

# IRISH SETTLERS IN EARLY DELAWARE

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**D**ELAWARE of the Seventeenth Century was hardly cognizant of a rare Irish inhabitant, at least one, who could be identified as to his nationality. A certain John Nolin did appear with a colony of settlers who came from Massachusetts Bay as early as 1644, that is, some ten years before the settlements were taken from the Swedes by the Dutch. Twenty years later, when the colony was seized by the English, James Crawford, a Catholic of some note, arrived as a volunteer in the military forces of Sir Robert Carr and, finally, settled down on eight hundred acres in St. George's Hundred which had been granted to him by Governors Richard Nichols and Edmund Andros.<sup>1</sup> There was a Kelly on the Delaware, as early as 1662, to whom the famous William D. "Pig Iron" Kelly (1814-1890), long a representative in Congress of a district of Pennsylvania, or rather of the iron interest, traced an honorable descent.<sup>2</sup>

The three Lower Counties of Pennsylvania, that is Delaware, had been assigned to William Penn in 1682. Hence this area became a natural refuge for Quakers, including Irish Friends, as for instance George Harland, a native of County Down, who settled in Newcastle, about 1687, served as a governor for a brief period, and founded a family of considerable renown in American life.<sup>3</sup> Arriving as a regular soldier in the reign of James II, Bryan McDonnell, a native of County Wicklow, remained at the expiration of his term of service, as many a Roman legionary or British veteran did after a colonial sojourn. He engaged in agriculture and sold lands in Wilmington, where he died in 1707. Some members of his family migrated to Virginia about 1750 during a

<sup>1</sup> *Journal of the American Irish Historical Society* (hereafter, *J.A.I.*), VI, 80; Henry C. Conrad, *History of the State of Delaware from the Earliest Settlements to the Year 1907* (Wilmington, 1908), II, 558.

<sup>2</sup> *Dictionary of American Biography* (*D.A.B.*), X, 299.

<sup>3</sup> *D.A.B.*, VIII, 267; A. H. Harlan, *Genealogy of the Harlan Family* (1914).

Scotch-Irish exodus from Pennsylvania to the frontier area of the Old Dominion.<sup>4</sup>

Presumably these settlers imported Irish servants or encouraged other Irishmen to settle in the colony because more names are identifiable after the turn of the century. With increased Irish emigration to William Penn's main province of Pennsylvania, a considerable number of Irishmen of Scottish or Irish origin must have remained in Delaware as the little port town of Newcastle proved a favorite landing for passengers bound for Philadelphia partly because there were less stringent quarantine regulations for new arrivals in Delaware. At any rate, Darby Whelan, whose child was baptized in Holy Trinity Church in Wilmington, and an Edward Brennan were men of record prior to 1719.<sup>5</sup>

Concerning these early years of the Eighteenth Century in the Three Lower Counties of Pennsylvania, Israel Acrelius, a Swedish Reformed Minister, who served in America a few years, wrote in his *History of New Sweden* (1759), the oft-quoted observation:

Forty years back our people scarcely knew what a school was. . . . In the later times there have come over from Ireland some Presbyterians and some Roman Catholics who commenced with school keeping, but as soon as they saw better openings they gave that up.<sup>6</sup>

With these religious Swedes and Finns, education was church-controlled, and no doubt the arts of teaching and preaching were combined in the same zealous disciple. While the following observation was of general application and was in no way confined to any part of the country or to any nationality, it would probably not be an inaccurate characterization for this region to say that: "It is a general plague and complaint of the whole land that for one discreet and able teacher you shall find twenty ignorant and careless."<sup>7</sup>

<sup>4</sup> *J.A.I.*, XV, 366 ff.

<sup>5</sup> *J.A.I.*, XVIII, 188 ff.

<sup>6</sup> Published in 1758. See, *Catholic Historical Researches* (C. H. Researches), XVI, 72, quoting *Historical Society of Pennsylvania*, XI (1874).

<sup>7</sup> Willard S. Elsbree, *The American Teacher* (New York, 1939), pp. 33, 39, quoting from Charles Beard and William Carr, "Colonial School Days," in the *Journal of National Educational Association*, XXIV, 24 (February, 1935).

An enthusiastic state historian, while stressing the unfavorable conditions of sparsely settled, urban Kent County, has observed:

One must not conclude, however, that the settlers were not interested in the education of their children. The Colonials of Kent County, Friends, Presbyterians, of the English Church were of a superior type. Too many of their sons rose to positions of honor . . . to have been the product of a community where ignorance and illiteracy prevailed.

The Scotch-Irish refugees, many of them classical scholars, taught, either in their own homes, or by going from house to house, or as tutors in the homes of the settlers.

Therewith he noted a William Dickey, "who came from Ireland in the early part of the 18th century, taught in his own house in the western part of the county as many as were in approachable distance of his house," and an academy at Dover ruled by Dr. Samuel McCall, a Scot, it would seem, between 1730 and 1760.<sup>8</sup> Among early educated physicians in Delaware was Henry Fisher,<sup>9</sup> an immigrant from Ireland in 1725, who was the father of several children, "among whom a son, Henry, became noted for his patriotic devotion to the cause of the revolution."

There were such local figures as Colonel Thomas Plunkett, a merchant, and Thomas Neil.<sup>10</sup> John McKinley (1721-1796), an immigrant from the North of Ireland, settled in Wilmington, practiced medicine eminently and became president of the state in popular recognition of his patriotic service in the Revolution (1777).<sup>11</sup> John Read, a native of Dublin, emigrated via Maryland to Newcastle, established a landed estate, founded the town of Charlestown at the head of the Chesapeake, and fathered the state's favorite son, George Read (1733-1798), who was famed as a lawyer, a signer of the Declaration of Independence, a framer of the Federal Constitution, and Chief Justice of Delaware.<sup>12</sup> The son of an Irish

<sup>8</sup> W. A. Powell, *History of Delaware* (1928), p. 394.

<sup>9</sup> Thomas C. Stellwagen, "Delaware Doctors," *Papers of the Historical Society of Delaware*, XIX (1897), 6.

<sup>10</sup> P. J. Hartigan, *The Irish in the American Revolution* (1908), pp. 129, 135.

<sup>11</sup> *D.A.B.*, XII, 109; Francis S. Drake, *Dictionary of American Biography* (1874), p. 585.

<sup>12</sup> *D.A.B.*, XV, 422; Drake, *op. cit.*, p. 757.

Presbyterian settler, Thomas Reed (1746-1823), was admitted to the ministry and presided over a classical school in Newark, Delaware.<sup>13</sup> Francis Robinson, an obscure Irish arrival in 1732, became a leading merchant of Wilmington.<sup>14</sup> Thomas (or James) Macdonough, a native of County Kildare, Ireland, settled in Wilmington, about 1730. His son, Major Thomas Macdonough (1747-1795), was a surgeon in the Continental forces and a judge, and his grandson, Thomas Macdonough (1783-1825), was a fighting commodore in the battle of Lake Champlain during the War of 1812.<sup>15</sup> An immigrant to Newcastle from Londonderry in 1731, was Robert Kirkwood. His grandson, Samuel Jordan Kirkwood (1813-1894), was governor of Iowa during the years of the Civil War, a United States Senator, and Secretary of the Interior.<sup>16</sup>

In Newcastle County, there settled Hugh McWhorter (d. 1748), a linen manufacturer from Armagh. This probably meant that he operated a hearth loom and supplemented a precarious living by farming an acre of land. Later he removed to North Carolina where his son, Alexander, won fame as a patriotic minister of powerful influence over his Scotch-Irish folk.<sup>17</sup> The Reverend William McKennan, also, arrived about 1730 in Newcastle County. He reared a family which included Colonel William McKennan of the American forces in the Revolution whose son, Thomas McKean McKennan, by a niece of Chief Justice Thomas McKean of Pennsylvania, became more than a local figure as a Congressman, Secretary of the Interior (1850), and president of a railway.<sup>18</sup> In 1734, Thomas McKin from Derry, Ireland, settled at Brandywine, was honored by a judgeship, and founded a family which was favorably known in the political and mercantile circles of Baltimore and Philadelphia.<sup>19</sup>

Immigration was given some encouragement when Delaware obtained a separate legislature in 1743 and when a toleration act

<sup>13</sup> *D.A.B.*, XV, 431.

<sup>14</sup> M. J. O'Brien, *George Washington's Associations with the Irish* (New York, 1937), p. 48.

<sup>15</sup> *Proceedings* of Vermont Historical Society (1903-04), p. 59 ff.; a genealogy in *Niles Register*, VII (Supplement), 43 ff.; *D.A.B.*, XII, 19; Drake, *op. cit.*, p. 579.

<sup>16</sup> *D.A.B.*, X, 436.

<sup>17</sup> *D.A.B.*, XII, 175.

<sup>18</sup> *D.A.B.*, XII, 88; *Biographical Directory of the American Congress* (1928), p. 1267.

<sup>19</sup> *D.A.B.*, XII, 102.

of that same year permitted any religious body to establish schools and hold title to real property used for their support. When Jeremiah Sullivan died, in 1766, his executors, all of Newcastle County, bore such characteristic Celtic names as Hallahan, Darby, Sullivan, and Philemon McLaughlin.<sup>20</sup> William Killeen (1722-1803) was imported as an indentured servant from County Clare, in 1737, and purchased as a tutor by a family in Talbot County, Maryland. For one reason or another, he crossed over into Delaware three years later, and obtained employment as a teacher of the classics in Dover, where he had the good fortune of living in the household of Samuel Dickinson and instructing his son, John Dickinson (1732-1808), later governor. With the support of such a patron and through his own native ability, Killeen rose rapidly as a lawyer and became chief justice (1777-1793) of the old "Blue Hen State," under its first constitution, when John McKinley was its first elected governor, and chancellor (1793-1801) under the second constitution (1792). No doubt originally a Roman Catholic, Killeen lived a Presbyterian and as such he has been described as of North of Ireland ancestry, regardless of his name which contemporary American writers would hardly localize.<sup>21</sup>

Charles Cullen, described as from Antrim, settled in Dover about 1752. A chronicler with an antiquarian interest has located seven McCarthys in Delaware marriage lists from 1735 to 1774 and five in militia musters.<sup>22</sup> A William Kelly deposed that he was captured off the coast of North Carolina by French pirates on the specific date of September 25, 1747.<sup>23</sup> At least a score of estates of Celtic Irishmen, to use an artificial term, were probated in Newcastle (1690-1753); and some eighty-three Irish names, besides doubtful cognomens, appeared in the list of wills in this county for 1744-1799. In the records of Holy Trinity Episcopal Church,

<sup>20</sup> C. H. *Researches*, VI, 36.

<sup>21</sup> Conrad, *Delaware* II, 823, 913, 922; Charles J. Stille, *The Life and Times of John Dickinson* (Philadelphia, 1891), pp. 16-17; *J.A.I.*, XXV (1926), 60; *Pennsylvania Magazine* (April, 1891), p. 5 C. H. *Researches* (1891), p. 191; M. K. Jackson, *Literary History of Colonial Pennsylvania* (Lancaster, Pa., 1906), p. 106. Little is known of Killeen's judicial career because of the failure to keep official reports of adjudicated cases so early. See Ignatius C. Grubb, "The Colonial and State Judiciary of Delaware," *Papers of the Historical Society of Delaware*, II, Paper 17, 1-70. See, Drake, *op. cit.*, p. 509, which cites the *New York Spectator*, October 22, 1805.

<sup>22</sup> M. J. O'Brien, *The McCarthys in Early American History* (1921), pp. 301-317.

<sup>23</sup> C. H. B. Turner, ed., *Some Records of Sussex County, Delaware*, p. 48.

about four hundred Irish names have been noted on marriage lists from 1719 to 1799. On militia rolls, Irish names were especially conspicuous. In 1746, Captain John Shannon's company of one hundred soldiers had fifty-one who were born in Ireland; in Captain McClughan's company of ninety-eight there were forty-three; and in Captain Armstrong's company of forty-three there were twenty-seven.<sup>24</sup> In 1749, two vessels from Belfast landed at Newcastle with indentured servants for sale. A year later a ship from Belfast disembarked passengers and indentured servants.<sup>25</sup>

Reverend Mr. Blewett reported, in 1748, to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel that Quakers and Roman Catholics were burying their dead on their own plantations, rather than, it would seem, patronize the Church of England cemeteries which presumably maintained a monopoly over burials as in the British Isles. Three years later, the Reverend Hugh Neil, certainly an Irishman regardless of his religious profession, informed this Society that five or six Papist families were attended monthly by a priest from Maryland.<sup>26</sup> Of this group, a Kerryman, Cornelius Hollahan, married Margaret Kelly, who was said to have been kidnapped and shipped to America as an indentured servant. Erroneously he has been identified as the first Catholic in Delaware, where he arrived about 1735. A man of some means as indicated by his estate of one hundred and fifty acres at Mount Cuba, which he had purchased at one pound-sterling per acre, he offered his home as a Mass House for Jesuit missionaries coming from Philadelphia or from their manors in Maryland. It was also utilized by Washington as a headquarters at the battle of Brandywine. St. Mary's log chapel, built about 1772, west of Wilmington, was long known as the Coffee Run Church.<sup>27</sup>

Included in the roster of militia companies (1758), there were four schoolmasters: Richard Little, James Murphy, Arthur Simpson, and John Bryan, whose contributions offered a slight indication of Ireland's cultural contribution to the primitive settlements.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>24</sup> *J.A.I.*, XIV, 187 ff.; XXVII, 182.

<sup>25</sup> *Philadelphia Gazette*, September 14, 1749, quoted in *C. H. Researches*, XXVII, 371; *Munster Journal*, November 26, 1750.

<sup>26</sup> *C. H. Researches*, III, 29.

<sup>27</sup> *Records of the American Catholic Historical Society* (hereafter, *Records of A.C.H.S.*), I, 177 ff.; Conrad, *Delaware*, p. 777 ff.; *A Guide to the First State, American Guide Series*, compiled as a Federal Writers Project of the W.P.A. for the State of Delaware, p. 124.

<sup>28</sup> *J.A.I.*, XIV, 187 f., XV, 366 f.

Robert Patterson (1743-1824), an immigrant from Ulster, became principal of the academy at Wilmington, from which he advanced to a majority in the American Revolution, a professorship of mathematics in the College of Philadelphia, to the more lucrative mastership of the United States mint, and to productive scholarship and the presidency of the American Philosophical Society.<sup>29</sup>

Among interesting arrivals in the decade preceding the Revolution were the McDermotts, of whom one was the mother of Captain Jacob Jones (1768-1850), who distinguished himself in his command of the *Wasp* in the fight with the English *Frolick* during the War of 1812.<sup>30</sup> Patrick O'Flinn was a native of Ireland who, on retirement from his Revolutionary service as captain of a company which he recruited for Colonel Henry Neill's regiment, kept the "Happy Retreat Tavern" of Wilmington. Washington stopped at this inn occasionally on his way from Mount Vernon to or from Philadelphia, as he did on his return from the Constitutional Convention. To O'Flinn, Washington appealed when he was searching for a good miller in 1798. Although there were few men with whom General Washington associated in familiar fashion, he was at home with this amusing Irishman as a gentleman of his suite, probably Colonel Lear, remarked "that in all his journies with the president, he had never seen him so much at home, in a public house, as in Captain O'Flinn's, or ever met with a man with whome he discoursed more familiarly than with him." This "Sign of the Ship" tavern proved a popular rendezvous for Irishmen and for Revolutionary officers of that exclusive Society of Cincinnati which was founded for undemocratic patriots. It was to this same lively O'Flinn that Wolfe Tone referred in his *Autobiography*; and the jolly publican must have encountered Hamilton Rowan, another Irish rebel of 1798, when he sojourned in temporary exile in Delaware.<sup>31</sup>

Edward Roche (1753-1821), an Irish arrival from Cork, settled in Wilmington, served as an officer in the Revolutionary

<sup>29</sup> Drake, *op. cit.*, p. 694; see a *Record of the Families of Robert Patterson* (1847).

<sup>30</sup> *D.A.B.*, X, 176.

<sup>31</sup> *Niles Weekly Register*, XIV (1818), 344, whose editor was a childhood admirer of the Irish tavernkeeper; William T. Wolfe Tone (ed.), *Autobiography of Wolfe Tone* (1826), I, 130; *C. H. Researches*, XIX, 188; O'Brien, *Washington's Associations with the Irish*, p. 48 ff.

War, and was said to have been so badly treated as an English prisoner after the battle of Camden that his health was impaired, though he lived thereafter some forty years.<sup>32</sup> John McGuire, father of the Reverend Mr. McGuire of Quebec, lived near Brandywine from which, as a royalist, he was forced to withdraw on the retreat of the British forces, possibly to Chester County, Pennsylvania, where his brother, Andrew McGuire, had located.<sup>33</sup> On the eve of the American Revolution, the number of immigrants increased with the new Scotch-Irish migrations from Ulster to the New World not to speak of immigrants shipping from southern Irish ports. The *New York Gazette* reported the good ship *Needham* from Cork with two hundred passengers after two hundred immigrants had been unloaded at Newcastle.<sup>34</sup> President Ezra Stiles of Yale College, in July 1774, wrote in his diary of the arrival at Newcastle of one hundred persons from Waterford and two hundred and twenty immigrants from Newry in Captain McGaffney's *Charlotte* and Captain McClenachan's *Hope*.<sup>35</sup> As of November 5, 1774, Christopher Marshall noted the *Friendship* from Cork at Newcastle with two hundred immigrants.<sup>36</sup>

In the Revolutionary forces of Delaware, with a population of about 37,500, there was a sprinkling of Irish names on the roster of its three regiments. There were some figures of local distinction as Sergeant James Murphy, Captain Thomas Keane, whose company of sixty-two militiamen from Newcastle County included twenty-five natives of Ireland, a Major James Moore, and Captain William McKennan. In Colonel David Hall's regiment of only 280 men, about 14 per cent carried Irish names. One regiment was commanded by Colonel John Haslett, an Irishman, who studied for the Presbyterian ministry but turned to the practice of medicine in Kent County. A member of the assembly and politically known, he was killed at the battle of Princeton, but left a son, Joseph, who served as governor in 1811-1814 and 1823-1824.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>32</sup> *Niles Weekly Register*, XX, 112.

<sup>33</sup> *Records of A.C.H.S.*, I, 370.

<sup>34</sup> Quoted in O'Brien, *Washington's Associations with the Irish*, p. 234.

<sup>35</sup> F. B. Dexter (ed.), *The Literary Diary of Ezra Stiles* (1901), I, 453.

<sup>36</sup> Christopher Marshall, *Passages from his Diary*, edited by William Duane, Jr., Vol. I, 1774-1777 (Philadelphia, 1839-1849).

<sup>37</sup> *J.A.I.*, XXI, 97 ff.; William G. Whiteley, "The Revolutionary Soldiers of Delaware," published by the Historical Society of Delaware, *Historical and Biographical Papers* (1896); *ibid.* (1895), 8, 12; Drake, *op. cit.*, 415.

During the American Revolution, "in Kent and Sussex more than half the people were of the Established Church of England, and many of them were pronounced Tories." Even the middle county, Kent, had such an exceedingly sparse and scattered population that it did not "in its earliest history, maintain churches nor even support itinerant preachers." In 1743, however, of 1,020 men in Kent County, 484 were Anglicans, 56 Quakers, 397 Presbyterians, and 20 of no religious affiliation.<sup>38</sup> This was a fair indication of the almost universal Anglo-Saxon and Scotch-Irish character of the people.

William Cobbett, the English radical, reformer, and journalist, found himself in Wilmington, a thriving town of 2,500 souls, where he earned about \$330 a year teaching the children of well-to-do refugees from Santo Domingo and assisting, according to tradition, at Mr. Pepper's school "where the respectable children of suitable age were in part educated." According to a reputable local annalist: "The teacher, Mr. Pepper, was a graduate of Dublin College, a teacher of languages, and proficient in French, which was deemed so essential when the town was teeming with emigrants." Pepper soon moved to Philadelphia where he wrote poetry, aided Cobbett on his *Gazette*, and taught English to refugees from the revolutionized French Indies, until his death in 1798. About this time, or a little earlier, Scotch-Irishmen like Wilson, Robert Coran, and John Filson were teaching in Wilmington's academies.<sup>39</sup>

A number of representatives with Irish names found their way during the national period into the state legislature as John Collins, William and Solomon Moore, Nathaniel Hayes, Charles A. Cullen, and Joseph A. McFerran. John Cochran (1809-1898) was a fruit grower and governor; Samuel Harrington (1803-1865) was a chief justice and chancellor of the state. Militia rolls, 1796-1800 and for 1827, carried at least 125 Irish surnames, preceded, however, by some evangelical Christian names. So all in all, there were

<sup>38</sup> Conrad, *Delaware*, II, 593; W. A. Powell, *History of Delaware* (1928), 140, 360.

<sup>39</sup> Mary E. Clark, *Peter Porcupine in America; The Career of William Cobbett, 1792-1800* (Philadelphia, 1939), pp. 6, 15, quoting Elizabeth Montgomery's *Reminiscences of Wilmington, in Familiar Village Tales, Ancient and New* (Philadelphia, 1851), pp. 313-314; and *Porcupine's Gazette*, February 19, 1798.

men of Irish origin, whether some of them were openly conscious of it or not.<sup>40</sup>

While Jesuit priests from Philadelphia did conduct missions in Delaware and maintain a Mass House on a farm at Coffee Run, organized Catholic religious life actually commenced with Father Patrick Kenny (1763-1840 [or 1842]), a Dublin man, who had been trained at Saint Sulpice in Paris and who arrived as a cabin passenger on a crowded immigrant ship in 1804. He found or established Mass stations at the homes of Judge Willcox, a convert, at Concord; of Anthony Hearne, a native of Waterford, at Rock Hill; of Daniel Fitzpatrick at West Chester; and of Thomas Maguire at Coffee Run.<sup>41</sup> The Irish in Wilmington were apparently numerous enough to be rewarded for their political support when President Jefferson named John Burke a deputy collector of the port.<sup>42</sup>

In time, Brandywine became quite an Irish Catholic center, what with factories, the Dupont powder works, and the liberality of the Duponts to the church which preached temperance and contentment to labor under the ministries of Fathers Riley, McCabe, and John S. Walsh. In 1855 an enlarged church and school accommodated about 1,300 souls, including some who were described as comfortable Roman Catholics.<sup>43</sup>

At New Castle, Catholic services were held by missionaries as early as 1804, but an attempt was made to build a brick church three years later. With the assistance of B. Murphy and others and a legislative grant to hold a lottery to raise \$2,000, a substantial church was built. This was used for sixty years by Kenny, his successors, Fathers Correll, Reilly, and Cobbin, who became a resident pastor in 1854.<sup>44</sup> Welcomed or not, Bernard and Mary (McCullough) Murphy were in Newcastle in 1822; and it was their son, John Murphy (1812-1880), who made a real contribution as a Catholic publisher and bookseller when American secular publishers had little interest in books or translations by Roman Catholics.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>40</sup> Conrad, *Delaware*, I, 268, 281 ff., 313 ff.; *Delaware Archives*, IV, 3 ff.; V, 272; *New England Historical and Genealogical Register*, October, 1907.

<sup>41</sup> *Records of A.C.H.S.*, VII, 27 ff.; Conrad, *Delaware*, I, 312; Anna T. Lincoln, *Wilmington, Delaware* (1928), 167; Scharf, *Delaware*, II, 877.

<sup>42</sup> Obituary in the *Providence Gazette*, June 8, 1803.

<sup>43</sup> *The Catholic Herald*, February 24, 1842; *C. H. Researches*, VI, 139 ff.

<sup>44</sup> Scharf, *Delaware*, II, 877, 892.

<sup>45</sup> A Sketch of Murphy by the writer in *D.A.B.*, XIII, 352.

A log cabin chapel erected at Wilmington, about 1805, by Reverend John Rossiter and served for a time by Father Charles Whelan, gave way to St. Peter's Church which Father Patrick Kenny built, about 1816, for a growing congregation which he served, or rather ruled, until his death. Father Kenny is best remembered for his diary, which despite its prejudices and self-sustaining dogmatism, has proven a source of information for early Irish settlers in Wilmington and its environs.<sup>46</sup> In 1816, he said a requiem Mass for the soul of Lieutenant Patrick McDonough. In 1818, he noted that the explosion at Dupont's Powder Works killed thirty-five persons of whom twenty-eight men and one woman were Catholics. Here was an indication of the percentage of Irishmen in the labor supply of the powder mills and the continuous danger of the employment. In a later explosion (1833), there were several Irish workers killed and injured, including one Kelly who was only out from Ireland about two months and who was slaving to bring over a wife and seven children. Father Kenny noted the arrival of Father Terence McGuire's brother from Londonderry; of Bernard Connolly, a schoolmaster, who was persecuted at all turns; of Donnelly, a schoolmaster in Wilmington, who married a niece of Bishop Henry Conwell of Philadelphia and established a school in that city; and of Anthony Hearne who, as early as 1826, had accumulated enough property to bequeath \$1,600 to the Catholic Church of West Chester. Of nativist hostility to his Catholic countrymen, Pastor Kenny made frequent observations. In 1826, a canal laborer, Michael Monaghan, was condemned to death for murder of a woman solely on her dying word. On further investigation he was reprieved and later pardoned by the governor. A year later another Irishman barely escaped death as an alleged murderer, for it was easy to cast sufficient suspicion on casual laborers to obtain convictions from native juries. Father Kenny's own hostler, John O'Neil from Queen's County, was attacked by anti-Catholic bigots, as they would be termed a century later in full realization that religious and racial bigotry are not confined to any one people or to any single Christian creed.

The pastor was not without troubles at the hands of his own people, nor was he oblivious to their faults. His hired man he could

<sup>46</sup> *Records of A.C.H.S.*, IX, 66, 70, 80, 81, 87, 88, 98, 108, 235, 435.

not discharge until he was able to settle with him, though he had the satisfaction of denouncing him in fine style in his diary: "I wish this Irish Indian Savage, Drunkard, Egg and cider sucker was a second time in his proper lodgings Botany bay."<sup>47</sup> Trustee troubles with over zealous laymen holding title to church properties in the fashion of American law, he was found to face. An early trustee was Victor Dupont, whose wife was an ardent Catholic and who reared some of her family in her own faith. His successor, James Purcell, M.D., was referred to as troublesome, from time to time. Indeed, the pious pastor refused to call several other trustees Catholics but rather "low Irish."<sup>48</sup> For John Keating (c. 1760-1856) and his wife, Eulalia Des Chapelles, however, he had due respect, and quite properly. Keating, an exile with the wild geese from Limerick, had commanded a French regiment at Santo Domingo, but rather than serve under the First French Republic, he emigrated to Wilmington and later removed to Philadelphia. His family became more noted than he, himself, for intellectual attainments. A son, William Hypolitus Keating (1799-1844), was graduated from the University of Pennsylvania, taught chemistry and mineralogy at the University, became a leader in the Academy of Natural Sciences, and a founder of the Franklin Institute which he served as secretary (1821-25). A daughter, Eulalia, on the death of her cousin-husband, Jerome Keating, entered the Visitation Convent of Georgetown of which she became superioress.<sup>49</sup>

This Irish pastor was interested in schooling for his people at a time when public education in Delaware was quite backward, partly because, until 1820, schools were dependent for support upon gifts and license fees from marriages and taverns. A few years later (1829), a sort of common school system was organized.<sup>50</sup> In 1830, the Sisters of Charity of Emmitsburg took charge of an orphan asylum and established an academy on Quaker Hill in Wilmington, known as St. Peter's Boarding School for Young Ladies. A parochial school was established for poor children, which the select academy helped to finance. In 1839, a boy's school, later

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, IX, 124.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, IX, 122.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, IX, 340 f.

<sup>50</sup> James B. McMaster, *History of the People of the United States* (New York, 1900), V, 357; Conrad, *Delaware*, III, 798.

St. Mary's College, so-called, was founded at Coffee Run.<sup>51</sup> Bishop Kenrick's *Diary* carried this note:

August the eleventh day (eight day, 1830, I confirmed eighty-six in St. Pater's Church in the town of Wilmington, in the State of Delaware. I visited also the school which the Sisters of Charity have there, where, besides six little orphan girls, who are cared for and taught in the house, they teach many young girls the rudiments of letters and religion.

In 1835, Bishop Kenrick, after confirmation at Newcastle and Wilmington, traversed the state "to discover any Catholic families who ought to be organized so as to be regularly attended by the nearest priest."<sup>52</sup>

Father Kenny was assisted for a time by Father George A. Carrell, S.J. (later Bishop of Covington), and was succeeded by other Irish priests—Patrick Reilly, a refugee from County Cavan; Walsh; and George Kelly. As Reilly's father, a manufacturer as Ulsterites would have it, was ruined by the Napoleonic ordinances, the youth set forth to seek his fortune in America and found work in a factory at Kensington, a suburb of Philadelphia, which had a large Irish laboring section. Learning some Latin under Father John Kelly, he proceeded to his philosophical and theological studies and was ordained by Bishop Francis P. Kenrick of Philadelphia. He volunteered for the Negro missions in Liberia and finally settled down in Wilmington where he became vicar general of the diocese.<sup>53</sup> Interestingly enough Archbishop Kenrick, on his translation to the archepiscopal see of Baltimore (1851), suggested to Archbishop John B. Purcell a number of candidates for appointment to the bishopric of Philadelphia, including Father Reilly of St. Mary's Church and Lawrence Cosgrave, S.J., of St. Peter's Church, also in Wilmington.<sup>54</sup> In 1858, Father Reilly nominated several Catholics including Philip Plunkett, William J. Pur-

<sup>51</sup> *Records of A.C.H.S.*, I, 117 f.; Conrad, *Delaware*, II, 777 ff.; John T. Scharf, *A History of Delaware (1609-1888)* (Philadelphia, 1888), p. 725.

<sup>52</sup> John Gilmary Shea, *A History of the Catholic Church*, III (1890), 559.

<sup>53</sup> *Records of A.C.H.S.*, I, 117 f., V, 7 f. He was a brother of Eugene Kelly, a banker in New York. See Richard J. Purcell in *D.A.B.*, X, 307.

<sup>54</sup> Based upon statement in a forthcoming doctoral dissertation on "Francis P. Kenrick" by the Reverend Hugh J. Nolan of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia.

cell, Michael Harrity, William McMenammin, Charles Smith, John Fox, Charles O'Donnell, Patrick McGowan, Hugh Sweeney, and Thomas Curley to collect for St. Mary's of the Immaculate Conception Church. In nearby Dover, Thomas Murphy was operating an English classical school (1852-).<sup>55</sup>

Public works brought some Irishmen to Delaware. The two-and-one-half million dollar breakwater near Cape Henlopen, with its two stone dikes, 75 feet wide and 1,500 and 3,600 feet long,<sup>56</sup> and the Delaware and Hudson canal and terminal construction under James S. McEntee,<sup>57</sup> provided work for immigrant laborers. So also did the new railroads, and the navvies were Irish almost to a man.

These gleanings are slight, but not altogether uninteresting, for a colony-state whose Irish contribution to the volume of population, Celtic-Irish and Scotch-Irish, in the usual quasi-intelligent sense of these terms, amount to 5.4 and 6.3 per cent, based upon a careful but problematical and proportionate comparison of distinctive names in Ireland's four provinces and names of the heads of families in the census of 1790 for Delaware.<sup>58</sup> However, the average man, free or indentured, rarely got his name into a colonial record, and especially a printed record, any more than did a laboring man in the national era. And not until the immigration of the forties did the Irish flow into Delaware.

<sup>55</sup> Scharf, *Delaware*, p. 726; Powell, *Delaware*, p. 450.

<sup>56</sup> S. Augustus Mitchell, *Intermediate or Second Geography* (1849), p. 29.

<sup>57</sup> For his son, Jervis McEntee (1828-1891), see *D.A.B.*, XII, 39.

<sup>58</sup> Report of Committee of the American Council of Learned Societies on Linguistic and National Stocks in the Population of the United States, *Annual Report* of the American Historical Association for 1931, I, 124, 307.