ Obviously, few Irish were that successful. Most people who owned their own businesses fared well, but rarely accumulated large fortunes.

Charles Cunningham was an Irish grocer who owned a modest store in Richmond. The store, which was also his home, was worth \$250.00; his personal property worth \$500.00.³¹ Those figures typified the small business of the 1850's. There were also several Irish women who came to Richmond and became merchants and grocers. One such woman was Catharine Viglini, who in 1850, owned a grocery store, looked after five children

²⁶ United States Census, 1860, Population Schedule, City of Richmond.

²⁷ Ferslew, Directory of the City of Richmond, 1860, 168.

²⁸ United States Census, 1860, Population Schedule, City of Richmond.

²⁹ Personal Property Tax Records, 1859, City of Richmond. According to the records, Murphey also owned a clock worth \$3.00, and furniture worth \$150.00.

³⁰ Manarin and Wallace, Richmond Volunteers, 43.

³¹ United States Census, 1860, Population Schedule, City of Richmond.

(ages three to sixteen) and a husband.³² A second woman, Miss Belinda Parke lived upstairs in the Viglini residence, and owned a bonnet store near the Viglini's grocery.³³

Anne Roche/Roach was an Irish immigrant who at age seventy³⁴ ran a grocery store on Main Street between 19th and 20th Streets.³⁵ A younger lady, Mary Jane Purcell, aged thirty, was the third Irishwoman discovered running a grocery store in the city. The business was located at 7th and Canal Streets.³⁶ She had married an Irish contractor, Patrick Purcell, in 1838;³⁷ but was, by 1850, a widow with three children.³⁸

In the wholesale grocery business, two Irish women, Mary Downey, and Mary Ahern both owned stores in Richmond. Mary Downey, fifty-seven years old, ran a store on 2nd Street, between Jackson and Duval Streets;³⁹ meanwhile, another Mrs. Downey owned a grocery store, as did several men named Downey. No connections between the various people were found, so it was unknown as to whether they were in the same family.⁴⁰

³² United States Census, 1850, Population Schedule, City of Richmond. Montague, Richmond Directory, 1850-1851, 127.

³³ Montague, Richmond Directory, 1850-1851, 127.

³⁴ United States Census, 1850, Population Schedule, City of Richmond.

³⁵ Montague, Richmond Directory, 1850-1851, 96.

³⁶ United States Census, 1850, Population Schedule, City of Richmond.

³⁷ Ibid., Mary Jane Purcell and Patrick Purcell obtained a marriage bond on December 11, 1838 in Richmond.

³⁸ Montague, Richmond Directory, 1850-1851, 96.

³⁹ United States Census, 1850, Population Schedule, City of Richmond; Montague, Richmond Directory, 1850-1851, 96. City of Richmond, Personal Property taxes, 1846.

⁴⁰ United States Census, 1850, Population Schedule, City of Richmond.

Finally, Mary Ahern (age sixty-six) and John Ahern (age thirty-eight) were Irish wholesale grocers.⁴¹ Mary's business was on the corner of Jackson and Adams Streets. John's business was on the corner of Leigh and 4th Streets.⁴² Grocers, merchants, and tailors, are mentioned in the census records of both 1850 and 1860; such talents and businesses were small, but provided sufficient income for the average immigrant family.

Few Irish physicians were recorded as coming to Richmond. Patrick Cullins was one, and he was quite successful for his property was reportedly worth \$20,000.⁴³ Another doctor who prospered was twenty-six year old Philip Lloyd,⁴⁴ and the last doctor found in the census' records was Gene Mahoney, a dentist. Mahoney's real estate was valued at \$1,500.00 and he accumulated approximately \$6,000.00 in personal property by the age of thirty-six.⁴⁵ In 1859, he owned three slaves, some gold and silver plate worth \$500.00 and furniture worth \$250.00.⁴⁶

Apothecaries and druggists were also listed as occupations of immigrants on the census records. In 1850, there were three immigrants listed as druggists, in 1860, there was only one person recorded as an apothecary.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Montague, Richmond Directory, 1850-1851, 13; 45. Although the two Ahern's were probably related, no evidence was found to determine the exact relationship between the two persons.

⁴³ United States Census, 1850, Population Schedule, City of Richmond.

⁴⁴ United States Census, 1860, Population Schedule, City of Richmond.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Personal Property Tax Records, 1859, City of Richmond. Mahoney was also taxed on one watch and a clock.

The three in 1850 were related and lived in an area with other medical personnel. Charles, Griffith, and Frank Johnson were brothers who shared a house with a Virginian, John Sainter. Frank was a carpenter, but his two brothers were apothecaries. All three were born in Ireland, but had emigrated to Richmond.⁴⁷ John Sainter was a medical student, most likely at the Medical College. In addition, their neighbor, Peyton Johnson (not related to the other Johnson's) was an Irish druggist.⁴⁸

Irish druggists had been in Richmond since 1800. The Irish Ternan brothers were druggists whose shop was a disgrace; and its attendants and business "begrimed with dirt . . . but they made a fortune."⁴⁹ The other Irish apothecary, from the same early period was called Crawford's. His shop was described as "a contrast in point of neatness; (to the Ternan brothers), but he was less popular, though also from the Emerald Isle and did not reap so rich a harvest."⁵⁰

Other industries near the Richmond area included coal mining and the railroads. There were reports of Irishmen, Scotchmen and Welsh laborers working side-by-side in the mines of Chesterfield County, near Richmond;⁵¹ research disproved this claim. No Irish were reported in newspaper's

⁴⁷ United States Census, 1850, Population Schedule, City of Richmond.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Wyndham B. Blanton Medicine in Virginia in the Nineteenth Century (Richmond: Gassett and Massie, Inc., 1933), 177.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Dabney, Richmond, 134.

coverage of mining disasters, nor were Irish miners found in the census 1850 or 1860. Although the Irish were not found working in mines nor on the river fronts at the deep water terminals, unskilled labor was in demand. Railroad companies in Fredericksburg and Staunton, both hired various Irish immigrants as laborers for the construction of the railroads. ⁵²

On the New Orleans and Norfolk river fronts and docks, Irish laborers were commonly hired to work. Although no documentation was uncovered, it seemed apparent that Richmond's Irish immigrants would work in Rocketts, Fulton Bottom, and at the Kanawha Canal in Richmond.

⁵² Bailey, History of the Diocese, 135.

CONCLUSION

Richmond's Irish immigrants were similar to others across the United States, they came to America in search for a second chance and prosperity. Richmond's constant demand for labor offered unskilled laborers well-paying jobs and drew many immigrants to the capital. There were Catholic churches, societies, clubs and organizations designed to aid the Irish in finding shelter and work. Those who joined the Montgomery Guards were often considered to be prominent citizens of their new home.

Max Berger described Irish-American's positions in his journal. He observed that even if the first generation of immigrants to America did not succeed, the second generation certainly improved. In America, food was cheaper, in more abundance, and wages were twice as high as in Ireland. Economic advancement and educational opportunities were available and achievable. The man who had once starved in Ireland was now able to send money home to the old country.¹

The Irish improved their standard of living in Richmond during the antebellum period. Most had steady employment, a roof over their heads, and no longer depended on the potato for survival. It was this paper's objective to examine the Irish experience in antebellum Richmond. Their involvement in the city's economic growth and development was also examined. The Irish had a large population in the city of Richmond. Although they

¹ Max Berger The British Traveller in America, 1836-1860. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1943), 171.

were not significantly involved in state or local elections, they did enhance Richmond's social and cultural growth. As new industry developed Richmond's urban population grew; and the combination of new industry and large labor force increased Richmond's capabilities and potential in the mid-nineteenth century. Although few Irish migrated south after arriving in America, those who came to Richmond found opportunity for improvement. Despite slavery and the large amount of dependence on crops such as tobacco, the Irish could and did succeed in the southern capital.

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VITA

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