

# *THE SILVER KEY*

*By Charles T. Burke  
Former President*

1737



1973

*A History of the Charitable Irish Society*

*Founded in Boston 1737*

1737-1765. During the first twenty-nine years of the existence of the Society the only records kept were those of the Treasurer, which show the amounts received for, and contributed to, charity, the financial condition of the Society, and amendments of the Constitution and By-Laws. The names of the officers during this early period do not appear.

- |   |                                |
|---|--------------------------------|
| 1766. William Hall  | 1898. Michael J. Dwyer         |
| 1767-1769. Hon. Robert Auchmuty                                 | 1899. Patrick M. Keating       |
| 1769-1786. Capt. William MacKay                                 | 1900. Edmund Gordon            |
| 1775. Last meeting, February 21, 1775,<br>before Revolution     | 1901. Dennis J. Gorman         |
| 1783. First meeting, October 26, 1784, after<br>Revolution      | 1902. John P. Leahy            |
| 1784-1786. Capt. William MacKay                                 | 1903. Michael J. Jordan        |
| 1787-1788. Simon Elliot   | 1904. William T. A. Fitzgerald |
| 1789-1790. Meetings on April 15, 1788, and<br>December 14, 1790 | 1905. Augustine J. Daly        |
| 1791-1800. Moses Black  | 1906. Michael A. Toland        |
| 1801-1809. Simon Elliot   | 1907. John J. Keenan           |
| 1810-1813. Thomas English                                       | 1908. John F. Sullivan         |
| 1814. Capt. James McGee   | 1909. James H. Devlin, Jr.     |
| 1815. Simon Elliot  | 1910. John B. Dore             |
| 1816-1817. Shubael Bell   | 1911. Patrick O'Loughlin       |
| 1818. Capt. James McGee   | 1912. Richard J. Lane          |
| 1819. Shubael Bell  | 1913. Bartholomew A. Brickley  |
| 1820. Walter Welch  | 1914. John A. Kiggen           |
| 1821-1823. Capt. James McGee                                    | 1915. Patrick H. Crowley       |
| 1824-1825. Samuel L. Knapp                                      | 1916. John M. Harney           |
| 1826. Andrew Dunlap   | 1917. Daniel V. McIsaac        |
| 1827. Abraham Moore   | 1918. John J. Sullivan         |
| 1828. Thomas Murphy   | 1919. James F. McDermott       |
| 1829. Franchis McKenna  | 1920. James A. Dorsey          |
| 1830. Bernard Fitzpatrick                                       | 1921. Charles S. Sullivan      |
| 1831. Rev. T. J. O'Flaherty                                     | 1922. Michael J. Carroll       |
| 1832. Andrew Dunlap   | 1923. Louis Watson             |
| 1833. James Boyd  | 1924. Charles J. O'Malley      |
| 1834. Richard W. Roche  | 1925. James H. Carney          |
| 1835. John C. Park  | 1926. Joseph A. F. O'Neil      |
| 1836-1837. James Boyd   | 1927. Francis Henry Appleton   |
| 1838-1839. Daniel O'Callahan                                    | 1928. Hugh A. Carney           |
| 1840-1841. William P. M'Kay                                     | 1929. Thomas M. Green          |
| 1842-1843. John C. Tucker                                       | 1930. Edward W. Quinn          |
| 1844-1846. Terrence McHugh                                      | 1931. Charles D. Maginnis      |
| 1847. Patrick Sharkey   | 1932. Leo T. Myles             |
| 1848-1850. John Kelly   | 1933. Michael H. Sullivan      |
| 1851. Patrick Donahue   | 1934. Maurice J. Lacy          |
| 1852. James Egan  | 1935. William J. Barry         |
| 1853. Denis W. O'Brien  | 1936. Patrick A. O'Connell     |
| 1854. Patrick Donahue   | 1937. Jos. Joyce Donahue       |
| 1855. Thomas Mooney   | 1938. James T. Sullivan        |
| 1856-1858. John C. Crowley                                      | 1939. Benedict Fitzgerald      |
| 1859. Patrick Phillips  | 1940. Charles S. O'Connor      |
| 1860-1861. Hugh O'Brien   | 1941. Charles L. Powers        |
| 1862. Cornelius Doherty   | 1942. Edward F. Timmins        |
| 1863. James H. Tallon   | 1943. Wilfred F. Kelley        |
| 1864. Patrick Harkins   | 1944. Ralph Leo Donoghue       |
| 1865. Michael Doherty   | 1944-1945. William J. Keville  |
| 1866-1867. Charles F. Donnelly                                  | 1946. John S. Keohane          |
| 1868-1869. John M. Maguire                                      | 1947. Charles J. Fox           |
| 1870-1871. John Magrath   | 1948. Lawrence T. Ritchie      |
| 1872. Thomas Dolan  | 1949. F. Murray Forbes, Jr.    |
| 1873-1874. Thomas J. Gargan                                     | 1950. William F. Donahue       |
| 1875. Bernard Corr  | 1951. Richard W. Sheehy        |
| 1876-1877. Patrick A. Collins                                   | 1952. Rob. H. Montgomery       |
| 1878. Joseph D. Fallon  | 1953. George E. O'Neil         |
| 1879. Edward Ryan   | 1954. William H. Henchey       |
| 1880-1881. Patrick F. Griffin                                   | 1955. John F. O'Donoghue       |
| 1882. Thomas Riley  | 1956. Charles T. Burke         |
| 1883. William W. Doherty  | 1957. John F. Gilmore          |
| 1884. Timothy J. Dacey  | 1958. William F. Hickey        |
| 1885. Denis H. Morrissey  | 1959. Daniel J. Lynch          |
| 1886. Edward B. Rankin  | 1960. Richard S. Emmet, Jr.    |
| 1887. John B. Moran   | 1961. Bernard R. Baldwin       |
| 1888. John A. Daley   | 1962. William H. Henchey, Jr.  |
| 1889. John H. Burke   | 1963. George N. Welch          |
| 1890. Michael T. Donohoe  | 1964. Alfred C. Sheehy         |
| 1891. Edw. A. McLaughlin  | 1965. Daniel M. Driscoll       |
| 1892. James E. Cotter   | 1966. Thomas R. Kennedy        |
| 1893. Thomas Ryan   | 1967. Russell Murphy           |
| 1894. Charles V. Dasey  | 1968. James E. Dowd            |
| 1895. Edward J. Flynn   | 1969. Paul K. Connolly         |
| 1896. John F. Cronan  | 1970. Paul H. Fitzgerald       |
| 1897. Michael T. Callahan                                       | 1971. Michael J. Walsh         |
|   | 1972. Robert P. Malone         |
|   | 1973. Gilbert M. Lothrop       |

## **The Charitable Irish Society**

Founded 1737

Incorporated 1809

### **The Oldest Irish Organization in America**

#### **PREAMBLE**

The following preamble was adopted at the time of the formation of the Society in 1737:

“WHEREAS: Several Gentlemen, Merchants and Others of the Irish Nation residing in Boston in New England, from an Affectionate and Compassionate concern for their countrymen in these Parts, who may be reduced by Sickness, Shipwreck, Old age and other Infirmities and unforeseen Accidents, Have thought fit to form themselves into a Charitable Society, for the relief of such of their poor and indigent Countrymen, without any design of not contributing towards the Provision of the Town Poor in general as usual. And the said Society being now in its Minority, it is to be hoped and expected, that all Gentlemen, Merchants, and others of the Irish Nation, or Extraction, residing in, or trading to these Parts, who are lovers of Charity and their Countrymen, will readily come into and give their Assistance to so laudable an undertaking; and for the due Regulation and Management of said intended Charity, the Society, on the seventeenth day of March, in the year 1737, agreed on the following Rules and Orders.”

#### **ORIGINAL MEMBERS**

The twenty-six original members of the Society were Robert Duncan, Andrew Knox, Nathaniel Walsh, Joseph St. Lawrence, Daniel McFall, Edward Allen, William Drummond, William Freeland, Daniel Gibbs, John Noble, Adam Boyd, William Stewart, Daniel Neal, James Mayes, Samuel Moore, Philip Mortimer, James Egart, George Glen, Peter Pelham, John Little, Archibald Thomas, Edward Alderchurch, James Clark, John Clark, Thomas Bennett and Patrick Walker.

## Sources

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## The Silver Key

Boston in the 1730's was a small town of about fifteen thousand inhabitants. Of this total about one thousand were negro, mostly slaves, and perhaps five hundred were Irish. It was governed by Selectmen. It was not, however, a simple country place. A thriving seaport, trading with England and Ireland, but more particularly with the West Indies, the southern ports of the Colonies and the Maritime Provinces, it supported a society of all classes, with an element of government officials and merchants of great wealth. The mansions which once lined North Square are gone, but some idea of the affluence of this society can be gained from those of their country houses which still stand, for example, the Royal house in Medford and the great houses on Brattle Street in Cambridge. Here the wealthy merchants and retired West Indian planters lived on their great estates with elaborate gardens, served by slaves. In town the favorite strolling place on pleasant afternoons of the leisured wealthy was beneath the Packwood elms which bordered the Old Granary Burying Ground. In a few years the society painter Copley was making so much in Boston that he was unwilling to try his fortune in London. The dress and jewels of his subjects testify to their prosperity. It was the town which banished Agnes Surriage and welcomed Lady Frankland. Being a seaport, Boston also had its combat zone, so labeled in unambiguous pre-Victorian terms on maps of the period.

The town was still dominated by the descendants of its original settlers. Under the reign of pious Queen Anne they had been compelled to admit the Church of England, which was established at King's Chapel, attended by the wealthier merchants and government officials. These people were not approved of by the general population, who even called them papists, that being the most derogatory term in the current vocabulary of religious denunciation. There were of course no Catholics living in the province legally, though on St. Patrick's day in 1731 Governor Belcher proclaimed "There are a considerable number of papists now residing within the town of Boston, and it is ordered that officers of the law break open their dwelling places, shops and so forth and bring them to the court of justice." The Irish were numerous enough to establish the "Irish Meeting House" (Presbyterian) in a converted barn in the 1720's.

Certainly not all of the population were wealthy merchants. There were many poor. In 1737 a violent inflation had been raging for a number of years, producing great hardship among the poor and the artisan classes. The winter was an unusually cold one, and wood had become very expensive, because it now had to be brought in from the country. The cost of welfare had doubled in five years, largely due, it was said, to those who had "crept among us from elsewhere." The almshouse contained 110, the workhouse 36; there were 1200 widows, 1000 of them poor. Lobster, however, was plentiful and cheap.

It was doubtless in the light of these conditions that "Several gentlemen and others of the Irish Nation residing in Boston" who happened to be gathered together on the 17th of March 1737 (Old Style, March 28, 1738 New Style) agreed to form a society for the relief of "those of the Irish nation who might be reduced by sickness, age or other infirmities and accidents to distress." They add that such efforts for their indigent countrymen shall in no case be at the expense of their contribution to the Town poor. It is hoped that all gentlemen of the Irish Nation or extraction residing in or trading to these parts will join their assistance to this laudable undertaking.

The records show that the "Rules and Orders Agreed upon by the Irish Society in New England," as they called themselves at first, "for the Management of their Charity" were adopted entire by the original group at the meeting of March 17, 1737. The rules are, however, detailed and show care, and probably a legal hand, in their preparation.

A preamble recites the intention of the "several Gentlemen, Merchants, and others" of the Irish Nation to establish a charity for the benefit of their compatriots, and sets forth "Rules and Orders."

Charity is to be extended to the poor and distressed of Irish extraction residing in Boston. Any of Irish extraction able to help in such an enterprise who refuse to join shall be for ever excluded from its benefits.

Each member shall pay ten shillings at least on election and shall contribute two shillings quarterly. Those who subscribe a larger sum will be inscribed as donors (there were four so inscribed). It is difficult to estimate these contributions in terms of our money, because the terms of conversion will differ greatly depending on what is used as a base. If the price of labor is taken as a standard, the shilling of 1740 should be considered the equivalent of ten

dollars Since improved manufacturing methods have greatly reduced the amount of labor in most manufactured items, if clothing or similar items are used the figure should be nearer five dollars On a conservative basis the entry fee was equivalent to fifty dollars, and the annual payment for the charity fund forty dollars Since the society was a small one, even with these payments, its charitable work was limited

“When the capital reaches fifty pounds, it shall be invested, and the interest shall be distributed to charity, the capital to remain entire “ Distribution was made at the quarterly meetings by majority vote Sums amounting to forty shillings were to be covered by a bond, payable when able

The managers shall be natives of Ireland, or natives of any other part of the British dominions of Irish extraction, “being Protestants and inhabitants of Boston.”

This qualification, limited to officers, implies the possibility of members who were not Protestant The provision may have been made in respect to the authorities It was at about this time that the Selectmen requested the General Court to pass laws regulating the movements of Catholics since they considered it impossible to secure the town against the danger from Catholics under the existing laws. The Selectmen, in their petition, granted religious tolerance to be desirable as a general principle, but felt that it could not be extended to Catholics because of their devious nature During most of this time there was war with France, and the activities of missionaries among the Indians was a sore subject (Father Rasle’s scalp had been displayed on the Common in 1724).

The annual meeting of the Society was set for the second Tuesday in April, St Patrick’s Day was not observed until after the Revolution

The officers were elected annually and included a “Keeper of the Silver Key,” whose duty is “to attend Gentlemen and others, Natives of Ireland, or of Irish extraction, residing in these parts, or Transients, to acquaint them with the Charitable Design and Nature of this Society, and to invite them to contribute by the formality of delivering them a Silver Key with the arms of Ireland thereon, and if any person do refuse the same they are to return their names to some subsequent quarterly meeting “

The great key, of coin silver about eight inches long,

bearing the arms of Ireland on one side, and those of George II on the other, is still a treasured possession of the Society, jealously guarded by the Keeper of the Silver Key.

The articles conclude with the motto "With Good Will Doing Service."

There were twenty-six names subscribed to the original articles as of March 17th, 1737. The names suggest an Ulster origin for the most part. They were apparently of that breed whose grandsons were pleased to call Scotch-Irish, but it is notable that they never applied that term to themselves. There was already a Scots Charitable Society in Boston, which they did not choose to join. They were gathered on St. Patrick's Day and chose that day as the natal day for their endeavor. Men of the Irish Nation they called themselves, when they decided to form the "Irish Charity" for those residing in Boston of the "Irish Nation" or of Irish extraction. Their symbolic Silver Key was engraved with the arms of Ireland only. Their church was known for fifty years as the "Irish Church."

There had been a considerable immigration from Ulster to New England in the early 1700's. It is said that these people brought the potato to New England with them. A native of Virginia, the potato was brought to Ireland by Raleigh and crossed the ocean again a century later.

These Irish were no more welcome in New England than were those from other counties one hundred years later. Indeed the first Boston protest against the invading Irish occurred before 1700. They settled generally in New Hampshire, where the town of Derry recalls them, and in the western parts of Massachusetts. However, a small group, led by the Rev. John Moorehead of Londonderry, did remain in Boston and in the 1720's established the "Irish Meeting House" in a converted barn on Long Lane. A church replaced the barn, and Long Lane became Federal Street when the United States Constitution was ratified by a convention which met in the "Irish Church." Moorehead was an active member of the Charitable Irish Society until his death in 1773. The names of several of the members appear in the records of his church.

The early members represented all ranks of society. The phrase "gentlemen and others" had great significance in 1737. There were lawyers and merchants and a teacher of reading, dancing, and painting. There was a ship captain, a joiner, a cooper, a constable, and a "retailer of strong drink." An early by-law required members to be clean and decently dressed when attending meetings, "not in cap or apron."



Of the first group, Peter Pelham is the best known to us. He had been granted by the Selectmen the liberty to establish a school for the education of children in "Reading, Writing, Needlework, Dancing, and Painting on Glass." He advertised his school in the Boston Gazette in February of 1738. It met in his house on Summer Street. Pelham seems to have been an early worker in mezzotint engraving, possibly its first practitioner. Some of his work appears in London. Why a successful man came to Boston, where his living seemed precarious, is a mystery, but a letter from his father suggests that he left England under some sort of cloud. His membership in the "Irish Charity" establishes an Irish origin.

Pelham's principal interest to us is his marriage to Mary Singleton Copley, widow of a tobacco merchant of Long Wharf. The Copleys had been married in Limerick, and both families were Irish. Mrs. Copley's young son, John Singleton, became a noted artist. Peter Pelham died when Copley was about twelve years old, but since Copley was selling his work at sixteen, it seems likely that he received some instruction from his stepfather, in spite of his son's claim that the artist was a natural genius who never received the least instruction from anyone. Peter Pelham's son Henry, Copley's half-brother and subject of his painting "Boy with Squirrel," was a member of the Society years later, and will be noticed in the proper place.

The second meeting of the Society, its first business meeting, was held on April 11, 1738, the second Tuesday in April, which was the established date of the annual meeting until 1794, when it was changed to March 17. This was three weeks after the initial meeting, March 25 being the first day of 1738 under the calendar then current.

Some of the by-laws adopted at this and later meetings are of interest: The meetings were to begin at seven o'clock in winter, and eight in summer. Members were to be warned by five o'clock. When the business of the meeting was completed, members who wished to could withdraw, having paid their contribution. Meetings should not last longer than two o'clock in the morning, except by a vote of the majority of the members present. No person should order a drink brought into the room except the President, "who, or some person appointed by him shall keep account of all the liquor ordered and take care that the same shall not exceed two shillings for each person present." New England rum sold for a shilling a quart at the time.

Fifteen additional members joined at this meeting,

indicating that there had been some recruiting following the initial proposal. In the second list of names, that of Patrick Tracy stands out. No Ulsterman he. Patrick Tracy was a merchant of Newburyport in his thirty-sixth year when he joined the Charitable Irish Society. He had come to Newburyport, a sailor from Wexford, only two years before but was already described as "quite successful." He became wealthy and with his sons operated a fleet of privateers during the Revolution which inflicted great damage on British shipping, bringing two thousand prisoners to Newburyport.

Tracy's greatest fame is as an ancestor. His daughter Hannah married Jonathan Jackson, the business partner of her brothers. The couple had nine children. One was James Jackson, founder of the Massachusetts General Hospital. Another son, Charles, was chief justice of the Massachusetts Supreme Court; another, Patrick Tracy Jackson, with his brother-in-law, Francis Lowell, started the first complete cotton mill in America at Waltham. When their operation outgrew the water-power of the Charles, they went to the Merrimac and started the pioneer cotton town of Lowell. P.T. Jackson was also interested in railroads and other enterprises. He married a Cabot, as did two of his brothers, one of his sisters a Lowell, another a Lee. One of his daughters married a Cabot, another a Lowell. Succeeding generations continued intermarriage with the prominent Essex families. In consequence an impressive number of eminent Bostonians number Patrick Tracy among their ancestors. Some of them have been and are presently members of the Charitable Irish Society. They include in the present generation the Governor of the Commonwealth and a member of the President's Cabinet (1972).

Robert Temple joined the Society in 1740. He had brought a party from Ireland in 1717 and settled on Noddles Island, where he had a mansion house "containing elegant rooms suitable for the reception of persons of the first condition." Temple's name is signed to a broadside issued by the Proprietors of the Kennebec Purchase offering land on the river in the vicinity of Richmond (1754). He was associated with Gardner, Hollowell, and the Bowdoins.

Another early member (1748) was Robert Auchmuty, He was a judge and for a time Governor's Counselor, a leader in the community. He was one of the directors of the Land Bank, a sort of local South Sea Bubble which ruined many,

including the father of Samuel Adams in its collapse. John Adams said of him, "He could sit with his bottle all night and argue like a genius next day." His son, also Robert, became president of the Society in 1767.

Nothing is known of the Society's activities in the early years. Members were added each year until 1749. Forty-two entered in 1739, but the number of new members fell to one in 1749. No more members were added until 1756. It would seem that the Society was not flourishing in those years.

The oldest existing record book contains the original articles, dated March 17, 1737. There is a list of members with dates of admission and payment of entry fee from March 1737-8 through 1740. There is also a record of quarterly payments for the years 1738 through 1741. The form of these records shows that the old calendar, starting the year on March 25, was being used in the Society's records. The date of the first entry fees is given as "March 17, 1737-8." This date would be called March 17, 1738, by our method of dating, so we must conclude that the natal year of the Society is 1738, not 1737, as has been long supposed.

This book also contains some by-laws of early date, probably copied from an earlier book.

The next entry is headed "A List of the members admitted to the Charitable Irish Society From March 1737 to July 1761 taken from the original entries, and from that time until . ." The last entry on this list is dated in 1766. Curiously, all the members who are earlier listed as joining on April 11, 1738, are here listed as joining on March 17, 1737.

The notation "dead" or "voted out" appears beside many names. Of one hundred seventy-three members admitted up to 1761, eighty-seven, or just half, remained.

The next item in the book is a new set of Articles which bears no date, though 1764 has been written on the page in a later style of writing. The Articles provided for printing two hundred copies for distribution to the members, and for future members. The Massachusetts Historical Society has a copy of this pamphlet, dated 1765. Society minutes for April 11, 1766, show votes of forty-five shillings to the Secretary for preparing the material and of forty-nine shillings to the printer, William McAlpine.

The Articles are in general the same as those originally adopted with a significant exception. The qualifications for officers are identical except for the omission of the word

“Protestant “ This was perhaps a reflection of changing conditions in Boston about 1760. The long war with France was over and the frontiers of New England safe from Indian attack after one hundred years of harassment The clergy were turning from religion to politics, and religious feeling was waning somewhat, though the concessions made to Canadian Catholics in the treaty which ended the war were bitterly resented In spite of the laws still remaining, the treaty also promised Catholic missionaries to the Indians living within the province This article of the treaty was irregularly observed

The Charitable Irish Society was in advance of the community in eliminating the religious qualification for office holding Catholics could not hold public office in Massachusetts until 1820.

The earliest minutes of a meeting of the Society are those for April 8, 1766. William Hall was elected President Since the Articles called for annual election of officers, it seems certain that this was not the first election Indeed at this meeting John Ball was thanked for his services as Secretary for seventeen years. If his services included keeping records of meetings, these have been lost Nicholas Tabb also seems to have been serving as Treasurer

William Hall, whose election as President of the Society is recorded in the minutes of the April 8, 1766, meeting, joined the Society with the second group in April 1738. He was a prosperous citizen who on a number of occasions gave bond for immigrants that they would not become town charges He was a leather dresser whose losses in the great fire of 1760 were listed as 666 pounds real and 142 pounds personal This was specified as pounds sterling, not in the depreciated provincial currency, and represented a very large sum Nicholas Tabb, the Society's Treasurer, was also a victim of this fire to the extent of 13 pounds William Hall died in 1771 and is buried in the Old Granary Burial Ground In 1965 the Charitable Irish Society replaced the crumbling headstone on his grave and holds memorial services there annually

It was William Hall's peculiar fate to own a slave who became more famous than his master Prince Hall, who became a free man and a voter in Boston, founded the first black Masonic lodge in the world He was literate and the Massachusetts Archives contain petitions in his handwriting He early petitioned the Governor for the abolition of slavery, and in the 1780's he petitioned the General

Court of the new Commonwealth for equal educational opportunities for blacks. In a time when the praises of liberty and the rights of man sounded on every hand, his was perhaps the first voice to be raised for his race

When William Hall assumed the presidency, there were 68 pounds in the treasury. Although the membership list indicated eighty members, there were twenty present and paying assessments at that meeting, and records in the pre-revolutionary period suggest that the active membership was at about that level. With this membership the Society's resources were limited and its charities modest, although some members made contributions in excess of their regular dues. Small amounts were granted to individuals generally to tide over an emergency, though there are instances of repeated grants to the same person.

A grant of a few years later (1771) is typical and opens a window on the troubled times as well. A grant was made to John Ryan "in recognition of his heroic behavior in the recent encounter with Lt. Penton, in recognition of the fact that the injury to his arm received at that time makes it impossible for him to support himself." At the time the award was made Mr. Ryan was on trial for piracy before a court of which the recent president of the Charitable Irish Society was a member. The reference is to an incident a short time before when Lt. Penton of the Royal frigate *Rose* boarded an American vessel looking for alleged deserters and attempted to impress some of the crew. The crew resisted and in the melee Ryan had his arm shattered by a shot and Lt. Penton was fatally stabbed in the throat with a pike. Reinforcements from the frigate arrested all of the Americans and brought them to Boston, where they were charged with piracy on the high seas. A special court was convened which included Governor Barnard, Lt. Governor Hutchinson, Governor Wentworth of New Hampshire, and Robert Auchmuty, who had concluded his term as President of the Charitable Irish Society a year before. John Adams was the defense attorney. The case was decided in favor of the defendants without a trial, on the ground of a technicality raised by Adams that the killing was a justifiable homicide, since the lieutenant was engaged in an impressment, which was then illegal in the colonies, though not in England.

William Hall was followed in the presidency by Robert Auchmuty who served from 1767 to 1770. Like his father a judge, he was considered by many to be the leader of the Boston bar. An outstanding Tory, he was connected with

many of the events in the years preceding the Revolution and was a frequent target of the patriot press. In one case where he presided, John Hancock was the defendant and John Adams the defense attorney.

John Adams was frequently opposed to Auchmuty in court but was associated with him as counsel in the defense of Capt. Preston following the King Street riot. Adams seemingly resented Auchmuty's pre-eminence at the bar and described him in typically spiteful fashion as having "a dull insipid mode of arguing, as many repetitions as a Presbyterian parson in his prayer--his voice is flat, his humor is affected and dull--to have this man represented as the first of the bar is a libel on it." Auchmuty was proscribed as a Tory and his considerable property was confiscated. He left Boston apparently before the encounter at Lexington and went to England, where he died a five hundred pound a year pensioner of the King.

The Vice-President of the Society during Auchmuty's presidency was Capt. Daniel Malcolm, a man at the other extreme of the political spectrum. A leader of the merchants, he was prominent in the non-importation movement and described as "a notorious smuggler." This group hired James Otis to argue their case against the Writs of Assistance. Robert Auchmuty, as King's counsel, maintained the other side. A rather amusing entry appears in the minutes at this time. At a meeting where Malcolm was presiding in the absence of the President, a committee was appointed consisting of Malcolm and two others "to wait on Robert Auchmuty about the arrearage in his dues." The account was promptly paid. Malcolm's most famous exploit was probably the occasion when he held the sheriff and customs officers at bay at his gate for a whole day by the implied threat of turning the Boston mob on them. His associate in this action was William MacKay, his successor as Vice-President and Robert Auchmuty's successor as President of the Society.

Malcolm died in 1769, during his term of office. He is buried on Copps Hill under a large monument which bears the inscription: "Here lies buried in a stone grave ten feet deep Capt. Daniel Malcolm, Merchant, who departed this life Oct 29, 1769, aged 44 years. A true son of Liberty, friend of the Public and enemy to oppression, and one of the foremost in opposing the Revenue Acts." This inscription attracted unfavorable attention from the occupation troops a few years later, and the stone still shows the effects of their marksmanship.

Malcolm last presided at a meeting of the Society in June. Curiously there is no mention of his death in the record, which simply mentions the election of William MacKay as Vice-President

Daniel Malcolm had a brother John, also a member of the Charitable Irish Society, who was a customs agent. He was twice tarred and feathered and beaten nearly to death by the Boston mob

William MacKay was elected President of the Society April 1769 and served until 1786. He was in time a member of the Boston Committee of Correspondence and of the committee to distribute the supplies and money which the other towns and colonies sent to the relief of the Bostonians distressed by the closing of their port.

William MacKay's name and that of Daniel Malcolm appear on the well-known "Paul Revere Bowl" among the seven who commissioned it. MacKay bought out the others and became sole owner of the bowl, and it remained in the possession of his family for more than a century.

Several members of the Society appear in accounts of the King Street riot of March 5, 1770, where several citizens were killed by British soldiers (from an Irish regiment), and its aftermath. Benjamin Burdick, keeper of the Green Dragon Tavern and a member, testified that he was in the front rank of the mob brandishing a highland broadsword. Henry Knox, who joined the Society two years later, was at the scene and said he warned Capt. Preston against firing.

No one was anxious to come forward as attorney for the defense of the British soldiers, who were tried in provincial court. Robert Auchmuty agreed to act if a Whig would associate himself in the defense. This was an act of considerable courage on the part of an unpopular man who was already being vilified in the patriot press.

Capt. Preston, who was probably Irish, since he belonged to an Irish regiment, sought the help of James Forrest, a customs agent known as the "Irish Infant," in finding a Whig to join Auchmuty as counsel. Forrest became a member of the Charitable Irish Society in 1772 and Keeper of the Silver Key in 1773. It was James Forrest who engaged John Adams for the defense and paid him a guinea as retainer.

Another future member of the Society, Henry Pelham, son of Peter, a founder, half-brother of Copley, like his father an artist and engraver, placed on sale a few days after the riot an engraving of a drawing of the event. A day earlier Paul Revere had brought out his well-known

engraving. They are plainly from the same drawing. An angry letter exists in which Pelham charges Revere with depriving him of the results of his work "as truly as if you had plundered me on the highway--one of the most dishonorable actions you could well be guilty of." Pelham and Revere were both competent engravers. Only Pelham was an artist capable of producing the drawing.

The Society continued to be a-political in its election of members. In 1772 besides James Forrest, the customs agent, two officers of the British garrison were elected. Also in 1772 Henry Knox joined the society. The Knoxes were members of Mr. Moorehead's church. Henry's uncles and brothers were members, as was his son in later years. Knox, a book-seller married to the daughter of the Provincial Secretary, had chosen the American side as war approached. At the siege of Boston he was Washington's artillery officer, who brought the guns from Ticonderoga to Dorchester. He served throughout the war as Chief of Artillery, becoming a Major General. After the war he was the founder of the Order of the Cincinnati and a member of President Washington's Cabinet, where he served as Secretary of War.

The last member admitted before the war was Henry Pelham (1774). Half-brother of John Singleton Copley, he had been the subject of the painting "Boy with a Squirrel," which had established Copley's reputation in England. When Copley left Boston in 1774, he left Pelham in charge of his affairs and his family. When war broke out Pelham was unable to collect rents and bills due an emigre, and his letters to Copley give a picture of the tribulations of a British sympathizer in besieged Boston. He could not take matters to court since the courts were not sitting. He says he was reduced to the clothes on his back and to dinner invitations from British officers for food. The younger Mrs. Copley and their son, who was to become Lord Lyndhurst, Lord Chancellor of Great Britain, went to England in the summer of 1775. Pelham wished to go also, but "mother (Mrs. Copley Pelham) will not leave Boston."

John Moorehead remained an active member until his death in 1773. His church was a center of patriotic activity where the women held day-long spinning bees, to be joined by the Sons of Liberty in the evening for refreshments and singing. The refreshments were all American products except a little wine. Moorehead's slave was sold in the settlement of his estate a few weeks before the encounter at Lexington, probably the last slave sold in Boston.



Attendance at meetings was small during these years, and the last meeting in February 1775 was attended by only five members. The Society did not meet again until 1784.

The list of proscribed Tories included the following names, which also appear on the rolls of the Charitable Irish Society:

Robert Auchmuty, Archibald McNeil, John Magner, James Forrest, Henry Pelham, Bart Sullivan, John Field.

After the engagement at Concord, James Forrest became captain of "His Majesty's Loyal Irish Volunteers," assisting in the defense of Boston.

Forrest, Pelham, McNeil, Field, and Sullivan sailed to Halifax with the British fleet when Henry Knox's guns forced the abandonment of Boston. General Knox's mother-in-law went with them. The old lady Mary Singleton Copley Pelham still refused to leave and remained in Boston alone. Robert Auchmuty had already gone to England.

While John Magner is listed as a loyalist, he did not leave Boston, and became treasurer of the Society after the war. He apparently made his peace with his fellow citizens and was the owner of a considerable property in 1790. He was active in organizing the first Catholic church in Boston when it became legally possible to do so, and was for years an active parishioner. Father Matignon, the first pastor, was temporarily buried in the Magner tomb in the Old Granary Burying Ground.

While the Charitable Irish Society did not observe St. Patrick's Day during this period, the day did not always go unmarked. Governor Belcher's observance in 1731 has been noted, as has the gathering of "gentlemen and others of the Irish Nation" on March 17, 1737. John Rowe, the diarist, reports a dinner at a private home on St. Patrick's Day 1767 of the "Sons of St. Patrick," attended by a group which included Daniel Malcolm and William MacKay as well as several other members of the Charitable Irish Society and the patriot leader, James Otis. Rowe also records in 1775: "This being St. Patrick's day, the officers in number about 60 walked to King's Chapel where a sermon was preached by Rev. Mr. Nichols. They returned in the same manner and dined at Mr. Ingersols in King St."

A notice in the Boston Gazette for November 14, 1774, says that the "Principal Knot of the 47th regiment" of the "Most Ancient and Benevolent Order of the Friendly

Brothers of St Patrick" would dine the following Thursday at Col Ingersoll's Tavern. A similar notice appeared December 14. This was no doubt the group who arranged the service in King's Chapel The honor of the first religious observance of St Patrick's Day in Boston belongs to the British Army

## The Silver Key

1784 - 1837

Boston society was greatly disrupted by the war Few of the members of the Charitable Irish Society who appear as attending meetings before the war seem to have been active after the war A number had left the city as loyalists, though John Magner, who appears on a list of the proscribed, remained in town and continued as an active member for many years, serving as Treasurer.

The Society assembled for the first time on October 26, 1784, at John Tufts'. William MacKay resumed the Presidency and welcomed the returning members with a short speech

"Gentlemen Members of the Charitable Irish Society, I congratulate you on this joyful occasion, that we are assembled again after ten years absence occasioned by a dreadful and ruinous war of near eight years, also that we have conquered one of the greatest and most potent nations on the globe in so far as to have peace and independency May our friends Countrymen in Ireland, behave like the brave Americans till they recover their liberties " Notable is the reference to "our countrymen in Ireland " Though MacKay was almost certainly an Ulsterman, the desire for liberty is expressed for "Ireland " In Ireland this was the time of the United Ireland movement, when all Irishmen, North and South, Catholic and Protestant, were united in determination to be a free nation The tragic religious division was a development of later times

Only five members attended this meeting. Seven new members were admitted that year, but only three more in the next six years. Simon Elliot, a wealthy merchant, became President in 1787, but there appears to have been little activity Apparently no annual meetings were held in 1789 and 1790 The only meetings in this period were on April 15, 1788, and December 14, 1790

Small amounts were voted for charity during those

years when the Society did meet, but it was obviously at a low ebb of activity

Moses Black became President in 1791, and served until 1800. He owned property on Long Wharf and lived in that part of Braintree which became Quincy at about this time. He was described as "an Irish gentleman of great popularity in this town." He held several town offices and was elected to the Legislature. Black was the owner of the Quincy property and one of the two largest taxpayers. He owned pew number two in the church, number one belonged to President Adams.

Eighteen new members were elected in 1791, the largest number during this period. Several names of interest appear on the list: Simon Elliot III, a future President, Thomas English, also a President to be, Robert Gardner, who may have been the Robert Gardner who chartered a ship to carry the news of the Boston Massacre to England (a Robert Gardner was commander of the Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company at about this time), also William MacKay, Jr., son of the former President, Capt James Magee, three times President, and Thomas Mc Donough, who was the British Consul in Boston.

In January of 1794 it was voted to hold the annual meeting on March 17, instead of the second Tuesday in April, as provided in the By-laws. This is the first mention of March 17 in the records except in the preamble to the original articles. At the annual meeting the By laws were changed, making March 17 the date of the annual meeting in future. At this meeting it was also voted on motion of Mr Gardner to set up a committee to purchase school books for poor children of Irish extraction. Three pounds was provided for the purpose.

In January of 1795 it was voted to celebrate the 17th of March with a dinner, thus establishing a custom observed ever since. The committee was authorized to invite the Rev. Jeremy Belknap to dine with the Society on that day. Dr Belknap thus became the first of a distinguished line of dinner guests. Members were also permitted to invite gentlemen guests "to join us at our table."

Dr Belknap, one of the best known clergymen of the town, was the pastor of John Moorehead's Federal Street Church, now Unitarian. Belknap is also remembered as an historian, a founder and first president of the Massachusetts Historical Society.

In 1797 the date of the annual meeting was referred to as "St. Patrick's Day." This is the first mention of St. Patrick

in the records. Twenty-four members attended the dinner that year, including General Henry Knox, former Secretary of War. The admission fee was set at \$5 at the business meeting (equivalent to at least \$100 in 1972), and the following year the charity contribution was set at \$1 quarterly, \$4 annually ( \$80)

The Society continued rather inactive in the next several years. Meetings were frequently omitted, and sometimes the record sadly notes that a meeting was called and "only the Secretary appeared." In 1798 meetings were omitted "because the contagion raged, and members were gone out of town." Meetings were not held in summer because members were out of town. The impression is given that the active membership was small, and perhaps rather well-to-do with summer homes away from the town. Charity in modest amounts was disbursed to individuals.

In 1801 the Presidency was assumed by Gen Simon Elliot, the third generation of Simon Elliots who were members of the Society and the son of the President in 1787-8. The first Simon Elliot joined the Society in 1757. He was a merchant in tobacco, sufficiently successful to have sustained a loss of 446 pounds in the great fire of 1760. He was the forebear of three subsequent Presidents of the Society, Simon Elliot II, Simon Elliot III, and James McGee.

Simon Elliot II inherited his father's business and fortune and increased it. He owned mill property in Newton as well as his father's Boston property. He joined the Charitable Irish Society in 1761 and was President in 1787-8.

Simon Elliot III inherited the family fortune, but does not seem to have added to it. He was more active in the public life of the town than his forebears, and served in the First Corps of Cadets where he became commanding officer. He was commissioned Major General in the Massachusetts Militia in 1796, becoming the ranking military officer in Boston. He was a Boston Fire Warden for many years and a State Representative from 1805 to 1809. His interests extended to the arts, and he was a founder of the first Boston Theatre. General Simon Elliot joined the Charitable Irish Society in 1791 and served as President from 1801 to 1809 and again in 1815.

At this time there began a departure from the practice of charitable grants to named individuals toward more impersonal charities. This was a reflection of the increasing immigration from Ireland. Mr. Robert Gardner

was reimbursed for \$13 which he advanced in the name of the Society for the distressed passengers of the brig Albicorn. A committee was authorized to extend immediate relief to "distressed Hibernians" to the extent of \$10 in each case, and another committee was to "look into the situation of the emigrants arriving from Ireland." Personal problems were not forgotten, illustrated by a grant of \$3.50 to James Miller for the purchase of a wooden leg. In 1803 the keeper of the jail was paid \$2.50 for five dinners for Irishmen on St. Patrick's Day. A total of \$74.00 was disbursed that year, to eight cases.

The Society was incorporated under the laws of Massachusetts in 1809.

While dinners are proposed for the 17th of March in every year after 1795, it is not clear that they were always held. In the early years the votes were conditional on a certain number (10-15) agreeing to subscribe "whether they dined or not." In several years the annual meeting was poorly attended or postponed, and no mention is made of a dinner. It seems to have become firmly established about 1805. In 1806, Fathers Matignon and Cheverus are both guests and appear regularly thereafter.

Simon Elliot was followed as President in 1810 by Thomas English, who served until 1814. He seems to have left few marks in the community.

He is listed among the Protestant contributors to the building fund of the first Catholic church and referred to as a merchant.

Capt. James McGee, second of the name in the Society, served three times as President, 1815, 1818, and 1821-23. McGee was a member of a noted family of sea captains and merchants. His father, James McGee, from County Down in Ireland had commanded privateers in the Revolutionary War. When wrecked in a winter storm off Plymouth, he was said to have saved his feet from freezing by filling his boots with rum. The senior McGee was early in the China trade and brought the first American ship to Batavia. He was associated in the China and East India trade with T. H. Perkins, with whom he was connected by marriage through the Elliots. After his retirement from the sea he lived in Roxbury, where he owned the Shirley-Eustis house. He joined the Charitable Irish Society in 1791. His brother Bernard, who joined the Society in 1798, was also in the China trade and was killed by Indians on the northwest coast.

The second Capt. James McGee made his first voyage to

China at 19. He went to China as master of a vessel at 21 and brought home a cargo which paid an excise tax of \$200,000. He retired from the sea at 28 and became a merchant. He joined the Charitable Irish Society in 1810, and was three times President.

Shubael Bell assumed the Presidency for the first time in 1816. He was a housewright by trade, but became Sheriff of Suffolk County in 1797. He joined the Charitable Irish Society in 1802. He was also a member of the British Charitable Society, of the Charitable Mechanics Association, and the Massachusetts Charitable Fire Association, and Senior Warden of Christ Church. He is best remembered for his letter to a friend describing the changes which were taking place in Boston early in the century. He continued in office in 1817 and served again in 1819.

Thomas Selfridge, attorney and a leader in the Federalist Party, became Vice-President in 1814. He had figured a few years earlier in a sensational political quarrel which culminated in his fatally shooting an assailant in State Street at midday. He was acquitted on the ground of self-defense.

Following the Revolution, and especially after 1800, the Irish population of Boston was growing rapidly. Its character was changing, for most of the newcomers were from the southern counties, and this is reflected in the membership of the Charitable Irish Society. While names are not a precise indication of origin, they are the only clue available, and such a classification suggests that nearly three fourths of the members joining between 1800 and 1825 were from the southern counties. There are other hints of a changing climate. In 1794 the annual meeting was moved to March 17th. In 1798 it becomes "St. Patrick's Day," and in 1815 "the festival of the Holy St. Patrick." In 1820 it was voted to omit the dinner that year "because it happens on a Friday" (On second thoughts a dinner was held.)

Since many of the new arrivals were Catholic and the Catholic Church was being established in Boston at this time, it is not surprising to find members of the Charitable Irish Society participating in its development. Public Catholic worship became possible after the Massachusetts Constitution was adopted in 1780. Several attempts to establish the Church in Boston were made by French refugee priests of dubious antecedents supported by a group of Catholics without episcopal sanction. These ended in bitter controversies and the departure of the priests. A

stable foundation was made when Father Francis Maignon was sent by Bishop Carrol in 1792. He was soon joined by Father John Cheverus, and for some years these two were the Catholic Church in New England.

The first member of the Charitable Irish Society to be associated with the Church was John Magner, who joined the Society in 1770. He was a blacksmith by trade and appears on some lists as a proscribed Tory. He is not listed among those going to Halifax and was in Boston soon after the war. He is listed in the census of 1790 as owning considerable real estate. He was treasurer of the Society for some years and Vice-President in 1803. Magner was associated with the earliest attempts to establish the Church and was an active participant in the early disputes. Strangely, perhaps, he was usually aligned with the French rather than the Irish faction. He continued active during the Maignon period and was a generous contributor to the first church building fund. At his death he was called the wealthiest Catholic in Boston.

James Cavanagh and Matthew Cottril became members of the Society in 1800. They had established mills at Damariscotta, but were much in Boston, where they customarily celebrated Easter after the Church was established. The church they founded at Damariscotta, St. Patrick's, still stands, distinguished by a Paul Revere bell. The Cottril house serves as a rectory. The mansion, Kavanagh House, surrounded by grounds and gardens is privately owned. Here Bishop Cheverus made his base on his missionary journeys in Maine, which extended north to the Indians at Passamaquoddy. Cavanagh and Cottril were contributors to the Boston church in 1793 and were its largest contributors for years. Tradition says that they gave the roof timbers from their holdings in Maine.

Don Juan Stoughton, the Spanish Consul, joined the Society in 1802. He was a well-known figure in Boston society of the day and was long remembered as a gentleman of great charm. He was the neighbor and great friend of Bishop Cheverus. Stoughton ranked among the largest contributors to the new church.

Assistance to the new church was not limited to Catholic members of the Society. Thomas English and Simon Elliot are among the contributors to the appeal which was made to the general public. President John Adams led that list.

Father Philip Lariscy, who became a member in 1819, preached in Gaelic at the early Mass at the Cathedral. His style was such that when Bishop Cheverus heard him in

English, he counseled a more moderate approach

Capt James McGee died in office (December 1823). Curiously the records do not mention this event. He was followed as President by Samuel Lorenzo Knapp, a native of Newburyport, descended from one of the original settlers of Watertown. He was Representative in Congress, 1812-16, and was known as a "spread eagle orator." He was a Colonel in the militia, but his career in Newburyport was marred by imprisonment for debt. He came to Boston and started a law practice and also edited a newspaper. Knapp was the author of several biographies, including one of Aaron Burr. He sometimes wrote under the name "Ali Bey ibn Othman." As a newspaper editor he defended the rights of Catholics and is the reputed author of Bishop Cheverus' memorial to the Legislature on Catholic Emancipation in 1820. As a result of this movement, restrictions which had prevented Catholics from holding office in Massachusetts were removed. Knapp received an honorary L.L.D. from a French university, probably through the agency of his close friend, Bishop Cheverus. Samuel Knapp joined the Charitable Irish Society in 1820. He had previously appeared as a dinner guest.

Little is known of Andrew Dunlap, who became President in 1826. He became a member of the Society in 1797. His son joined the same day. He is referred to as "Senator."

Although the death of the Society's President passed unnoticed shortly before, there appears in 1826 a vote to establish a committee whose members shall have the duty of attending the funerals of all deceased members and all members are urged to join them in attendance. For the first time resolutions now appear in the records on the death of members, and there are many of them through the years. In fact they comprise the bulk of the records in the nineteenth century. There are many references to attendance at funerals (evidence of a major interest in necrology). A prolonged controversy resulted from the effort to expel a member because of "scandalous conduct" at a funeral, apparently in a matter involving the precedence of carriages.

From a rather uncertain start, where minimum guarantees of ten were difficult to obtain, the annual dinner became established as a principal activity of the Society. Bishop Cheverus appears as a dinner guest in 1805, and regularly thereafter. In 1814 the Governor and Lieutenant Governor were added to the guest list and in



1815 the English, French, and Spanish consuls. Bishop Cheverus addressed the dinner in 1817, the first time a formal speech at the dinner is mentioned. The Bishop gave the Society the proceeds of the collection at the Cathedral on March 17th, amounting to \$36.55. The collections were contributed in several later years, as well as the proceeds of a lecture. By 1820 the dinner mustered sixty places.

The practice of small gifts to individuals was continued-- \$2.50 to \$10 in many cases, two sick Irish families in Charlestown \$4, and a rather large sum for the time of \$19.50 for a funeral. These sums should be measured against the current daily wage of \$1. The assets of the Society totaled \$1092 in 1819.

Abraham Moore, who became President in 1827, is referred to as Colonel. Apparently a serious controversy arose just after his presidency. A special meeting was called February 9, 1829, to consider Col. Moore's letter of September 15, 1828, "and to settle some difficulties or differences arising in the Society." A meeting of that date had considered the letter and appointed a committee to investigate. The letter is not in the records and they give no clue as to the nature of the difficulty. It was voted to indefinitely postpone "the above matter." Several other votes indicate a strained atmosphere. At the meeting preceding the special meeting it was voted that any member inciting a disturbance at a meeting shall be expelled from the meeting and afterward expelled from the Society. It was also voted at this time that a committee be appointed to examine the list of members and to expel those who have brought disgrace to the Society by immoral conduct. The committee recommended the expulsion of eight members for immoral conduct and three for scandalous conduct. Another vote seemingly related to this incident empowered the Secretary to drop names of members who voluntarily absent themselves from meetings.

Nothing is known of Thomas Murphy (1828) and Francis McKenna (1829), the next Presidents.

Benedict Fitzpatrick, elected in 1830, was a successful tailor, representative of the artisans and tradesmen who made up a considerable part of the emigration from Ireland in this period. His son became the third Bishop of Boston.

At this time the Society loaned \$480, a large portion of its capital, at six per cent, to the Catholic church in Pawtucket. A committee was soon appointed to consult

with Bishop Fenwick about the security. Presumably the security was insufficient, for the loan was cancelled.

The Rev T J O'Flaherty, apparently the only clergyman ever elected to the Presidency, assumed office in 1831. He was Vicar-General of the Boston diocese and editor of the diocesan paper. The historian of the Archdiocese refers to his "perfervid style" in editorials. He seems to have had no trace of ecumenical spirit.

Another Andrew Dunlap became President in 1832. A native of Salem, he was a foremost criminal pleader. He became United States Attorney for Boston and was an orator of some note. He was active in politics as a Jackson Democrat.

James Boyd, elected President for the first time in 1833, was born in Netownards, Ireland, in 1793. He was born of a Presbyterian family but became Unitarian. He came to Boston in 1817 and started a business in leather goods. He later specialized in fire hose and accessories. He owned patents in this field, and his son patented hose of woven cotton impregnated with rubber. The company was the largest manufacturer in New England, and a successor company still manufactures the product in Cambridge. He was an organizer of the Charitable Association of the Boston Fire Department. In 1835 he was a member of the Legislature and sponsored the act making cities and towns liable for compensation for property damaged by mob action. This law was an aftermath of the destruction of the Ursuline Convent by a Charlestown mob. Boyd was an original incorporator of Mt. Auburn Cemetery, where he is buried. His infant son was the first person buried at Mt. Auburn.

During his Presidency, Boyd presided at two of the most memorable functions of the Society, the meeting with Andrew Jackson and the Society's Centennial.

The Irish had now become a large element in the Boston community. While the Irish immigrants of a century earlier had been by no means welcome in Boston, the difference of the later arrivals from the native population was accentuated by the fact that most of them now belonged to the growing Catholic Church. The old Puritan hostility toward popery had not disappeared, and in some elements of the population was activated by alarm at the obvious Catholic growth. It was shown in various ways, some not subtle.

The Irish sought instruments of identification and solidarity in response. Under this pressure the emphasis of

the Society gradually shifted from the Charitable to the Irish, and it sought for the first time to draw attention to itself. The first evidence of this wish to impress the community was perhaps the funeral committee in 1826, but the visit of an Irish President of the United States to Boston in 1833 offered an unusual chance for the Society to make the city aware of its presence. The Society was in fine fettle that year and voted to celebrate the anniversary with a "sumptuous dinner," cost not to exceed \$2 per plate. In March the relatively enormous sum of \$186 was spent for a banner. In June a committee was appointed to wait on the Secretary of the President of the United States to ascertain at what time it would be convenient for the President to receive the respects of the Society on the occasion of his visit to this city. Andrew Dunlap was requested to introduce the Society to the President. James Boyd, President of the Society, was to deliver an address. John McNamarra was chosen as Banner Bearer.

Marshaled by a Chief Marshal and ten Marshals, one hundred members of the Society followed their banner from their meeting place at Villa's on Hanover Street to the Tremont House, where they were received by President Jackson. President Boyd addressed the President, presenting the greetings of a band of his fellow Irishmen, stressing the bond of race. Jackson in reply referred to "the countrymen of my father" and added that he was always proud of his descent from this "noble race." "Would to God Irishmen on the other side of the ocean enjoyed the advantages they do here."

Again in 1834 the Society marched in a civic procession honoring LaFayette on his visit to Boston. They met at Julien's with a standard and twelve marshals, wearing the badge of the Society and a special badge honoring LaFayette. Accompanied by "a splendid band of music" they marched down Federal Street to Washington, to Park, and to the State House, where they joined the general procession which included all the military units in the city. A circuitous route was followed to Fanueil Hall, where orations were heard. The Society then proceeded in procession back to Julien's, where it was dismissed and suitable refreshments were served.

The greatest public effort in the Society's history was the Centennial Celebration in 1837. The Society voted that the observance should consist of a public procession, exercises, and a dinner. Members subscribed \$115 toward the expense. James Boyd was again President of the Society.

and was assigned the principal speech of the day. Since the day again fell on Friday, a dispensation was sought and granted by Bishop Fenwick on condition that those taking advantage of it give a small sum to charity. The caterer charged \$2.25 per plate for the dinner, which included a bottle of wine at each place. Dinner tickets were sold for \$2.50 (equivalent to a laborer's wage for several days, indicating that the members were relatively affluent).

The Society assembled at Concert Hall on Hanover Street and held its election. At one o'clock the Charitable Irish Society and the Young Catholic Friends, who joined them on this occasion, formed in procession together with the invited guests, who included his Excellency the Governor, the Mayor, the City Marshal, the Secretary of State, and several members of the state Senate and House of Representatives. Directed by their marshal, led by the Banner Bearer and the New England Band, they proceeded to Masonic Temple on Tremont Street, where the exercises were held.

The exercises started with selections by the band, followed by prayer. An original ode to the tune of "Gramachree" preceded Mr. Boyd's address, and another to the tune of "Paddy's Land" followed it. Another prayer concluded the ceremony.

Mr. Boyd's speech must have required nearly two hours to deliver. He reviewed the history of the Society and regretted the absence of descendants of the founders among its members. He commented on the changes taking place in the Society and said that he as a Protestant wished to call attention to the fact that while the original articles had excluded Catholics from office, the membership had been predominantly Catholic for twenty five years and in that time there had been ten Protestant Presidents (twenty years) and but five Catholic. He spoke of the virtue of temperance and the duties of citizenship and of other things.

Following the exercises at Masonic Temple, the procession reformed and returned to Concert Hall, where two hundred fifty members, guests, and friends sat down to a "sumptuous dinner."

There were apparently no formal speeches at the dinner, but there was a formidable list of toasts. The formal toasts were.

The Day Ireland	Music St Patrick's Shamrock	
The United States	Hail Columbia	
The President of the United States		
The Commonwealth of Massachusetts	Yankee Doodle	Reply by Gov Edward Everett
The City of Boston	Home Sweet Home	Reply by Mayor Samuel Elliot
The Founders of this Society	Exile of Erin	
Daniel O'Connell	Sprig of Shillelah	
Justice to Ireland	Garryowen	
Republicanism	Marseilles	
Mass Charitable Mechanics Asso.		Reply by Fairbanks Pres MCMA
The Ladies	Haste to the Wedding	

This did not exhaust the appetite for toasts, for there followed some twenty toasts offered by members and guests from the floor

Thus ended the first century of this charitable enterprise undertaken by "Several Gentlemen, Merchants, and Others of the Irish Nation residing in Boston in New England "

## The Silver Key

### Second Century

The establishment of the Irish presence in the city continued to be an important part of the Society's activities. It marched to Faneuil Hall in 1845 for the funeral observance for President Harrison, and in the same year seventy members joined the procession for the funeral ceremonies for President Jackson. In 1848 the Society marched again to join the exercise in honor of "the most important event that ever occurred in Boston, the introduction of water from Long Pond (Lake Cochichewick). There appears to have been some dissatisfaction with the place assigned the Society in the procession observing the funeral of President Zachary Taylor (1850), and when it was invited to join in the great Railroad Jubilee of 1851, the reply was "Under the present circumstances, for causes and from feelings best known to ourselves, we deem it both expedient and proper to decline the invitation." The Railroad Jubilee was the great event of the time. Most of the civic organizations in Boston were in line, including a number of Irish groups, among them the Irish Protestant Charitable Society.

In 1875, however, the Society voted after "spirited discussion" to take part in the centennial observance of the battle of Bunker Hill. The banner was furled by this time, the marshals' batons in storage. Twelve representatives of the Society rode in carriages. It was surely significant of something that the Charitable Irish Society was placed in the third division, with the New England Historical and Genealogical Society and the Massachusetts Historical Society rather than in the seventh division, which consisted entirely of Irish charitable and temperance societies. It was on this occasion that a Boston newspaper (the Saturday Evening Express) said of the Society "Its honorary members are numbered in the thousands, and present members represent between two and three millions of money."

The Society made several more public appearances, at the Boston anniversary in 1880, with a float in the great Columbus Day parade in 1912, and in the Tercentenary parade in 1930. On this occasion the Society's delegation rode in cars, without marshals, though a former President, Major General Francis Appleton, was marshal of the seventh division.

There was reason for this concern for showing the flag in the prevailing attitude toward the Irish in the community. The two most serious anti-Irish riots in Boston history occurred during the Society's centennial year. The Broad Street riot on July 11 started with an encounter between a Catholic funeral procession and a volunteer fire unit near the Irish quarter in the Broad Street-Fort Hill section. A fire alarm brought additional firemen, and there was presently a full-scale riot and a general sack of the Irish tenement district on Broad Street. There was no effective city police force, and the disorder continued until evening when the Mayor appeared at the head of Broad Street with two companies of militia, who dispersed the crowd. One result of this affair was the organization of a professional Fire Department in Boston to replace the disorderly volunteer force.

Among the Boston militia companies one, the Montgomery Guards, was composed principally of men of Irish ancestry, with many immigrants, some of them possibly not naturalized. One of its organizers was John Tucker, President of the Charitable Irish Society in 1842. Other members associated with it were Andrew Carney, Edwin Palmer, and Thomas Mooney. The company adopted the motto of the Society, and its banner bore the legend, "Fostered under thy wings we will die in your defense."

At a muster on the Common on September 12, the other Boston militia companies refused to join in the drill unless the Montgomery Guard was excluded. When the regimental officers refused to comply with this demand, the regiment, with the exception of the Montgomery Guard, left the Common. The Montgomery Guard remained and performed their drill. On their way back to their barracks they were attacked in the streets and pelted with stones and abuse. Surprisingly, although the men had weapons in their hands, discipline was maintained and the mob escaped unscathed. The climate of opinion was such that neither the mutinous militia companies nor any of the mob were punished. The Montgomery Guard was disbanded by the Governor as a gesture of appeasement to the mob.

This was a period when to be Irish in Boston was to be on the defensive, and second - and third-generation Bostonians of Irish descent were not encouraged to advertise the fact by joining a society with a distinctive name. James Boyd had commented on the absence of descendants of the founders, and the Society was entering

a period when few of its members were prominent in the life of the city

An 1846 publication, "Our First Man," listed those persons in the city worth \$100,000. It included a number of names whose bearer could well have been qualified for membership in the Charitable Irish Society, including four grandsons of Patrick Tracy, but the only member of the Society listed is Andrew Carney.

Of Andrew Carney the authors say "One of the new aristocracy of Irishmen, dealer in slop clothing, Ann St. Mr. Carney had the good fortune to become interested with a gentleman having a government contract for supplying clothing for the Navy, made during the enormously high prices of 1836 and '37. Goods fell afterwards more than half and the lucky contractors made a fortune. The above is now a large owner of real estate. It is fashionable for people to turn up their noses at the Irish, but within twenty or thirty years the children of some of our present Irish fellow citizens in very humble stations, will be among the richest people in the city. The Irish are just as good at making money as the Yankees, and a great deal better at saving it."

Andrew Carney was born in Ireland in 1794, where he learned the tailors' trade. He came to Boston at the age of 20 and worked at his trade. There were a number of Irish tailors in Boston (Benedict Fitzpatrick was another) and the city became a center for the trade. The manufacture of ready-made clothing became a Boston industry, depending on Irish labor, long before the birth of the New York garment district. Carney joined with Jacob Sleeper in this business and was financially successful. He sold out his interest in 1846 and turned to real estate, banking, and insurance, where he multiplied his fortune. He was a founder of the bank which was an ancestor of the First National and of the John Hancock Insurance Company. He was a philanthropist on a large scale, and his name is remembered in one of the city's great hospitals.

Hostility to foreigners and Catholics was growing throughout the country about 1850 as the Know-nothing movement gained strength. In Boston it coincided with the great influx of desperately poor Irish refugees from the famine. As a result, according to Handlin, the social status of the Irish in Boston in the early 1850's was below that of the Negro, and there were minor incidents of violence when Irish started to move into Negro neighborhoods.

The movement reached its climax in 1854 when the



Knownothing ticket won all the elective offices in Boston and in the State. At the Society's annual dinner in 1855 no public officials were invited because, the President said, it was impossible to find any public official who was not an avowed enemy, "politically and Religiously." By the platform they were elected on they were in direct opposition to the Constitution of the United States.

Possibly the officials did not go dinnerless, for the Protestant Irish Charitable Society also dined that March 17th and drank toasts to the ill health of the Pope.

While the practice of making small donations to individuals continued, concern for the needs of the growing tide of immigrants resulted in a proposal to set up an office to assist immigrants who were being exploited at the docks, but it was decided that the Society's means were insufficient to staff such an operation. The Society had about 100 members in 1850, paying dues of \$4 each. Usually a great majority of the members were not current in their dues.

When the deluge descended in 1847 the Society's means were utterly inadequate to making a material contribution to the alleviation of the two disasters, the one on the Boston docks and the other in Ireland. Yet Handlin's comments--that by 1845 the Charitable Irish Society "had completely lost its original character and settled down to the business of celebrating St. Patrick's day with a grand dinner--attaining the dignity of the Parker House in 1850" and again "the Charitable Irish Society had early shed its original function, becoming primarily a wining and dining club"--are unduly harsh at this time.

In March 1847 the Society voted: "Whereas in view of the calamity with which Ireland in the wisdom of an inscrutable Providence is afflicted, we regard humiliation and not rejoicing, fasting rather than feasting, as best becoming Irishmen: Resolved That while famine is stalking through the land of our birth, while destitution, despair and consequent death, increased and fearfully increasing, comes to our knowledge by every succeeding packet, the jocund song, the sparkling wit, the impassioned sentiment, and viands, though never so rich, could only be to us at best amidst such painful recollections 'like apples on the Dead Sea shore, all ashes to the taste.'

"Resolved that the customary festival of this society on the 17th of March be dispensed with this year, and that in addition to what we have done individually for the relief of

the suffering, we now in our associated capacity, contribute the expenses of such celebration to be applied to the same object

“Resolved That the officers of the Society are hereby authorized to act as a committee to receive such contributions as members under the foregoing resolution may please to make, and to appropriate the same to its legitimate object, at such time, and through such a channel as they may deem expedient

“Resolved That by this entrenchment on our usual course it is not intended in any degree to curtail our yearly subscription for local distribution “

The sum of \$56 was contributed from the treasury to the relief of famine in Ireland. The amount contributed to the special fund is not stated. The Society voted \$86 for local relief that year. In 1848 the dinner was resumed, and \$160 was distributed to 209 recipients. This response seems less than heroic, even in the light of a daily wage of \$0.50 for unskilled labor, but it must be presumed that many members were helping their own friends and relations both in Boston and in Ireland. The Boston Diocese raised the rather large sum of \$150,000 and members of the Society may have contributed to this fund. A similar amount was contributed by the general population of New England. Certainly it seems that the Society did not rise to the emergency in any large way, or assume the leadership in relief efforts.

Members of the Society were very active in the relief effort as individuals. The first attempt to organize relief for famine victims in Ireland was led by a former President, Father T. F. O’Flaherty, in 1845, when a partial failure of the potato crop gave a hint of what was to come. He was assisted by Thomas Mooney, President of the Society in 1855, Daniel Crowley, Treasurer in 1851, and the Rev. James O’Reilly, a member. This group raised a substantial sum in a short time. Improved conditions in Ireland in 1846 and the view of politicians that money should go to support the campaign for the repeal of the Act of Union brought this effort to an end.

When news of the new disaster began to reach Boston by the packets in early 1847, Father O’Flaherty was dead. The first call for help for Ireland came in a pastoral letter from Bishop Fitzpatrick, read in all the Catholic churches (February 7, 1847). The response was prompt and generous. Father O’Reilly collected from his North End parish \$1300 in cash and \$700 in pledges in a single day.

prominent in the life of the city John Tucker, President in 1842 and 1843, was city councilor and later a member of the legislature.

Patrick Donahoe, President in 1851 and 1854, came to Boston at the age of ten and learned the printers' trade He became part owner of 'The Jesuit,' the diocesan paper, and in 1836 the owner of the 'Boston Pilot,' an independent newspaper at the time, and acquired a large fortune He was an active supporter of the government in the Civil War, helping to raise the ninth regiment The great Boston fire of 1872 destroyed his printing plant, and a second fire the following year his bookstore His bankruptcy followed, and the 'Boston Pilot' was sold to Archbishop Williams

The colorful Thomas D'Arcy Magee joined the Society in 1845. Born in Ireland, he came to Boston at 17, and his oratory so impressed his listeners that he became editor of the 'Pilot' at 19 He returned to Dublin to edit the 'Freeman' and later the 'Irish Nation' He escaped from Ireland in 1848 and went to New York and again to Boston, where he started the 'American Celt' He was invited to Montreal by the Irish there He was elected to Parliament and became Minister of Agriculture He was assassinated in 1867

The approach of civil war was foreshadowed in 1860, when President Hugh O'Brien called attention to the impending dissolution of the Union and proposed a resolution of loyalty, which was passed "Resolved that we invoke our brethren and fellow citizens to lay aside all sectional or partisan animosities and devote themselves to the cause of our endangered common country" In 1861 there were 180 members

Many members of the Society served in the Union army The Montgomery Guards, who had organized a social club under another name, surfaced as the nucleus of the famous "Fighting Ninth" regiment Patrick Donahoe gave each man a gold dollar when they were mustered on the Common Its first commander was Thomas Cass, who died of wounds received at Malvern Hill He was followed in command by Patrick Guiney, who ended the war as a Brigadier General and later served as Assistant District Attorney of Suffolk County. Both Cass and Guiney were members of the Society

The Society met regularly during the war, noting in resolutions from time to time the fortunes of its members in the field In 1863 "some seventy five" members sat down to the anniversary dinner Strangely, no mention is

made of the death of President Lincoln, or of any participation in funeral observances in the records of 1865.

Hugh O'Brien became President of the Society in 1860, after serving some time as Treasurer. Born in Ireland, he was brought to Boston as a child of five. His education was obtained in the Boston Public Library. He became a printer, edited a trade paper, and prospered sufficiently to become the President of the Union Institute for Savings. O'Brien entered politics and became Boston's first Irish Mayor in 1885.

One of the Society's most colorful members, John Boyle O'Reilly, became a member in 1871. He had joined the Fenian Society in Ireland and enlisted in the British army, presumably with subversion in mind. He was arrested, tried for treason, and sentenced to twenty years penal servitude and transported to Australia. Escaping from the penal colony in a small boat, he was picked up at sea by an American whaler whose captain loaned him money and placed him on board a ship going to Philadelphia, where he arrived in 1869, aged 25. He came to Boston the following year and joined the Fenian raid into Canada (1870) which he reported for the Boston papers. He was on the staff of the 'Boston Pilot' and became owner of this paper in 1876. O'Reilly wrote extensively, both poetry and prose, and was a contributor to Scribners, Atlantic, and Harpers. He was a friend of the Boston literary group and was more than any other Irishman of his time accepted by the Brahmin establishment.

Another future mayor, Patrick A. Collins, joined the Society in 1870. A native of Ireland, he came to Boston at 14 and shortly went west, where he worked in the mines. He returned to Boston at 22 and learned the upholstery trade, at the same time taking up politics and law. He was a member of the Legislature at 26, serving in both houses. He graduated from Harvard Law School in 1871, and served three terms in Congress (1882-6). He was chairman of the Democratic National Convention in 1888. With a choice of consular appointments, he chose London and served there without giving the English any justification for the concern which they felt at his appointment. Collins closed his political career with two terms as Mayor of Boston (1901-3). His name became a byword for integrity.

James Jeffrey Roche, who joined the Society in 1893, followed O'Reilly as editor of the 'Pilot'. Like O'Reilly he was a writer whose work appeared in the Atlantic, Scribners, and Harpers, the press of the intellectual

establishment of the day. He was a member of the St. Botolph club, and like O'Reilly was accepted in literary circles. He became American Consul at Geneva in 1904.

During the last half of the 19th century the Society seems to have been struggling to establish a purpose between the charitable tradition of the founders, need for ethnic identity and image, and the desire to be a local voice in political questions in Ireland.

The St. Patrick's dinner in 1857 required \$125 in Society funds. No charity was voted in 1858. In June of 1858 the constitution was amended to provide that no money should be paid out for any purpose except by vote of two thirds of the members present. In 1860 it was voted to conserve the Society's funds until its capital reached \$5000. There was strong opposition. An invitation to the Archbishop of New York to come to Boston and give a lecture for the Society's charity fund was declined. At this time the Society did justify Handlin's slur. No charity was dispensed for ten years from the Society funds, although on one occasion members subscribed \$23 for the relief of a "poor family." Some members stopped paying dues in protest of this policy.

By 1870 the capital had grown to \$5000, and contributions of \$100 were made to the St. Vincent de Paul Society and to the Home for Destitute Catholic Children. An appeal from the Hibernian Relief Society of Memphis--"in God's name send some relief to a suffering people"--at the time of a cholera epidemic, was responded to by a public subscription sponsored by the Society which raised \$500, a substantial part from outside the Society's membership. The dues collected that year amounted to \$98. Funds fell to the point where the treasurer said that nothing remained to be given away after expenses were paid, though in several years the expenses included a large deficit from the annual dinner.

One of the requests laid on the table at this time was from the British Consul, asking help for victims of the East India Revolt.

A new crisis in Ireland in 1880 resulted in another cancellation of the annual dinner and a contribution for relief in Ireland of \$1000 to be given to the Land League. There was a gradual increase in charity in the following years, on no particular plan. Assistance was given in several disasters outside of Boston and with increasing regularity to local institutions. The old custom of making small personal grants was still resorted to occasionally.

"The Story of the Irish in Boston" says of the Society at this time: "The charitable work of the Society is made up of small donations to tide over special emergencies, and is not in general of such a sort that any display could be made of it: still there are occasional contributions of five hundred or a thousand dollars at a time. The Society is not rich. If it had been wisely managed at its origin, its age should by this time have made it wealthy. A very large fraction of the annual income goes toward celebrating the anniversary of St. Patrick and satisfying the natural longing of Irishmen for the society of their countrymen."

In 1896 an arrangement was made in cooperation with the St. Vincent de Paul Society for an agent at the steamship docks to meet incoming immigrants, especially women, and to assist them in establishing contact with relatives, and if needed, to supply them with shelter. This agency, later conducted by the Catholic Charitable Bureau, was supported by the Society until the depression of the 1930's stopped the flow of immigration.

The proposal for a building constantly recurred in different forms, sometimes as a temporary refuge, or a reading room and library, or a focus for Irish activities in the city and a place to show the flag. In 1885 a committee recommended that the Society spend one hundred thousand dollars to erect a building. Legislation was passed (June 19, 1885) authorizing the Society to hold real and personal estate to the amount of two hundred thousand dollars and to issue bonds in that amount.

The building project led to the Society's annual ball, a fund-raising event. The first of these was held on January 13, 1886. It was, according to the newspapers of the time, a "brilliant gathering" of "distinguished people" and the ladies were "arrayed like the lilies of the field." The balls were an annual event for eleven years, until the last one produced a deficit.

The Society declined an invitation to join the British Society in celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the accession to the throne of Queen Victoria because "the Society knows of no action of Queen Victoria affecting Irish people which it can commend, and many inimical to them."

The ball was not the first evidence of interest in the social development of the Society. In December of 1871, at a slimly attended meeting it was voted to provide for ladies at the annual dinner. A shocked membership rallied to the threat, and a special meeting was called in February

to reconsider the question, and after prolonged discussion, reconsideration prevailed by a majority of two votes.

The pleasant tradition of the pots of shamrock on the table at the St. Patrick's Day dinner was instituted in 1893, when Mrs. John Boyle O'Reilly gave shamrocks to the Society for this purpose.

Speakers and musical programs were introduced at the meetings in 1898. Annual Ladies nights, consisting sometimes of a dinner and sometimes of a cultural program, were held with some interruptions from 1907 until 1930. In 1922 it was proposed that Ladies night be combined with the annual dinner. The Society membership was polled by postcard ballot and voted against any change in the traditional arrangement. The practice of inviting ladies to the quarterly meetings was started in 1937 and continues.

In 1924 a charity concert was held (December 7) for the benefit of the charity fund. Apparently the talent was donated, since the only expense of this nature mentioned was \$75 for an orchestra. This event was repeated in 1925, but was discontinued the following year because it was "too laborious for the return." It was voted instead to solicit the membership for a Christmas charity fund. Gifts were received from 237 members, totaling \$808. The dues had failed to keep up with the declining value of money and were relatively a fraction of what the founders had undertaken to assess themselves.

Striking out in another direction, a lecture in Irish Culture, open to the public was instituted in 1935 and continued the next year.

The Society's increasing interest in political events in Ireland was shown on a number of occasions. In 1880, under the leadership of John Boyle O'Reilly, the Society sponsored a public meeting to protest a proposal of the English government to solve the Irish Question by subsidizing emigration from Ireland to the United States and the Colonies. A few years later \$209 was voted for the Parnell Defense fund. The Boer rebellion was endorsed, and a telegram of support sent to Krueger. The interest continued into the new century. The Society joined Irish societies in New York, Charleston, and Savannah in urging President Wilson to promote the cause of self-determination for Ireland at the Paris Peace Conference in 1918. In 1926 resolutions were passed condemning the Immigrant Quota Act, and in 1928, the National Origins Act.

Probably the Society's most successful effort at image-making was the St. Patrick's Day dinner of 1912. The speaking guests included President Taft, Cardinal O'Connell, Governor Foss, and Mayor John F. Fitzgerald. This event proved to be so popular an attraction that it was possible to limit ticket sales to members who were current in their dues. This was a great boon to the treasurer, and new members applied by the hundreds in the months preceding the dinner. It was necessary to set a membership limit of 1200. Membership more than doubled in two years.

The dinner menu was hardly less notable than the guest list:

Dinner Menu, March 18, 1912

Soup

Broiled Shad

Sweetbread Patties

Larded Filet of Beef with Mushrooms

Roman Punch

Roast Jumbo Squab

Waldorf Salad

Ice Cream

Cakes

Coffee

The society settled into its third century as a mature and rather conservative group. A serious financial situation was weathered in the 1930's at a time of general crisis, and the society was established on a firm basis under the secretaryship of David Keohan.

In the last three decades a rather settled program has been followed. The emphasis upon ethnic image has become less with the growing maturity and solid position of the Irish in the Boston community. The Christmas Charity fund is contributed by the members each year, and distributed without fanfare to a broadly representative group of established charities in the Greater Boston Community.

The annual dinner continues to be the principal event of the year. The traditional toasts have been reduced to four, perhaps reflecting the lessened endurance of a new generation. They are answered by men of stature in the civil and religious worlds. Traditionally a Senator or other



Federal officer responds to the Toast "The United States of America". The Governor of the Commonwealth replies to that toast, and the Mayor for "The City of Boston". A leader in the field of Religion, Education, or Government responds to "The Day We Celebrate". Speakers in these years have included Senators, Ambassadors, Bishops, Governors, and a future President of the United States.

The Quarterly meetings are purely social, and guests, including ladies, are welcomed. They characteristically consist of a lecture on some topic of general interest, and usually a collation.

The membership had become more representative than ever before. The descendants of the founders, whose absence from the rolls James Boyd lamented at the Centennial are well represented. An association of "Gentlemen and others of the Irish Race", it has included among its members in recent years many of the leading business and professional men in the Boston area, as well as elected officials.

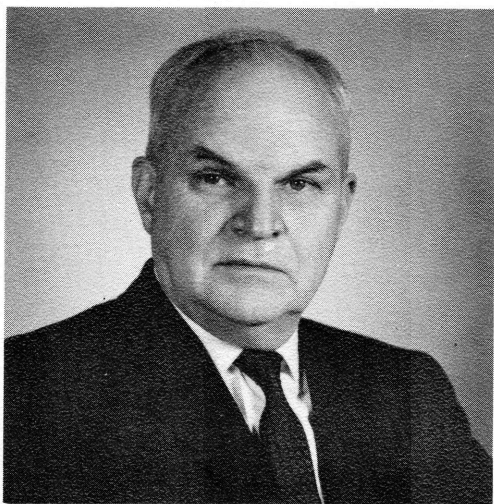
Among those descended from early members, none held his Irish heritage more dearly than Henry L. Shattuck, a descendent of Patrick Tracy. Treasurer for many years of Harvard University, he established there a chair of Irish Literature. He served the Charitable Irish Society for twelve years as Treasurer, and made the society a generous bequest.

The current (1973) Governor of the Commonwealth, Francis Sargent, and Mr. Elliot Richardson, Attorney General of the United States, now represent the line of Patrick Tracy in the society's membership. Samuel Eliot Morrison, eminent historian is descended from another member of the early years. Mr. Murray Forbes Jr., descended from Capt. Bennet Forbes of the "Jamestown" was elected President of the Society in 1949.

The Society achieved its most illustrious member with the election of John F. Kennedy to the Presidency of the United States in 1960. Its current membership includes Senator Edward Kennedy, and ex Senator Leverett Saltonstall.

In its history, the Society has mirrored the experience of the Irish in Boston.

*The Charitable Irish Society is indebted to Mr. Burke for his tireless effort in producing this History of the Society*



*Charles T. Burke*

*Elected President 1956*