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Wolym O. Griffiths of Birmingham

(biographer of Mazzini)

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The Liverpool Irishman

OR
Annals of
the Irish Colony in
Liverpool

SECOND EDITION.

1894 749



- 4 OCT 1976

THE LIVERPOOL IRISHMAN;

OR,

ANNALS OF THE IRISH COLONY IN LIVERPOOL.

The following estimate of the Catholic population of Liverpool, compiled from the "Liverpool Catholic Home Almanack" for 1906, may be taken as representing the Irish population of the district:—

PARISH.	POPULATION.
Copperas Hill	(1812) 3,300
Athol Street	(1849) 6,771
Oakfield	(1889) 1,858
Collingwood Street	(1872) 3,500
Kirkdale Road	(1878) 6,200
Edge Hill	(1843) 4,985
Scotland Road	(1803) 8,225
Great Howard Street	(1849) 5,205
Kingsley Road	(1884) 1,755
Bovington Hill	(1870) 2,590
Aighurth Road	(1892) 800
Arundel Avenue	(1890) 2,941
Gt. Crosshall Street	(1848) 3,300
Earle Road	(1904) 1,593
Hale Road	(1883) 2,650
Salisbury Street	(1845) 11,353
Mount Vernon Street	(1896) 3,579
Fountains Road	(1871) 5,648
Grosvenor Street	(1846) 10,931
Highfield Street	(1741) 3,975
West Derby Road	(1861) 4,264
Old Swan	(1842) 3,432
Wavertree	(1871) 1,178
St. Domingo Road	(1856) 4,386
High Park Street	(1866) 6,094
Vauxhall Road	(1850) 5,717
Park Place	(1827) 8,114
West Derby	(1880) 850
Seel Street	(1788) 3,892
Maryland Street	(1853) 1,455
Rice Lane	(1872) 2,130

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Silvester Street	(1874)	7,436
St. James's Street	(1843)	4,814
Beaufort Street	(1903)	
St. John's Road, Bootle	(1862)	1,824
Chestnut Grovc, Bootle	(1845)	9,283
Derby Road, Bootle	(1895)	3,165
Ford		306
Garston	(1883)	2,300
Gillmoss	(1757)	345
Grassendale	(1837)	253
Huyton	(1856)	330
Kirkby	(1897)	

The above estimates total 161,747.

Including Liverpool business people residing in Cheshire and Waterloo suburbs, the Irish population of the district must be 250,000, when the non-Catholic Irish people are also taken into the total account.

These figures show the Liverpool Irish to be a large portion of the citizens of the great Mersey port. In coming from Ireland for employment, they bring the accent and habits, the virtues and failings, the religion and the politics of the old country. If not possessed of technical skill, they are strong and endowed with muscle, and Irish labour has helped to make Liverpool wealthy.

In the annals of Liverpool it is mentioned that St. Patrick sailed from the Mersey for the conversion of Ireland. "At the junction of Great Crosshall Street and Marybone stood "St. Patrick's Cross," and there is a Catholic church in the city named after the apostle to Ireland.

In Leyland's Itinerary it is stated of Liverpool that "Irish marchantes come much thither as to a good haven, and moch Irish yarn that Manchester men do buy there."

Religious feeling ran high in Liverpool in the old days. John Synett, an Irishman, born in Wexford, and master of a barque, was excommunicated by the Bishop of Chester for being a Catholic recusant. This gallant sailor was denied burial at Liverpool, and was interred at Harkirke, near Crosby, in the Catholic graveyard, on August 3rd, 1612.

In 1701 many Irish people attended services held by the priest who was sent to Liverpool by Nicholas Blundell, of Crosby; and in 1727 some 256 palms were given out on Palm Sunday.

In 1736 a Catholic chapel existed in Lumber Street, Liverpool. It was reached by a passage from Edmund Street, Oldhall Street, and was a Jesuit mission, which was taken over by the Benedictines in 1783. When the Stuart army, in 1745, retreated north to Liverpool, the mob attacked this chapel. It was rebuilt, and again replaced in 1845 by a new church in Edmund Street. In 1885 it was removed to Highfield Street, to make room for the L. & Y. Railway Station. An Irish Jesuit named Father Anthony Carroll resided here in 1759; and Father Peter O'Brien also laboured in Liverpool, 1760-70.

In 1804 Bishop Gibson gave the Catholic population of Lancashire at 50,000, and Liverpool had four missions, viz., St. Mary's, St. Peter's, St. Nicholas's, and St. Anthony's. The latter replaced the old French chapel in Scotland Road. There was a chapel in Moor Street, and one in Chorley Street, 1771-81. In 1788, Father John Price built a chapel in Sir Thomas Buildings. The Catholic population of Liverpool in 1788 was given at 6,916, in 1800 at 12,209, and in 1811 at 21,359. In 1830 the Catholics of Liverpool formed one-third of the population, or some 50,000 people.

In 1835 the Irish quarter of Liverpool extended from Dale Street to Park Lane. Town improvements drove a wedge through the district, and formed north and south colonies of Irish. As far back as that year Orange and Green riots took place in Liverpool, and the July meeting of 1835 led to a fierce fight in Park Lane, even those arrested being forcibly released by the Irish from the Vauxhall Bridewell.

In 1838 the Hibernians of Liverpool, a benevolent society, were a powerful body. Nearly all the dock labourers were Irish ribbon men, and used a password. Although often denounced by the Catholic prelates as a secret society, the ancient order is now a widespread organisation, especially in U.S.A.

The famine fugitives from Ireland crowded to Liverpool, and 13,470 of them received poor-house relief in Christmas week, 1846. In February, 1847, 26,343 Irish fugitives landed in Liverpool, and many deaths from the famine fever took place.

The Liverpool Irish took an active part in O'Connell's repeal movement. The old Repeal Hall in Paradise Street was the headquarters, and £1,000 was subscribed by the dockers in

1844 as repeal rent. T. B. M'Manus was the Irish leader in Liverpool at that time, and in 1843 he took 1,000 Irishmen from this city to Dublin for O'Connell's Tara meeting, which was abandoned.

The Liverpool Irishmen joined the advanced section of Repealers, and formed Confederate clubs here. They had rooms at Hood Street, Paradise Street, Precson's Row, Circus Street, Bevington Bush, Great Howard Street, and Hurst Street. The chief Young Irelanders were T. B. M'Manus, Dr. Reynolds, George Smyth, Dr. O'Donnell, Dr. Murphy, and Pat O'Hanlon. Great activity was shown by the clubs, and drilling was carried on openly on the north sands beyond the new Clarence Dock. The society kept open a Sunday reading room at the George IV. Assembly Rooms in Hood Street. A shop for the sale of guns and pikes was kept at 110, Leeds Street, and warehouses in Pickop Street and Atherton Street. M'Manus went to Ireland, was present at Ballingarry, was arrested at Cove, and transported. He died in San Francisco in 1861, and his remains were brought to Dublin by the Fenians. Reynolds escaped to America, practised as a surgeon in New York, and served with the Irish in the Civil War, of which he was the poet laureate. George Archdeacon, the repeal warden for Liverpool, was expelled by O'Connell, imprisoned in 1848, and became a Fenian in 1867. Many other Liverpool Young Irelanders were arrested and convicted, including Edward Murphy, Martin Boshell, Thomas O'Brien, Joseph Cuddy, George Smyth, Pat O'Hanlon, James Laffan, and Francis O'Donnell.

The Fenian movement was well supported in Liverpool. The meetings were held in Circus Street and in Devon Street Hall. George Archdeacon was an active member until he was arrested at his paper shop, 11, Bidder Street, Islington, on September 23rd, 1865, and taken to Dublin. John Ryan was the most active Fenian organiser in Liverpool. He helped in the escape of James Stephens from the prison in Dublin. The Fenian chief was taken from Ireland in a fishing hooker owned by Pat De Lacy Garton, an Irish fish merchant in Liverpool, who sat as Town Councillor for Scotland Ward. Peter Maughan recruited many Fenians in the army until transported. The Irish Volunteer Corps had many suspected Fenians, and their arms were removed about this time, when the preparations were made for a supposed rising in Liverpool by bringing a warship and troops to the city. Corydon, the

Fenian informer, was born in Spitalfields, and became a Fenian in America while serving as a hospital steward in the Civil War. He told the Chief Constable of Liverpool about the proposed capture of the arms in Chester Castle, the attack on which was abandoned by the Fenians on February 11th, 1867.

The failure of O'Connell, of Smith O'Brien, and of James Stephens, did not quench the fire of Irish freedom in the Liverpool Irishmen. They supported the Parliamentary movement under Isaac Butt. Dr. Andrew Commins, a well-known Liverpool leader, was president of the Home Rule Confederation. When Parnell asked for support, some 50,000 Liverpool Irishmen attended his meeting before St. George's Hall, on November 29th, 1879. Mr. T. P. O'Connor was elected M.P. for Scotland Division of Liverpool in 1885, and has retained that seat ever since. The Irish Parliamentary movement, under the titles of Land League, National League, and United Irish League, has been strongly supported by Liverpool Irishmen since 1879.

The present condition of the poorer Irish people in Liverpool is much below the standard of comfort of modern times. There is much pressing need for a non-political and non-sectarian Irish society of social workers in Liverpool to improve the conditions of slum life. Such a society could do a great deal for the poor children, in the way of educating, clothing, and finding them apprenticeship in useful trades.

Religious rioting is a favourite summer amusement among the submerged tenth in Liverpool. A so-called band, playing party tunes, will readily collect a Saturday or Sunday crowd of followers, who chaunt taunting airs, and regard stone-throwing and window-smashing as exhilarating pastimes. Of course, no self-respecting Irishman, Catholic or Protestant, associates with this ignorant rabble; but, as Orange and Green colours are used, Ireland gets the blame for this rowdyism.

It is calculated that 90 per cent. of the Liverpool Irishmen are at present not connected with any Irish society in the city. There is no social bond of brotherhood uniting the people. It has been suggested that the best means of securing combination and co-operation would be by forming a Liverpool Irish Society.

The organisation of pastimes for such a large Irish population as that of Liverpool is a big affair. Easter, Whitsuntide, August Bank Holiday, and the summer Sunday afternoons

could be used for organised parades to the sea sands and country lanes for the poor Irish children and adults who live in squalid tenements and cellars. A Liverpool Irish Society could organise such daily outings, and with great facilities by coasting steamers to Irish ports week-end excursions at cheap rates could be arranged.

Athletic exercises have always been dear to Irishmen. This department of our social life has been very properly placed in charge of the Gaelic Athletic Association. The local clubs, besides having hurling and football practice on private grounds, should organise prizes for contests in individual athletics, such as running, jumping, weight-throwing, handball, tug-of-war, cycling, &c. The Irishmen of Liverpool would like to meet and honour local athletes who have specialised in Irish manly exercises. The G.A.A. authorities should not be bashful in catering in the pastime business for Liverpool Irishmen.

To the Gaelic League in Liverpool, Irish residents look for the organisation of indoor pastimes, such as Irish plays and concerts, competitions in music and singing, formation of choirs, prizes for reciting bardic tales, and pressing for the teaching of Gaelic to the Irish children in the Catholic schools. Small Gaelic classes and dancing instruction in cheap rooms are well-intentioned and "select," but the League should hire a large public hall suitable for plays, concerts, and public meetings for an Irish population of 350,000. Once or twice each year a "feis" should be held on a large scale, to encourage competition and give the public an idea of what progress is being made.

Ignorance of Ireland and her history is the cause of much of the misery of the Liverpool Irish. The descendants of the Irish famine refugees have had no training in the history and literature of Ireland. They have been taught to regard their country and their race with contempt; their national pride and self-respect can only be restored by providing them with books and papers giving the true history and condition of their native land. The Liverpool Irish Literary Society should take this work in hand by holding competitions, and giving prizes to students of Ireland's history and literature.


The revival of Irish industries, as an antidote to emigration, has been receiving much thought and practical support during recent years. The 250,000 Irish people in Liverpool district

could assist the movement very much by using Irish-made goods. At least half of them would regularly buy such articles if the goods were on sale in the locality. The other half of the Liverpool Irish require to be instructed in the principles of the industrial revival. If an Irish Co-operative Society be established in Liverpool for distributing Irish grown or manufactured goods, at least 36 depôts near the Catholic churches could be made to pay a handsome profit to the shareholders.

The United Irish League in Liverpool is now being re-organised by the District Committee. It is intended to form a network of branches throughout Liverpool, by means of which guidance would be given to the Irish voters at election times.

The various branches of the Irish National Foresters in Liverpool now constitute the largest body of organised Irishmen in the city. All people of Irish birth or descent should be enrolled in this society, which has the welfare of the Irish race for its chief object.

There are a large number of Liverpool Irishmen supporters of the Sinn Fein movement. The time has now arrived when some effort should be made to organise a branch of the society in Liverpool, where much useful work is waiting to be taken up. The members of the National Council should come together without delay, and commence organised action.

Ireland and Irishmen
in the
American
War of Independence

GUIDE TO EXHIBITION