A Study of 100 Postwar Irish Immigrants in the City of Chicago, 1953

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A STUDY OF 100 POSTWAR IRISH IMMIGRANTS
IN THE CITY OF CHICAGO, 1953

by

Patrick J. Dillon

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School
of Loyola University in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of Master of
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LIFE

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This is a study of a cultural group in Chicago which has not hitherto been the subject of research work in the field of sociology. Since the author came to Chicago two years ago, he has been very much in contact with the Irish people who have settled in the city. He has observed their way of life and heard them express themselves on their many problems. He has seen their successes and failures. He has been very close to the Irish immigrant in Chicago for two years. Until he became a graduate student at the Loyola University, this researcher had spent all his life in Ireland before coming to Chicago in 1951. He grew up in the same atmosphere as the immigrants studied; consequently, he is quite familiar with the background that they have known at home. Since coming here, the writer has had opportunity to observe them in this new life and hear their opinions on it, opinions which they have expressed freely to one who is also a recent Irish immigrant with almost everything in common with them.

During these past two years the author's interest has been stirred up in regard to their life, and the whole question of Irish immigration has become alive and of real interest to him in a manner that had never occurred before. This study is, then, in the first place an analysis of a group of recent immigrants, with regard to their background in Ireland and selected phases of their
existence in this city. The findings should prove interesting and informative, while serving at the same time to fill a gap in the field of immigrant study. The Irish immigrant group is sufficiently large and important to be studied as it constitutes a definite and sizable portion of Chicago's foreign-born population.

In the 1950 census, there were 30,555\(^1\) Irish-born people living in Chicago, a number which represents the sixth highest foreign-born national group. This thesis will not attempt to study the whole group but will confine its attention to a particular portion, which will be defined and explained shortly. While the group chosen for study may not constitute the same ratio in the total foreign-born population of the United States, it nevertheless constitutes a sufficiently large section of the Chicago community to warrant attention. The study, in illustrating the lives of recent Irish immigrants in Chicago, should be of some value to these immigrants themselves in so far as it will indicate various approaches to life in Chicago and point out successes and failures. In doing this, it will afford information which will be of possible assistance to them.

This may and should be of interest especially to the prospective immigrant who knows little or nothing about life here or what he is to expect on his arrival. To the degree that Chicago is typical of other American cities, much of what is true about the Irish immigrant here will hold in other cities.

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as well. It seems to the author that the question of Irish immigration is topical and is tending to receive more attention. This interest seems to have been aroused by a declining population in Ireland, brought about by late marriage, abstinence from marriage and the emigration of the youth of the country. The author is not, of course, qualified to give an authoritative and final opinion on the subject, but his topic deals in a limited way with the larger problem. The study of a group here in Chicago, while it cannot either prove or disprove these assumptions, should throw light on what seems to be an important problem for Ireland.

As stated above, the Irish-born population of Chicago in 1950 was 30,555. Obviously, for the purpose of a Master's thesis, it is impossible to study that group, firstly, because it is too large; secondly, because it is too varied both in age and degree of assimilation; and, thirdly, because it would be too difficult to get a representative sample. The author intends to study only those who have come to Chicago since the end of World War II. During the war years there was very little emigration from Ireland to America and consequently there was a break of at least five years in the continuity of migration. This, then, is a special sub-group and to a certain extent separated from the larger one at least in point of time.

In approaching this task, this researcher encountered some difficulties that should be mentioned. He found it impossible to determine with any degree of accuracy the exact extent of the Chicago group as there are no official statistics kept. After considerable trouble, he succeeded in obtaining 4,200 names of Irish people who came to Chicago since 1945. These names were obtained from the various Irish clubs, societies, and from the mailing lists
of the proprietors of Irish dance halls and entertainment centers. Obviously such a list is not exhaustive nor complete for the simple reason that all post-war immigrants are not included in these lists. Nevertheless, since the lists obtained were many and from all parts of the city, there is good reason to believe that they contained a majority of recent Irish immigrants at least.

It would be quite safe to conclude that perhaps two-thirds are on these rosters which are up-to-date, as many who volunteered opinions and are in a position to know stated that such is a very conservative estimate. One important difficulty in tabulating these names was to find the marital status of these people, as that information which is usually not listed on the rosters. Many have been married since the compilation of these lists, and, in the study of a cultural group such as this, it is important to know marital status as an index of assimilation.

In the study of this group the method used was the personal interview. For the purpose of that interview a 100-person sample of the whole group was made, sufficiently large to be representative and small enough to complete in the amount of time to be devoted to the research. This sample was drawn at random according to the sex distribution in the whole group and also according to geographical location in the city—divided for this purpose into three sections, namely South, West and North. To that sample the study will be confined. To the extent that it is representative of the whole group and within the limits of sampling error, the study and its findings will be true of the postwar Irish immigrant in Chicago. In the interviews the author used a schedule which was made as relevantly exhaustive as possible and to which on the whole the response was good. Various degrees of co-operation and readiness to answer questions
were shown by the respondents. In 68 cases the author received very good co-
operation, in 24 cases moderate co-operation and in 8 cases (all men) co-opera-
tion was bad and their attitude, while not one of hostility, might be described
as that of being on guard against inquisitiveness. Nevertheless, enough infor-
mation in all cases was received to justify stating that the author studied
rather thoroughly one hundred immigrants. The interviews of these immigrants
were begun in May, 1955, and completed in September of the same year.
CHAPTER II

HISTORY OF IRISH IMMIGRATION TO THE UNITED STATES

Before beginning the thesis proper, in which the writer will set forth, analyze and interpret his findings, he will present a brief historical survey of Irish immigration to America in general and to Chicago in particular in order to acquaint the reader with the background of the Irish immigrant to Chicago.

Apart from Indians, all Americans are migrants or descendants of migrants who have come since the days of Columbus.

The discovery of America by Christopher Columbus in 1492 did not bequeath it to Ferdinand or Isabella, nor to Spain nor even to Europe, but rather it was given to all humanity, for the remainder of time to come.2

The Irish Annals make mention and there is a strong tradition corroborated by a similar one in Scandinavian countries and portrayed in their early writings that St. Brendan, an Irish Saint, (500-600 A. D.) having made two voyages, discovered America but did not return.

After the discovery of America, the Spanish were the leaders in its colonization and as early as 1565 they were established in Florida. They were followed in 1570 by the French to Carolina and Canada. In 1580 Sir Walter

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Raleigh of England settled 180 immigrants at Roanoke, Virginia. In 1607 the English colony at Jamestown began; 1629 saw the founding of Plymouth and 1634, Baltimore. The first Irish who found permanent homes in America were Catholic patriots banished by Oliver Cromwell to the Barbados in 1649 after the failure of the Confederation of Kilkenny in that same year. In this island and in neighboring Montserrat, the Celtic language was commonly spoken at the end of the 18th century.

During the last quarter of the 17th century there does not appear to have been any considerable emigration from Ireland due to the fact that the Restoration brought Charles II to the throne of England and with him a relaxation of the persecution and bitterness against Irish Catholics. The Irish had a chance to settle down to make a living again. This respite was short lived, and after the Revolution in 1688 and with the reign of William and Mary conditions in Ireland became worse. Industry and manufacture of goods in Ireland was discouraged and prevented where possible. In that period (1690 to 1700), 100,000 emigrants left the country according to contemporary estimates. In a lecture by Mr. William R. Grace, Mayor of New York, February 21, 1886, he stated:

Prior to the American Revolution there was a steady tide of Irish immigration to America but nothing compared to the volume of the 19th century. During the later part of the 17th century shiploads of Irishmen, women and children came to the colonies, including New England, under conditions which left them no better than slaves. No trustworthy knowledge about numbers is obtainable, nothing better than contemporary estimates for isolated years but probably less than 5,000 Irish settlers per annum.3

In the early 18th century Pennsylvania was a favorite objective with the Irish as there was less persecution there. In New England prejudice was strong against the Irish, but nevertheless great numbers came to Boston and parts of Connecticut, and there was an early Irish settlement as Concord, Massachusetts, in 1725. Earlier (1723) there was an Irish settlement in Maine called Belfast. The towns of Limerick and Dublin were established in New England before the middle of the 18th century. In Pennsylvania and Massachusetts the Irish were not localized and did not therefore take that distinctive part in colonization which marked the English, Dutch, Spanish and French.

Thomas D'Arcy McGee states that the Irish outnumbered other nationalities 10 to 1 in the group of immigrants who arrived at Philadelphia in 1729. The English and Welsh numbered 267. There were 43 from Scotland and 543 from Germany, while there were 5,655 from Ireland.\(^4\)

The colony of Maryland was founded by Roman Catholics and at an early date attracted many Irish, a notable family being the Carrolls who came in 1689, from which family came the first American bishop. The Irish population in Virginia began in 1710 along the Blue Ridge and in 1737 there were considerable Irish colonies at Williamsburg and Camden in South Carolina. In 1746 the first Irish reached Kentucky. The Irish came early to New York and immigration to that city has continued unceasingly throughout the years and today it has the largest Irish population in America, as well as receiving annually the

greatest number of Irish immigrants.

According to Mr. Grace, from 1820 to 1850, the minimum Irish emigration was 218,626, divided as follows:

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<td>1820-1830</td>
<td>27,106</td>
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<tr>
<td>1831-1840</td>
<td>29,188</td>
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In the ten years ending 1880, 379,368 Irish landed in New York. According to the 1880 census there were 1,854,571 people of Irish birth in America. Of this number 1,126,367 (almost two-thirds) were located in five States—Massachusetts, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania. In addition, 391,632 were scattered throughout eight of the western States from Michigan to Kansas; more than one-half of these were in Ohio and Illinois. About 85 per cent of the remainder were scattered throughout the Eastern States, California and Minnesota. It is worth noting that all these are states which have big cities.5

Individual Irishmen appeared early on the scene in Illinois. They came in a military capacity, and it has been said of them that "Having no government of their own to serve they served others".6 During the French occupation it was an Irishman who commanded the Illinois country, vested with almost vice-regal power in the name of King Louis XIV of France—Chevalier

5 Grace, "The Irish in America," 15.

Charles McCarthy. Born in Ireland in 1706, he became an officer in the French Army and was sent to Louisiana in 1731 and was made Commander of Fort Chartres in 1752.

Before Irish settlements in Illinois began, many such Irishmen were there either as officers or soldiers in colonial armies, and the same is true of the first Irish in Chicago. Modern Chicago had its beginning with the building of Fort Dearborn in 1803. The builder and first commander of Fort Dearborn was Captain John Whistler, a native of Ireland. John Kinzie, generally regarded as the first resident of Chicago, arrived there after the Fort had been established. Whistler was commander until 1810.7

The first major wave of foreign immigrants to Chicago were Irish who, so to speak, spilled over into the area from the East coast. During the 1830's a steady stream of Irish immigrants came towards Chicago. The history of that movement is mostly that of the development of public works in the State of Illinois. Most of these people were of the poorer class, ready for the most menial work and they far outnumbered all other foreign elements. An article dealing with that period states:

As far back as 1837 Michael Healy now of Chicago who in that year settled in Alton found his compatriots to be the most considerable new element in Illinois and with few exceptions of the working class. "We were all poor then" he said a few days ago when recalling his early experiences, "Irish and everybody else. There was not a man in Illinois who could put his hand on more than 10,000 dollars. We were just pioneers and every man was a worker."8

7 Ibid., 7.
8 "The Irish in Chicago," Chicago Tribune, April 19, 1874, 10.
The Illinois-Michigan canal, begun about 1830, employed thousands and many Irish came from the East to earn their living. In 1840 there was a slackening of public works, and most of the Irishmen settled on the land as squatters. They prospered so well at agriculture that they stayed on the land even when renewed prosperity brought a revival of construction work later. Many Irish received considerable areas of land in lieu of payment for their work. Thomas D'Arcy McGee—American-Irish poet, writer and patriot—at the time of his death a leading statesman in Canada, wrote the following verses about 1860:

Tis ten long years since Eileen Bawn
Adventured with her Irish boy
Across the sea and settled in
A prairie farm in Illinois.

Sweet waves the sea of summer flowers
Around our wayside set so coy,
Where Eileen sings away the hours
That light my task in Illinois.

The Irish homes of Illinois,
The happy homes of Illinois
No landlord there
Can cause despair
Nor blight our fields in Illinois.9

In the 1840's thousands of Irishmen driven out of their own country by the great famine responded to the call of the Midwest and from that time until the railroad system was practically complete, Irish labor continued to be the main reliance of contractors. As early as 1840 when Chicago was only a community of 4,500, with little apparent promise of future greatness, there was a strong Irish settlement in the town.

The first organization of the Irish in Chicago in sympathy with the Irish political movement in the Old Country took place in 1842 when an association was formed having as its purpose the repeal of the Act of Union according to which Ireland was ruled by England. Prior to this year the Montgomery Guards, the first military association of Irish Americans in Illinois, were formed with a Captain Kelly as its first commander. The first public demonstration was a procession on St. Patrick's Day in 1843, ending up at St. Mary's where Mass was celebrated.

In a census of 1843 it was reported that Chicago had 773 residents of Irish birth. As the years went on the Irish population in the city grew, greatly increased in number by the wave of emigration which began in Ireland after the great famine of 1846-1847 and continued for many years. The Chicago Tribune in 1874 described it thus:

...the most dreadful wholesale starvation of modern times, unredeemed by one deed of daring on the part of a wretched people dragooned by "law" and cowed by a despotic Priesthood. The rocket like glare of Young Ireland10 blazing for a moment amid the clouds of the mountain tops and sinking forever from Ireland's sight in the convict settlements of the Southern seas.

Then the greatest national exodus that has flooded the earth since "thru paved sea and desert waste the pilgrim of Sinai led the people from bondage, or since retiring before the Baltic floods the barbarians of the North made havoc of ancient civilisation, and a race richly endowed by nature with virtues and vices, the former of which were repressed by the conqueror and the latter of which were developed by the same conqueror's vicious system of state-craft as undeniably displayed by every dealing of haughty England with her unfortunate neighbor."11

10 Irish Revolutionary Movement to overthrow British Rule in Ireland, 1848. It was a failure.

11 "The Irish in Chicago," Chicago Tribune, April 19, 1874, 12.
As the Irish population increased in Chicago, various organisations and clubs were established for patriotic, charitable and social purposes. As the same is true among the present-day Irish community, the author will touch briefly on the more important movements.

In 1858 an organization called "United Sons of Erin" was established with the twofold object of local work among the Irish in Chicago and aid to the Old Country. Its existence was not of long duration and its work as a benevolent society passed to the Ancient Order of Hibernians when that organization extended its workings to Illinois in 1865. Through the A.O.H. it continues to the present day. Thomas Francis Meagher, an Irish patriot deported to Van Diemen's land, escaped to America in 1860 and began to organize the Irish people with a view of stirring up national sentiment to help the cause of freedom at home. A patriotic society was formed, the Emmet Monument Society. The Clan na Gael Guards, established at this time, became very powerful in Chicago. Their aim was also patriotic—to help Ireland gain her freedom. This organization still exists but is not so powerful nor popular now. Another organization worth noting is the Emmet Guards, military in character, with Irish patriotic arms. These answered the call of the Union in 1864 and were admitted into the army as a separate unit on sending a special petition to the President. This was the Irish Brigade, which, with their leader, Colonel Mulligan, made their heroism at Lexington a matter of history.

The Irish group at the end of the 19th century was the largest foreign-born population in Chicago. In 1850 there were 6,000 Irish in Chicago and in 1890 Chicagoans of Irish birth and ancestry numbered 215,534. In 1950 the Irish-born population of Chicago had declined to 30,555.
In the early days of Chicago there were strong Irish settlements on the near South and West sides of the city and also North of the Loop. But as Chicago's population increased over the years, Irish people moved from those neighborhoods and settled away from the center of the city. Today the strongest centers of Irish people are found nearer the outskirts of the city, with the majority on the South side.

The Irish were the first immigrants to Chicago, and they were followed by the Scandinavians, who often tarried in Chicago instead of going to Minnesota as so many of them did. In 1880 the first wave of southern and eastern European immigrants came to Chicago, the latest being the Poles. The Poles now form the largest single national element in Chicago's foreign-born population. According to the 1950 census, the ten largest groups of the present foreign-born population are: Polish, 94,009; German, 56,635; Italian, 54,954; U.S.S.R., 52,879; Swedish, 31,104; Irish, 30,555; Czecho-Slovakian, 24,465; Lithuanian, 23,611; Austrian, 21,002; English and Welsh, 15,189.12

A significant feature of Chicago's population has been a steady decline of the foreign-born population. In 1949 a spot survey found that the population of foreign-born in the city fell from 673,000, or 22 per cent of the total population in 1940, to 478,000, or 16 per cent in 1949. In 1940 the Irish population in Chicago totaled 35,156. By 1950 there was a decline of approximately 11 per cent.

Having treated briefly of Irish immigration to Chicago to the

12 United States Census of Population, 97.
present day, it is in order also to set forth in short form a few points on the status of Irish people in Chicago in order to understand their background here.

In the early years of immigration, especially in the middle of the 19th century, great numbers came to Chicago, driven out of Ireland because of the famine. These were mostly very poor, uneducated people who had been oppressed, persecuted and slandered by the English. Being Catholics they were subject to much bigotry and discrimination. At the middle of the century the Irish immigrant in America was looked upon much as the Negro is today. He was the community's scapegoat. A Chicago newspaper of that time went to great pains to point out in its editorial that the Irishman was less acceptable than the Negro in the American community. It portrayed the typical Irishman as being uneducated and uncivilized:

Breaking heads for opinion's sake is his practice. The born criminal and pauper of the civilized world and withal the innocent victim of the statecraft of England and of the Priestcraft of Rome, a wronged, abused, pitiful spectacle of a man capable of better things, punished to hell by that abomination against common sense called Roman Catholicism and that outrage on political decency called American Democracy. -- What else does he know? To compare him with an intelligent free-man would be to insult the latter. . . . The country has survived Irish immigration--the worst with which any country has even been inflicted . . . . The danger of miscegenation of white and black is as remote as that the Irishman will succeed in making his way by marriage into the American family by which he is abhorred.13

It is true that there was considerable rivalry among the Irish themselves, based on the old clan system which goes back to the beginning of Irish

13 The Chicago Evening Post, September 9, 1868.
historically, the explanation of which is not relevant here. But much of that was carried on here and had a very harmful effect on the Irish because it prevented their union for their own betterment and establishment in a new country.

All Irish immigrants in those days were not driven by economic necessity; many left for political reasons to escape the wrath of an alien and hostile government. Most of this latter group were fairly wealthy, well-educated, and free from the threat of punishment. With their love of culture and liberality of sentiment, they became loyal and prominent American citizens.

Another writer of that period has this to say:

It may perhaps be too much to assert that the transplanting of an Irishman from his own soil to a new country and a healthier atmosphere has been of unmixed benefit to him in every sense; but in one respect his improvement is unquestionable—he is above that shame-faced snobishness which he too often displays at home. It is not everyone in the old country who will make the story of his own elevation in life a matter of honest pride . . . . People rarely migrate to a strange country and face the hardships incidental to a new life, from the mere love of change; nor do the comfortable and well-to-do usually quit their agreeable homes from a spirit of adventure. Necessity is the grand stimulus which impels the European to sever with rude hand his old ties of home and kindred and quit his native land to cross the ocean in search of a new home. Of all people in the world the Irish are—or rather were—most intensely, even passionately, attached to the land of their birth and the least willing to leave it for another country whatever its attractions. But the mass of the Irish who quitted the shores of the old country had no choice left to them; what the process of law, too often accompanied with the pomp and parade of armed force, but partially effected, was accomplished by the resistless influence of blight, famine and pestilence. These were the chief compelling causes of that rush across the ocean which has been one of the most extraordinary phenomena of the present century and which may yet bring about events well worthy of the gravest consideration of the patriot and statesman.14

One point that is worth noting about the Irish immigrant at this

period is that on leaving a rural atmosphere and agricultural work at home he shunned both in this country for work in the city to which he was unsuited because of inexperience. The author quoted above and below stresses this point.

In no country have the peasantry exhibited a stronger or more passionate attachment to the land than in that country from which myriads have gone and are still going and yet the strange fact and indeed the serious evil is that, notwithstanding the vast majority of those who emigrate from Ireland to America have been exclusively engaged in the cultivation of the soil - as farmers, farm servants, or outdoor laborers - so many of this class remain in the cities and towns for which they are not best suited rather than go into the country for which they are specially suited; where they would be certain to secure for themselves and their families, not merely a home, but comfort and independence. It is almost impossible to exaggerate the evil consequences of this unhappy tendency of the Irish to congregate in the large towns of America, but why they have hitherto done so may be accounted for without much difficulty. Irish immigrants of the peasant and laboring type were generally poor, and after defraying their first expenses on landing had little left to enable them to push their way into the country in search of employment as was best suited to their knowledge and capacity, so splendid seemed the results that it at once predisposed them in favor of the city. The glamour and company of the city life helped to kill the loneliness and the chance was lost and the simple, innocent countryman to whom the trees of the virgin forest were nodding their branches in friendly invitation and the blooming prairie expanded its fruitful bosom in vain, became the denizen of the city, for which he was unqualified by training, by habit and by association. 15

As time went on the lot of the Irish immigrant improved and he was no longer marked out as the object of derision and oppression - he had become established. Since towards the end of the 19th century the Irish were the largest foreign-born group in Chicago. Being Irish was no longer a hindrance. Mr. William Grace, as previously noted, in a lecture given in 1886 said of

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15 Ibid., 24.
the Irish:

They have shown powers of adaptability to new conditions which have secured to them full recognition, while at the same time they have preserved their race individuality to such extent as to have profoundly influenced the course of English politics in relation to the home country.16

At the present time, however, it is significant to note that of all the national groups in Chicago, the Irish alone seem to form the least cohesive group. Their assimilation is virtually complete. The Polish people have the National Alliance; the Italians their welfare councils; the Latins, their fraternal societies, etc. The Irish on the other hand have no comparable alliance but are rather represented by a multiplicity of organizations and societies without any integral purpose or policy, which may be explainable in terms of the comparatively recent immigration of the Poles, Italians and others.

The Irish and Irish-American groups today are far outnumbered by other national groups, especially Polish and Bohemian. In point of fact, however, the Irish-American population seems to enjoy an influence in excess of that possessed by any other national group. They are found to be prominent in all spheres of Chicago life.

16 Grace, "The Irish in America," 27.
CHAPTER III

PRELIMINARY DESCRIPTION OF 100 POSTWAR IRISH IMMIGRANTS TO CHICAGO

The author has stated in his introduction that he was able to locate the names of four thousand postwar Irish immigrants in Chicago. This number does not represent all postwar Irish immigrants in the city, but it represents approximately two-thirds of the total number, as far as can be verified. These people are scattered all over the city in the various residential areas. They are in many different kinds of work. They have different home backgrounds, having come from different parts of Ireland and from different types of families. They have come here at different times over the postwar period and are of different ages. The group, therefore, presents a picture of varying contrasts and details, but its constituents have three things in common—their Irish birth and background and their immigrant status in an American city.

At the outset the author shall endeavor to present this picture in statistical form, setting forth an analysis of the group in different breakdowns with interpretations of each. In the group of four thousand there appeared a sex distribution of seventeen men to every thirteen women; therefore the random sample of one hundred persons includes fifty-seven men and forty-three women. In presenting statistical information on that sample, which

19
is the subject of the study, each group will be treated separately.

Ireland is divided into thirty-two counties, six of which are ruled by England, namely, the six northeastern counties in the country. A brief resume of Ireland's population and political division will give a clearer picture of the immigrants' background and place of origin to the reader.

At the census of population in April 1951 the population of the twenty-six counties of Ireland was 2,960,593; the population of the six northern counties was 1,370,933. Ireland's total population was 4,333,526 at the time of the latest census. In 1951 the total population was distributed as follows in the different cities, towns and rural areas: Dublin city, which is the Nation's capital, contained 634,000, over 21 per cent of the total population of the country; 593,000 or 20 per cent resided in ninety-three other towns with population of 1,500 or over; 205,000, 6.9 per cent, resided in 693 smaller towns and villages. The remainder of the population, the so-called "country or rural population" i.e., living outside the smallest "cluster of twenty homes or more," totals less than 1,529,000 or 51.6 per cent of the total population of the twenty-six counties.
PLACE OF ORIGIN OF 100 POSTWAR IRISH IMMIGRANTS TO CHICAGO

AND DENSITY OF POPULATION IN IRELAND 1951 - CENSUS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mayo</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kerry</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Galway</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leitrim</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clare</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cork</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roscommon</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limerick</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kilkenny</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monaghan</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antrim</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waterford</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tipperary</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Westmeath</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cavan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>57</strong></td>
<td><strong>43</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

County Density of Population (per 1,000):

- Mayo: 11.0
- Kerry: 12.2
- Galway: 12.2
- Clare: 11.5
- Limerick: 12.3
- Tipperary: 12.7
- Waterford: 16.5
- Cork: 18.5
- Offaly: 10.6
- Leix: 10.6
- Wicklow: 12.6
- Wexford: 15.4
- Kilkenny: 12.8
- Carlow: 10.2
- Dublin City: 304.2
- **Belfast**
TABLE I

100 POSTWAR IMMIGRANTS TO CHICAGO, BY COUNTY OF ORIGIN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County of Origin</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mayo</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kerry</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Galway</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leitrim</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clare</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cork</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limerick</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roscommon</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kilkenny</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monaghan</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antrim</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tipperary</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cavan</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Westmeath</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waterford</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>57</strong></td>
<td><strong>43</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this group sampled fifteen of Ireland's thirty-two counties are represented, as listed in Table I. Although seventeen other counties are not included, it does not mean that there is no emigration from these counties;
rather, it does suggest that fewer people leave those places for Chicago. About two-thirds of the group come from three counties. Significantly, there is no one included from Dublin, the country's capital which at the present time represents twenty-one per cent of Ireland's total population.

Most of these people have parents living in Ireland and only in a few cases has the oldest member of the family emigrated, giving up the right to inheritance (See Table III). In the instances where the oldest member of the family left home, he or she was one of a large family (six children or over in all cases), and in each case both parents are still living in Ireland. The majority of families from which these immigrants originated number over five children and thus may be said to come principally from large families. Only eleven have come from families of three children or less which is more than the average family size in this country. The majority of these lived in rural districts where large families are common.

**TABLE II**

100 POSTWAR IRISH IMMIGRANTS TO CHICAGO, BY POSITION IN FAMILY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position in Family</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oldest member of family</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate member of family</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youngest member of family</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE III

100 POSTWAR IMMIGRANTS TO CHICAGO, BY PARENTS LIVING OR DEAD

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parents living or dead</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Both parents living</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both parents dead</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father dead</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother dead</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>57</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When the writer inquired of the immigrants about their families, they stated that they had so many brothers or so many sisters; they never included their mother or father in this statement. Later in the conversation they would go on to tell me about their parents. It is worth noting here that thirty-eight of these immigrants came from families of seven children and over. In the case of four men, their mothers had been immigrants in this country at one time; the fathers of nine men had been here prior to settling down in Ireland, while in fourteen instances the father had spent some time in England. The mothers of three girls have been in America and one girl's mother has been to England; fathers of six girls have been in this country and four have been to England. Both parents of one man are living in Chicago at the present time and intend to remain here.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of children in family</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the group studied it was found that the family background was rural in the cases of forty-eight men and thirty-nine women; nine men and four women were from a town or city. In rural areas the parents of forty-one men were farmers, four are sons of laborers, who do not own land but live in the country, doing manual work there for wages, three men are sons of school-
teachers from the country. Three of those with urban backgrounds come from cities with a population of ten thousand or over and six from smaller towns. All except one of these come from laboring class families who do not own their own business. Four women come from urban areas, three of these are from small towns and one from the city. Thirty-three of those from rural districts are daughters of farmers and four are laborers' daughters while two are from families of schoolteachers. In the whole group, eighty-seven per cent came from a rural background and seventy-four of these came from a farm background, while only thirteen came from an urban background. For most of these people, therefore, immigration means a complete change in environment. For those who have been reared on farms, it might be said to be the abandoning of a familiar mode of life and the adoption of a completely new one.

TABLE V

74 POSTWAR IRISH IMMIGRANTS TO CHICAGO, BY SIZE OF FAMILY FARM IN IRELAND

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size of Farm</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Over 50 acres</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 - 49 acres</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 - 29 acres</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 20 acres</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>41</strong></td>
<td><strong>33</strong></td>
<td><strong>74</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The study further showed that twenty had emigrated to England prior to arriving in Chicago. In many cases the individual left Ireland during the
war, when it was very difficult to come to America because of the danger involved in traveling and difficulty in obtaining transportation. Eleven men and two women had gone to England before 1945 and left there as soon as possible after the war. While in England, the men in the group were employed as follows: four did construction work; two worked in transportation; one was a motor mechanic; two were employed on the docks. Three of the women worked in hospitals training as nurses, none of them completing the course; two were domestic servants. The whole group worked in cities. Two of the men were married to Irish girls while in England and came here soon afterwards.

TABLE VI

20 POSTWAR IRISH IMMIGRANTS TO CHICAGO, BY LENGTH OF TIME PREVIOUSLY SPENT IN ENGLAND

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years in England</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In respect to age, the 100 immigrants ranged from nineteen to forty-one years at the time of the interview. Sixty-eight were under thirty years of age.

**TABLE VII**

100 POSTWAR IRISH IMMIGRANTS TO CHICAGO, BY AGE AT TIME OF INTERVIEW

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The group studied cannot be said to be an educated one; but rather a group of laborers, for the most part not fitted for skilled or technical work or to work in specialized and professional fields. Six have gone to school since coming to Chicago, four receiving a high school diploma, namely, two girls and two men. One man has gone to college and obtained a degree in economics, while another has studied at a business school for two years and secured himself a good position as a result of his training.

### TABLE VIII

100 POSTWAR IRISH IMMIGRANTS TO CHICAGO, BY EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education received</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grammar school education</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical school education</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part high school education</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full high school education</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part college education</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part seminary education</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Very few of these people have come here during the past two years. In fact ninety per cent of them had already come by the end of 1951. The vast majority, therefore, have two years experience in the city and to a certain extent, can be said to have settled down in the city. Five men among the group studied have lived elsewhere in the United States before coming to Chicago. One came to New York in 1948 and to Chicago in 1951, another came
to Springfield, Massachusetts in 1951 and after six months moved to Chicago. Two arrived in Los Angeles in 1951, and came here in 1952 and 1953 respectively and yet another who went to Los Angeles in 1949 moved to Chicago during the following year. One woman who arrived in Cleveland in 1950 came here in 1952, while another who immigrated to Boston in 1949 came to Chicago the following year.

Various reasons have impelled immigrants to choose one city in the United States in preference to another and while it is safe to say that the opportunity to earn a living is the most important consideration for any immigrant, it is a noticeable fact that young people from Ireland come to that city in America where they have some close relative. In the group studied it was found that only eight of the total number, namely seven men and one woman have no relative in Chicago. Sixty-nine immigrants have either aunts or uncles living in the city and the other twenty-three have relatives other than aunts and uncles here.

**TABLE IX**

**100 POSTWAR IRISH IMMIGRANTS TO CHICAGO, BY DATE OF ARRIVAL**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of arrival</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1946</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1947</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1949</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1952</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1953</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The economic status of the immigrant is most important in order to understand his life here in Chicago. Such a picture is difficult to portray completely in statistics. The subject requires a fuller treatment and explanation, which will be given in chapter IV of this study. The writer set down here with as much accuracy as possible the type of work each one was engaged in at the time of interview. He specifies "at the time of interview", because it was found that changing jobs is not uncommon amongst them. Since their work is not specialized, except in a few cases, they go from one type of work to another, in order to increase their wages or to obtain a more congenial or suitable job. As has been pointed out already, this group has come here within the past seven years. For many of them, Chicago was the first city they lived or worked in; consequently, it took considerable moving around before some found the job they liked and finally became adjusted.

It has not been stated here what wages the immigrant earns, as the whole economic picture of the Irish immigrant in Chicago will be treated later in my study. Then their financial status will be given also. The listing of occupations in the foregoing table is not specific and detailed as such a listing would void the purpose of the table and confuse the reader.
### TABLE X

57 POSTWAR IMMIGRANTS TO CHICAGO, BY OCCUPATION 1953

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Males</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Factory, mill or foundry work (non-skilled)</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stationary engineers or janitor work</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bricklaying and plastering</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation, C.T.A. and Railroad work</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motor mechanics and skilled factory help</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carpentry</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White collar work, office, etc.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Truck driving</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operating an indoor elevator</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Painting and decorating</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manual non-skilled labor (Construction)</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot; &quot; &quot; &quot; (Gas Company)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot; &quot; &quot; &quot; (Railroad Yards)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot; &quot; &quot; &quot; (Food Stores)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>57</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


### TABLE XI

43 POSTWAR IMMIGRANTS TO CHICAGO, BY OCCUPATION 1965

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Restaurant work (Waitress)</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office work</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food store service</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nursing</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factory work (non-skilled)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic service</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operating an elevator - building</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone company</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housewives</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>45</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TABLE XII

100 POSTWAR IRISH IMMIGRANTS TO CHICAGO, BY MARITAL STATUS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Married</th>
<th>Widowed</th>
<th>Single</th>
<th>Engaged</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
<td>29</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>30</strong></td>
<td><strong>1</strong></td>
<td><strong>50</strong></td>
<td><strong>19</strong></td>
<td><strong>90</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Eleven of the men who are married have Irish-American wives, while seven are married to Irish-born girls and two were married to Irish girls in England before coming here. Six men are engaged to Irish-American girls and four to girls born in Ireland. Ten of the married women have Irish-born husbands; one is married to an Irish-American and one to an American of German descent. Seven girls are engaged to Irish immigrants and two to Irish-American men. In the group studied, there were no mixed marriages or any indication of such. Each member of the group is a Roman Catholic.

TABLE XIII

30 POSTWAR IRISH IMMIGRANTS TO CHICAGO, BY FAMILY SIZE 1953

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of children</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total having children</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Childless</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married total</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup> A widow, the mother of two children, is not listed here.
TABLE XIV
DURATION OF MARRIAGE OF THE CHILDLESS, 1963

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 1 year</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;  2 &quot; s</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;  3 &quot; s</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;  5 &quot; s</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>8</strong></td>
<td><strong>6</strong></td>
<td><strong>14</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All these immigrants who are married or engaged intend to make their homes here and to become American citizens, if they have not already done so. Six girls and three men, all single, stated that they intended to return to Ireland and live there. Only nine per cent intend to return to the homeland for permanent residence while ninety-one per cent intend to live in Chicago. From these figures, it is not logical to conclude that all the group or all Irish immigrants in Chicago are so satisfied with what is offered them here that they are induced thereby to make a permanent home away from their native land. This may be true in some cases, but there are other influences at work to keep the Irish immigrant here, the greatest of which I would say, is the uncertainty of making a living if they were to return home. Thirty per cent of the group studied are married and present indications suggest that fifty per cent will be married within a year. Only two of these immigrants, who are married, own their own homes. Those women who are married and have children
do not work. Six married women work and all are childless. Two are waitresses, one is a secretary, one a nurse and one works for the telephone company. Ten men and twelve women have returned to Ireland for a visit since coming here. Two of the men and two women are now married, while four of these men and six of the women are engaged.

TABLE XV

100 POSTWAR IRISH IMMIGRANTS, BY LOCATION IN CHICAGO 1953

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>South side of the city</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>57</strong></td>
<td><strong>43</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The writer has endeavoured in this chapter to give the reader a general picture of the group studied by breaking it down under various headings. All the information collected in the study is not contained in this chapter, because much of it cannot be put in statistical form. Nevertheless, the most important points of information concerning the Irish immigrant are contained in the various tables. In the remaining chapters the writer will discuss further and in greater detail the background of the Irish immigrant before leaving Ireland, dwelling more on the stories of these people themselves and adding his own observations. He will treat in detail also, the same immigrants in Chicago, their difficulties and successes, their likes and dis-
likes and in general their attitudes to the American way of life. This chapter is, therefore, a general picture of the postwar Irish immigrant to Chicago.
CHAPTER IV

THE IMMIGRANT'S BACKGROUND IN IRELAND

In this chapter the author will deal with the native background of the recent Irish immigrant to Chicago. He believes that a few elementary remarks on Ireland's geographical structure will help the reader to understand better the country of origin and consequently the immigrant's past environment.

Ireland is not large, compared with most other countries. It covers 32,585 square miles. America contains roughly 3,000,000 square miles, so that ninety-two Irelands could be tucked into one America, with some to spare. From north to south the greatest land distance is 306 miles and from east to west, 182 miles. No part of Ireland is more than sixty miles from the sea. The coastline is 2,100 miles long and it is heavily indented, especially on the south and west coasts. Mountains and hills occur for the most part along or near the coastal areas, with relatively flat land in the interior. The average Irishman, when asked about the country's climate, will probably say that it is always raining or nearly so. That is a popular misconception. It does rain quite a bit in Ireland, but the rainfall, though frequent, is mostly light. The average yearly rainfall in Dublin City and district is twenty-eight inches, in the north-east, central and east central Ireland, thirty-eight to forty inches and in the south and west Ireland, forty to fifty inches. During the summer months the average day temperature in Ireland is sixty-five to seventy

38
degrees. The spring and autumn temperature is between fifty-five and sixty degrees. In the south and west the temperature seldom drops below fifty-five degrees. On the whole, the Irish climate is equable, and the country escapes the violent extremes of hot and cold which is experienced by many other countries. Geographical position favors it, thus the cold Siberian winds which cross the great land mass of Europe and Asia have largely spent themselves before they reach Ireland; on the other hand, the comparatively warm westerly winds from the Atlantic, as well as the Gulf Stream, tend to raise the average temperature above those experienced in England and in the countries of Europe.

The area of Ireland is less than twenty million acres, and more than half (eleven million) are devoted to agriculture. Over half of the country's population of three million people live on the land, and about eighty per cent of the country's total exports consists of agricultural products. Ireland is thus predominantly an agricultural country where rural problems are national problems and where the manner in which rural life in its many manifestations is organized has an important bearing on the entire national economy.

The foregoing is a brief sketch of the homeland of immigrants studied in the city of Chicago. From these people the author has heard many things concerning their respective districts and homes. They told about their childhood and school days in Ireland, the fathers, mothers and dear ones they have left behind. In many cases they could not name one definite reason for leaving but in almost all cases it was a repetition of a story which has long been a part of Irish life; namely, young ambitious people leaving for a better life, not so much because they wanted to but because the land that gave them birth did not have the wherewithal to furnish them with the living standard they
had heard and read about in another land and which they wanted for themselves. In the course of his study of these people there were many things the author remembered about his own native place and about the young folks with whom he grew up. There was a definite similarity, as many of these, too, have crossed the sea to earn their living. In the remainder of this chapter he will set down this information which, coupled with his own experiences and observations, should prove to be an accurate picture of the background of Chicago's recent Irish immigrant.

1. PLACE OF ORIGIN

One hundred immigrants have been studied, fifty-seven of which are men and forty-three women. This group comes from fifteen different counties in Ireland. In all, Ireland has thirty-two counties so that less than one-half the number is represented here. In chapter III, page 21, a listing is given of the different counties represented and the number from each one. In this group three counties predominate; namely, Mayo, Kerry and Galway, making up sixty-four per cent of the total. Two counties, Mayo and Kerry, comprise together fifty per cent or one-half the total number. This shows that in the sample the majority of recent Irish immigrants to Chicago are from these counties. Among the Irish community in the city this is also the popular estimation. In the group studied, Galway has fourteen per cent, Leitrim coming next with seven per cent, Clare having six per cent, Cork having five per cent and the others combined making up eighteen per cent of the total.

The majority of these immigrants come from a certain part of Ireland, from counties in the west and southwest coast, Cork, Kerry, Clare, Galway,
Mayo and Leitrim. All these counties have one thing in common; namely, that there is a large proportion of poor land in each one. Kerry, Mayo and Galway have the highest and largest mountain ranges in Ireland, while strangely enough all these are famous for their beautiful scenery, such as Killarney and Dingle peninsula in Kerry, Connemara in Galway and Croagh Patrick and Cong in Mayo. While thousands of overseas visitors come annually to visit these places the natives leave in great numbers because they find it hard to make a living in the barren surroundings. In parts of these counties Nature is a hard master where the brown bog affords poor feeding to livestock and the rocky fields do not yield easily to cultivation. In the poorer parts of these counties the people own small farms of poor quality land from which it is difficult to make a living. A boy from County Kerry said of the farm his father had:

Our farm was about twenty-five acres, only five acres of it were fit for raising crops. The rest was on the side of the mountain, was rocky and had as much heather as grass. We raised sheep and had two cows from which we got enough milk for the family. The only money we got was from the sheep we sold each year and two calves. We never could sell any of the crops we raised as we used them all at home, the oats, potatoes and vegetables. We never had much money but we always had enough to eat although the food was plain, mostly potatoes, bread and meal, and we never ate much meat because we could not afford to buy it. We did not have our own bacon because the farm could not grow enough food to raise pigs for killing. We had to work very hard to make a living all the time.

Not all the immigrants from these counties came from such poor farms. Some of the land was better but in no case did I meet any from big farms as such are rare in those parts of Ireland. A girl from Mayo had this to say:

I am a farmer's daughter and we live in North Mayo. Our farm is about thirty acres, about half the land is good and half is of poor quality but all right for sheep and cattle. My father and brothers worked hard all year. We had two cows, some sheep (about twenty), a horse and a few young cattle.
They raised crops of potatoes, hay, oats and some vegetables. We killed and cured our own bacon and that was about the only kind of meat we had to eat. My mother kept poultry, hens and chickens which we used at table only on occasions as they were mostly for market use. The eggs and chickens we sold, and that provided us with the food we had to buy as well as small items for the household such as oil, candles, soap, etc. Our home was thatched as were almost all in the neighborhood. It was very comfortable and clean, and we were very happy although we never had much money but always enough to meet our needs. There was no use for any of us to stay at home as my older brother was the only one who could get the farm so I decided to go to America, to Chicago, where my aunt lived. I heard it was a good place to make a living.

Such were the counties from which the majority of these people came, small farms and homes, not real poverty but certainly not more than frugality and by no means wealth. It's hard to see a future for the majority of the youth as only one can have the homestead in the end.

Not all the immigrants studied came from the counties along the western and southern seaboard. Eighteen per cent came from other parts of Ireland. Some of these from the counties mentioned came from towns and so from a different background. There are two from Antrim and two from Kilkenny. Tipperary, Monaghan, Limerick, Cavan, Waterford and Roscommon are also represented. Those counties are not of the same type as the others. The land is of a better quality and there are more big farms. In all cases studied, where the immigrant was not from a town or city, they were from small farms or children of laborers and again it was a question of only one inheriting the homestead and the others seeking a living elsewhere. In these cases it was to Chicago they came.

In eighty-one cases out of one hundred those people said that emigration was a common thing in their native districts. To anybody familiar with
Ireland and its history this is what to expect. "Emigration has been the outstanding experience of the modern Irish community and no other community has experienced it with the same intensity or over the same length of time." 17

For most of these people to the challenge of nature has been added the challenge of history. The troubled history of Ireland which has left its mark not only on the people but physically on the land itself. An alien rack-renting landlord system deprives farmers of incentive and pride in their land. From this system there came emigration and land usually left to waste. In most of Ireland the land-owner, often an absentee, never invested money in his land and the tenant had none to invest. The natural wealth of Ireland over centuries was drained away and much Irish labor was put to waste. Although the landlord system is a thing of the past and today the Irish farmer owns his own farm the results still remain in the form of land that is not producing half what it should and therefore not able to support its people. It will take many years of great effort to remedy the harm of more than three centuries. Since the days of the famine (1847-1849) emigration has been a big factor in Irish life and has been going on long enough now to establish a tradition. The sons and daughters of the family go just as did their aunts and uncles before them. One girl from Kerry said:

Most of the girls and boys I went to school with have gone either to England or America. Nearly all my aunts and uncles went to America so why wouldn't I? Anyway, what good in

staying home when I could make no money worth while; I'd get a few pounds a month if I worked in a store but what good is that. After hard work I'd have nothing but struggling to make ends meet all my life.

In neighborhoods where emigration is common children grow up with the understanding that they, too, will go when they are old enough and they come to accept it. One emigrant expressed himself as follows on this point:

As a boy I loved to go to the parties for those who were leaving for America - American wakes we called them. I was at many a one and God knows, as a young fellow going to school, I longed for my own time to come when I could be off to make my future too, but I didn't have much sense then and I found out that when the wake is for yourself it's not so enjoyable.

This tradition of emigration, according to ever forty per cent of these immigrants, is deep-rooted in the people. Some of them answered as fellows when I asked them if the people who had left home over the years still had any influence or were of any help to those left behind, "If it weren't for the money from America I don't know how most of the neighbors, including ourselves, could have got on, especially when the families were young." Another said, "If it weren't for the American dollars at Christmas, it would not have been much of a holiday for us."

The tradition of emigration was a factor in eighty-one per cent of the cases studied, and all without exception were quite familiar with emigration to the extent that all knew somebody personally who had already migrated to America, and sixty-seven knew people who had gone to Chicago.

2. ECONOMIC BACKGROUND OF FIFTY-SEVEN MEN

In this section of the chapter men and women will be treated separately in order to give a clearer picture and to avoid too much confusion.
TABLE XVI

FIFTY-SEVEN MALE POSTWAR IMMIGRANTS TO CHICAGO, BY FATHER'S OCCUPATION AND PLACE OF RESIDENCE IN IRELAND

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Rural</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>Urban</th>
<th>Town</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Farmer's sons</td>
<td>47</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laborer's sons</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schoolteacher's sons</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Storekeeper's sons</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>52</strong></td>
<td><strong>2</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>3</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The vast majority of the number are from the country and are sons of farmers. To understand better their history the types of farms they lived on were as follows: Seven lived on farms of under twenty acres, twenty-seven lived on farms of twenty to twenty-nine acres, eleven lived on farms of thirty to thirty-nine acres and two lived on farms ranging from forty to forty-nine acres.

The majority here are the sons of farmers who owned from twenty to twenty-nine acres of land and eighty per cent are from farms which range from twenty to thirty-nine acres. The average size farm in Ireland is about thirty acres. Those in the smaller farms are from the poorer parts of the west and south where life is extremely difficult and the soil is at its worst. Land of this kind is found in parts of Kerry, Mayo and Galway. In five cases the people on these farms did some fishing in addition to farm work. The fish
was used for food and some of it was sold at the nearest market town. In those homes life was very rugged. One man described his work thus:

As soon as I was able to help, my father took me with him into the fields and sometimes he took me fishing at night. I've often fallen asleep as I steered the boat while my father fished. I was then only about fourteen years old.

The majority of the group came from the average size farm. Life in most cases was not hard for boys who grew up in such a home, and making a frugal living was not too hard although few could attain very much prosperity.

The boys helped after school and especially during summer vacation harvesting the crops. One man described his day thus when a school boy:

My father had about thirty acres of land which was reasonably good and there were six of us kids, three boys and three girls. I was number three and had a brother and sister older. On a school day my mother would call me at 7:30 AM. I ate a light meal of porridge and went for the cows, to take them home for milking. I also counted the sheep and cattle and saw that everything was all right. I got back with the cows about 8:00AM. I milked one as did my older brother and sister. I then prepared food for and fed the calves. During this time my father and brother had eaten and were on their way to the day's work on the farm, whatever it might be. I got through with my tasks about 8:30 AM, washed and ate my breakfast which my mother had prepared - usually bread, butter and a boiled egg (my mother did not believe in feeding us young ones meat at breakfast) and tea. I was through about 9:00 AM and then I set out for school. I got there walking in about twenty minutes. We began at 9:30 AM and to tell you the truth I never liked school and was glad when lunch break came at 12:30 PM and still happier when we got home at 3:00 PM. I should be home at 3:30 PM but I often loitered with the boys. When I did I was usually scolded by my mother and chastised by my father occasionally. I ate my dinner, usually bacon, cabbage, potatoes and milk, as much as I wanted. I then proceeded to do whatever had been assigned for me, sometimes help on the farm with my father or maybe do some errands for my mother. At 6:30 PM or 7:00 PM I had to take care of the cows again and after tea at about 8:00 PM I was through. I did homework whenever I could not get to play ball or something else with the boys and I
usually had to retire about 9:30 PM and always before 10:00 PM. I had to be in by 9:30 PM for the Rosary or if I didn't I would be punished.

The men who lived on these farms seldom worked on the farm with their father after they reached the age of sixteen except the oldest son who would eventually get the farm and the homestead. They either worked for bigger farmers who had to hire help or worked at other jobs such as construction and roadmaking, etc. Some of them went to the cities and did manual work there. (This point will be dealt with again in greater detail in the next chapter with regard to the wages and type of work done by these immigrants outside their own home before leaving Ireland.) Fourteen of those sons of farmers had never been away from home or worked elsewhere before coming to America. The remainder had been working elsewhere in Ireland or in England prior to emigrating. None of them had been paid by their fathers for work on the farm nor did any of them expect it or complain that such had not been the case. Forty-one out of forty-seven said they had left because they knew there was no use in their staying on the farm as they had older brothers who would inherit it, therefore, they had to make a living elsewhere. Three admitted they had left because they hated farming and four had gone to high school and looked for different types of work, others of these who said they left because they saw no future for them at home had received, some of them part and some of them complete high school education.

Thirty-four of forty-seven of the homes of these studied in this group were thatched houses, which are very common in western and southern Ireland. The remainder were houses with slate roofing. Five of these were houses with two-stories. Of these five, two belonged to those who had over
forty acres of land. None of these houses had running water or bathrooms. Nine had electric lighting and seven of these families owned an automobile. The writer estimates, having studied these people, that roughly eighty per cent were making a comfortable living in Ireland, that is, they came from homes where they had no poverty but a good living without much luxury. The remainder definitely were poor by any standard.

In addition to farmers there were five others from rural districts. Three were sons of laborers and two were sons of school teachers. By laborers is meant a man who lives in a country district and owns his own cottage where he lives with his family. He also owns a small plot of land, always less than an acre on which he grows potatoes and vegetables. He works for wages either for a farmer or for the public authorities on the roads. The standard wage for such manual labor now is about five pounds sterling per week, (fifteen dollars in American money). That and the plot of land are his only income for support of his wife and family. Those people are not very well-to-do, but they live comfortably and are in about the same standard as the farmer with about twenty acres of land. If the family is not too big, they usually make a living without finding life too difficult. Family size will not be treated here, but it might be pertinent to remark that in those two cases the families had five and seven children respectively and that neither complained of poverty. Naturally, they themselves began to work for wages as soon as they were able. An interesting factor in both cases is that until they finally emigrated to this country, they never left home but engaged in local manual work the wages for which they did not keep but turned over to the other members of the family. This seems to have been an ordinary thing while the children were living at
One immigrant is the son of a school teacher living in the country, a member of a family of ten children. Although living in the country, he said he took little interest or part in farming. Both parents were not teachers. His mother took care of the household duties. It was not usual in his neighborhood to emigrate and his parents, especially his father, were "dead" against it he said. He was the second boy in the family and there were two girls older than he also. After grammar school, which he hated, he had to go to a boarding high school. He ran away from there and came home. Then, at the age of fifteen, he was sent to learn his trade in business. He spent two years at this in a small town. He then ran away to England and as soon as he had enough money for his passage he came to the United States in 1950 at the age of twenty. He knew a pal in Chicago and came here after a few months in New York. He worked at construction for a year and made good money. He then went in the Army and to Korea. He is making good wages but is not the responsible type. He has no desire to return to Ireland as he knows he has been a failure in his father's eyes. He is estranged to a certain extent from home and consequently somewhat bitter. This is a boy from a home and parents of a higher level than any other male immigrant interviewed. A modern home which is rare in rural Ireland, educated parents, a leisurely youth, every chance to get a good education and make a respectable living in Ireland, yet he is an immigrant in Chicago, not because of lack of opportunity of finances at home but because he didn't like to work there at congenial work in comparison to the type of work he must do here. If the writer were to venture a prediction, he would say that this man, despite his background, has a poorer
chance of being a successful citizen in Chicago than any ether one of the
fifty-seven men studied.

Among the group of males studied, there were five with ruban back-
grounds, two from small towns and three from what might be called larger towns,
and provincial cities. Those from the small towns and two from the other
towns were laborers' sons, and in all cases these were manual laborers. They
are of about the same resources as the laborer in the rural district. As re-
gards means if livelihood, there is little difference, although in towns liv-
ing conditions are more modern, but in those cases, not any better than the
average house in a rural district. The families in these cases were smaller,
the largest being five children. Living in a town, near a high school, they
all had some high school education. Two completed high school and one spent
two years in an Ecclesiastical Seminary. The writer will not deal further
here with their education as he intends to deal briefly with their educational
background in another section of this chapter and with its effects on their
life here in a section of Chapter V.

There is little difference in the background of those boys from that
of those in the country. They do have a better knowledge of modern life and
are more influenced by it than the boy from the country but the influence, due
to small size of the town, is not very great and very soon they are on the
same level. The most important thing learned from them was that they never
were used to hard work and do not like to engage in it here. In no case have
they been found doing hard work although many of the boys from rural districts
welcome it because of the high wages obtainable therein.

Among those from urban areas there is one who is the son of a store-
keeper and tavern owner from an Irish provincial town. Both parents are living and owners of a first class business in Ireland. They might be considered as well-to-do people. He is one of a family of seven, three boys and four girls, and he is the youngest boy, having one sister younger than he. His oldest brother is now following in his father's business. (All the family had high school education.) His other brother is a doctor in Dublin and three of his sisters are married, two to local business men and one to a lawyer. His younger sister is studying to be a doctor in an Irish university. He, too, had high school education and entered an Ecclesiastical Seminary in Ireland. After a considerable time there, he decided he did not have a vocation, and he returned to secular life, much to the disappointment of his family, especially his mother. He could have got a good living in Ireland as his father would have helped him in business, but he thought he had failed his parents and that he was somehow a misfit in the local community which seemed to look askance at the "spoiled priest." He stayed at home for a year until, in his own words, "The whole thing got me down and it almost drove me mad so I decided to get away as I had enough of school and had no desire to study for a profession. I had enough of these narrow-minded people." So at the age of twenty-five he came to Chicago and found employment in journalism and is doing quite well. He seems perfectly adjusted and a normal fellow who intends to marry and make his own home here in the near future, with a good job ($400.00 a month) and good prospects. He is assured of success. Here is one case who did not have to emigrate for economic reasons. He would have been as well off home and possibly better, but for psychological reasons, he was compelled to leave and in a different environment he has succeeded while at home he almost certainly
would have failed.

In dealing with the rural or urban background the author has dealt with the educational aspects in some cases and he will add something more here before closing this section on the male immigrants. All of the group received grammar school education or "primary" as it is called in Ireland. The average boy leaving school in Ireland has about the same amount of education as his counterpart in this country and about as well fit to enter into the next phase of life in Ireland as is the American boy here. On the other hand, it is easily understandable that, as regards being fitted to live and make a living and get on in the city of Chicago, the Irish boy is certainly not as well prepared as the boy who went to school here even though he may have a better education. Seventeen of the group had part high school education and seven of them received their diplomas. In the cases of ten individuals who quit high school it is true to say that they were better equipped to obtain a living in Ireland than those who had finished school after primary. In all cases they left, they said, either because they did not like school (six) or could not make the grade (four). Those are no different, as regards educational equipment, than the immigrant who has not gone to high school at all. Seven completed high school and three of these work in offices here in Chicago, while four do not, but I think it is better to deal with their work here in the chapter on the immigrant to Chicago. The same is true of these six who had some trade school education in Ireland and the author has already dealt with two

18 High school education is not compulsory in Ireland and it is never free.
immigrants who have been educated in Ecclesiastical Seminaries in Ireland.

3. ECONOMIC BACKGROUND OF FORTY-THREE WOMEN

In the previous section the author has been dealing with the male portion of his study under this heading so now he will set forward the same information on the forty-three women he has interviewed. Here it will not be necessary to go into the same details, as much of what he has said in the previous section is as true of women as men, so he will confine himself to pointing features from the background of the immigrant that is peculiar to the women. In a group of forty-three women studied there were thirty-eight farmer's daughters and one daughter of a schoolteacher from a rural area, and four were from urban areas. All of these women went through grammar school, six received part high school education, four received full high school education and three received technical educations. As can be seen at a glance, the overwhelming majority of the group come from farms in rural Ireland. These farms varied somewhat as follows but were all small farms: Ten lived on farms of under twenty acres, eighteen on farms ranging from twenty to thirty acres, nine on farms ranging from thirty to thirty-nine acres and one on a farm ranging from forty to forty-nine acres.

Most of these, all but one in fact, are farms under forty acres. The girl in Ireland does not inherit except where there was no boy in the family. On these small farms, as a rule, life would not be as hard for the girl as the boy, although they always help in the home duties which include milking cows, feeding poultry, preparing butter, etc. In any farm house a young girl can find plenty to occupy her time. Oftentimes, too, girls help
the men in the fields. One girl said she often helped her father and brothers harvest hay and oats. On asking these ladies if they would like to live on a farm in Ireland thirty-one replied that they would not as it was too hard a life and they had no desire to do the work which is expected of a housewife in Ireland. Seven said they would be prepared to be a farmer's wife but not on a farm like their fathers had. It was too small and their fathers could not afford to give them a big dowry without which, four said, no big farmer would marry a girl. All admitted that it would be most difficult to live on a farm after working in the city. Without exception all said they were not satisfied with the wages obtainable by a girl in Ireland, and twenty-seven of them had jobs in Ireland before leaving. In a later chapter the author will give in full complete interviews with some of those girls. One girl interviewed was the daughter of a schoolteacher in the country. There were five in the family, two boys and three girls. She is number four, two boys and one girl older. She received full high school education and worked in the Irish Civil Service in Dublin before coming here:

I left Ireland because I was not satisfied with the wages. I was getting four pounds a week ($12.00 dollars), and could not save any money. I am glad I came here and am doing much better than I could ever hope to in Ireland. I work in a bank and make $280.00 a month. My parents did not want me to leave but agreed when they saw I was determined to go. My sister is married in Ireland to a business man and my younger sister is still in high school. One of my brothers is in the Seminary and my oldest brother is a Civil Engineer.

Four of the girls are from towns in Ireland and all are the daughters of laborers of moderate means. Two received full high school education and one has received part high school education. All worked in offices as secretaries or typists before coming here and again all said that they were
not satisfied with the wages there, although two admitted that they were keen on getting to America anyway. Out of the thirty-eight girls from a farm background, two have gone to high school and one graduated and failed to become a teacher, on which she had planned, so she then emigrated. Twenty-five of those who had not gone to high school told me they would like very much to have had more education but as high school is not free in Ireland, their parents could not afford it.

4. BACKGROUND OF FIFTY-SEVEN MALE IMMIGRANTS

The size of families (Table IV, Page 25) from which the fifty-seven male immigrants came varies from a family of two children to that of fourteen children. Very few of the families have less than four children and similarly few are more than seven. Seventy per cent of the immigrants come from families which have from four to seven children while the model family size is that of six children. In the parts of Ireland where emigration is most prevalent and also from which the majority of these immigrants come from, the families are large. In the Kerry-Mayo-Galway group the family of four is found only three times, while all the families over seven are either from Kerry or Mayo, the two counties which have the largest representation. Where there is a big family (five or over), it is obvious that unless the parents are wealthy that education or financial help is not possible from the home so they must make their own living as soon as they can work away from home. In many instances immigrants expressed themselves as follows, "There was no point in my staying at home as I could not improve myself there." It is unheard of that these who remain home on the farm are recompensed for their
labor as there is no money for it except where there is a big farm. That was not true in any of these cases and is rare in the west and south of Ireland. It has been stated already that when boys work in the vicinity of their homes and live there, they usually give most of their wages to their parents and that is further incentive to leave, not that they complained about the practice but obviously if there is ambition to start for oneself such a practice will not help very much. In all cases where the family was over seven, the author found that the older members played a very important part in helping to raise the younger ones by working as soon as they were able and providing funds. The author also noticed this in Ireland himself and were it not for the help of these, he does not think such large families could be raised so that more was expected of the older members than the younger ones. The same is true in the case of girls from large families. In a few cases where the girl was an older child in a large family she showed a deep interest in the younger members, almost to the exclusion of her own interests. In one case, which may be an extreme, a girl said:

There are eleven of us kids and I am the oldest. I've been five years here and I have not saved any money as I've sent it all home to help my younger brothers and sisters get educations. If they don't they will leave Ireland and I hate to see that happen.

Of the men interviewed three were the oldest members of the family and consequently had a right to the homestead. One interview of such a case is given in a later chapter and this should serve to elucidate their position. Usually, they must wait until all the other members have left before they can settle down and get married. That is a long time if the family is large. Nineteen are the youngest members of the family and eleven come from families of all
boys. There was nothing to mark them out as being special among the group as far as could be ascertained, and their reasons for leaving or coming to Chicago were not out of the ordinary except that in ten cases of nineteen there was already another member of the family here before them. Of eleven girls who were the youngest in the family, eight of them had a member of the family here before they came. The family size (Table V, Page 26) of the women studied does not differ appreciably from that of the men. The average is the same and the same thing is true about big families in the counties of largest representation and no small families from the same counties. There is no girl in the group from a two-child family. Seven of the girls interviewed were the eldest members of the family and six were from families of all girls. Where a girl is the oldest member of a family there is no question of her having the homestead unless there are no boys. In no instance did any girl interviewed qualify as entitled to inherit family property. In the whole group studied, the author found that there are two girls and five men whose both parents are dead. There were twelve men and five girls whose fathers were dead and eight men and six girls whose mothers were dead. Those who had no parents living in Ireland were very emphatic about not wanting to go back to Ireland and that can be easily understood. The same was true, although not to the same extent, where the mother was not living. Some had no desire to go back and others seemed to have a deep attachment to home, but in all but one case, (a man) the author found that where the mother alone was living in Ireland, that the immigrant was passionately devoted to home and was most anxious to visit and talk about it, much more so than in many cases where both parents were living. There is one other point of interest about family background, namely, the case where the
one of the parents or both were in this country at one time. One man told his
parents spent five years in Chicago where they were married before going back
to live in Ireland on a farm. He was number four in a family of three boys
and two girls. He always wanted to come, he said, as he knew it was a good
country and better than Ireland for making a living. His parents agreed and
did not oppose him. He is delighted he came but, like his father, he means to
go back and buy a farm or business when he has enough money. Three girls and
two men had one of their parents in this country before they were married. None
of them had been opposed by the parent when coming here. In only one case was
there positive encouragement.

5. SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND

In order to complete the picture of the background of the recent
Irish immigrant to Chicago reference must be made to the social life in Ireland
and to the more important social institutions with which they were familiar and
particularly the influence of religion on his life. In rural Ireland and in
the small towns, from which all the immigrants studied came, social life is
very much different from that found in an American city such as Chicago. In
the country the houses are apart and situated in groups of from fifteen to
thirty. This group is called the village, and the village is part of the
larger unit known as the parish which contains anywhere from 200 to 300 families.
For the Irish boy or girl most activities and social life was centered first in
the family, then the village and then the parish. Most of the time was spent
in work and most evenings were spent at home with the family. In the village
people visited from one house to the other, told stories or played cards and
occasionally had parties or dances. Most parishes fostered athletic sports such as hurling and football and had teams which contested for the championship of a county or part of a county. Such sports aroused great interest and support among the people and keen rivalries existed between the various parishes. Parishes often had their own dance halls also at which dances were held each month. Movies and theatrical entertainment were not common because the nearest movie halls were usually six to ten miles away, so visits to such places were not frequent. In towns movies were very popular as also was dancing and such entertainment. Fifty-two per cent of those interviewed had radios in their homes. All had gone to movies, but sixty-five per cent said that they had not gone often at home and did not have too much interest in them. One immigrant said:

I lived on a farm about six miles from the town. As a youth before leaving home I spent my free time during the fine weather playing football. I went to the local dancehall as often as they had dances there and went to a dance in town or to a movie about once a month. In wintertime I played cards at night for small stakes and sometimes I went to the movies.

All those interviewed are Catholics and although questions were not asked to find out if any of them came from broken homes, it could be ascertained from their conversation that there was no case of this. (It is almost unknown in the small town or in rural Ireland.) Religion plays a very important part in the home life in Ireland. One man wrote this about his home:

My parents being devout Catholics were strict in our upbringing. There were five of us in the family, four boys and one girl. My mother had a great devotion to the Blessed Virgin and never did we retire without saying the family Rosary. When we were children the month of May had a special meaning. It was Mary's month and in turn each of us went in the evening to a nearby field to pick flowers to place before a statue of Our Lady.
We called them Blessed Virgin's flowers. They were blue in color and in the shape of a bell, but the family's devotion to Mary was not just practiced in the month of May. Each Saturday we consecrated ourselves to the Immaculate Heart of Mary and burned a candle before her statue.

One can easily see that the background or early life of those Irish immigrants to the city of Chicago was entirely different from what they experienced on their coming here. It was a complete change, therefore a new life so to speak, and in the next chapter it will be explained how they adjusted themselves to, and how they used their talents which, from youth, had been molded and trained for a different life in their native country, to earn a living in what to them was a strange new life.
CHAPTER V

THE IRISH IMMIGRANT IN CHICAGO

During World War II few Irish immigrants came to Chicago or to any part of the United States. Immediately thereafter what might be called a new wave of immigration began. The postwar group of Irish immigrants which is the subject matter of the study seemingly do not differ much from the other Irish immigrants who came in the years before the war, except in point of time of arrival. Their background was the same, in general, although it is true to say that the standard of living in Ireland improved slightly in the intervening years, the country had become more modern but not in any appreciable degree as to change the background or type of person leaving. Their education was the same. They spoke the same language, (English), and thus did not have any language difficulty on arriving in Chicago. In the study sample of one hundred people there were fourteen whose language at home was Gaelic but they all could speak English well, so they were no different from the others, all of whom learned to speak and read Gaelic in school.

When an emigrant leaves the home country for a strange one it is natural to choose a place where a relative or friend or some close connection with home will be found. Among the group studied this is true in most cases.
Only one woman in forty-three and seven men out of fifty-seven have no relative in Chicago; in fact, all but eight have either uncles or aunts or first cousins to whom they came. The lady who did not have any relative here says that she had a girlfriend who had come to Chicago two years previously and she came out to her. The same is true of the men who did not have any relative here. Four of them had relatives in other places to which they came at first and later came to Chicago for some reason. Three had pals here as did the girl mentioned above.

When the immigrant from Ireland makes application to come to the United States, he must find an American citizen who will make a guarantee in the form of cash or property that the prospective immigrant will not be a burden on the country when he comes here, in other words that it will not be responsible for his support before he has proven his worth and become a citizen. It is natural, therefore, that the relative is sought out to do this and, consequently, the immigrant comes to the city where the relative is living, although some of them may decide later to go elsewhere in the country.

As has already been pointed out in the chapter on the background of these immigrants, life in an American city is something new, a complete change of environment in most cases. For those who had been to England (fifteen men and five women) it would not have been so different but there, nevertheless, would have been a big change from postwar England. For each immigrant there is first of all the sorrow and loneliness on leaving home as he knows that going to America means that the visits there in the future will be very rare if any. Most of those spoken to mentioned this factor and regretted very much the break with the family, so in the case of the majority of those immigrants it is
reasonable to suppose that it was with mixed feelings of loneliness and expectation they arrived here. Such expressions as "I was brokenhearted leaving home," "If I knew I was going to feel so bad I would never have left," "I feel sorry for anybody who has to leave home and come to this country," "Leaving home and family is enough to prevent anybody from going to this country," "It's hard when one must leave one's parents and family to make a living. I wish I were more fortunate." One man told the writer about his leaving home thus:

On May, 1949 I passed through the customs at Shannon Airport. My sympathy goes out to each immigrant that leaves his Irish home. Those dread moments of parting still haunt me, the repetition of which has deterred an impending visit. As the plane roared through the skies high above the Atlantic, there I sat alone and with a broken heart. I looked at the future with confidence, since failure or success for the greater part were mine for the choosing.

One has only to be present at the airport of Shannon or the pier at Cobh to understand the feelings and attitudes of emigrants. One who has not left home or broken with it as the emigrant has cannot possibly appreciate his position. The author having lived and grown up in Ireland himself and having also boarded an American-bound steamer from an Irish port, having known, lived amongst and spoken freely to many Irish immigrants in Chicago, can truthfully state that each one who had left Ireland has had an experience never to be forgotten and the picture of which was very vivid in the mind when foot was set on American soil and during the early months in the country.

Having seen the immigrant's reaction on leaving Ireland one naturally asks, what about the first impressions of this country. All of the people interviewed came first to New York by boat or plant. Seventy-six came directly to Chicago and the remainder either spent a few days in New York before finishing the journey, actually eight did this, while the other sixteen (ten men,
six women) spent some time working in other American cities before finally coming here to Chicago. At the moment the study will be confined to the first impressions of the immigrant on arriving and will deal later with those of the group who have had experience in other parts of the country before coming to Chicago.

It is difficult to describe the impressions of 100 immigrants and it was found that most of them on being asked such a question found it a hard one to answer, but an attempt will be made to set down a few points which were heard from these people about their first impressions of this country.

At the outset it should be noted that all of these people came to either a friend or relative and did not have to worry about finding their way or getting some place to stay on their arrival here, and each one mentioned that fact saying that otherwise they would have been completely lost and would have found it very difficult or impossible to get around by themselves at the beginning. One girl said:

It was all completely new to me. The little I saw of New York before getting a train for Chicago scared me. Everything was so massive and everybody in a hurry. I wondered how I would ever get accustomed to a place like this, after such a quiet life in my own home in the country. I was glad finally when I got on the train for Chicago. Being weary and fed up, I cried myself to sleep. At the station next day, my aunt and uncle were to meet me and drive me to their home. They were both from Ireland and I thought they were very nice, no American accent or grandeur, just real people and I knew they understood me. Their children were about my age, a boy and two girls. At first I could not understand them so well and did not like them, but later I did. I could see they were amused at my rich "brogue" and asked me all kinds of questions just to hear me talk. I did not go to work for a whole week, during which time I was taken around to see the city and I began to feel at ease and decided, well, it isn't too bad. My uncle got me a job in a food store not far from where he lived. I worked on the cash register and after some difficulty operating it on the first day, I found it easy and began to like the work, which I welcomed because it kept me busy and I didn't have too much time to think
of home, although I cried myself to sleep more often than not for the first few months.

The experience just given is typical of the Irish girls first introduction to the life here in Chicago. They do not seem to find it too difficult, at least they were not so ready to talk about their early experiences here. One said he lived with his aunt and family after coming here, got a job in a factory after two days, and being from Kerry very soon met fellows from home and from then on had no trouble getting around and very soon began to enjoy himself.

Others did not find it so easy, like one who came from a part of Ireland from which few had emigrated to Chicago. He spent almost six months here before he made any Irish friends and he had no use for the Americans as he couldn't feel at ease. "They didn't seem to understand me, and I certainly didn't understand them," he said.

As has already been stated, the majority came out to relatives here and stayed with them at the beginning. Those who did not have some relative either had spent some time elsewhere in the States and consequently knew how to get around and meet Irish people or else they had friends here who took care of them and helped them make a start.

Ninety-two came here to relatives, and of that number, only thirty-one are now staying with these relatives. Some have got married and others have secured flats of their own, (living with other young people) or have moved to boarding houses and living with people they do not know. This seems an interesting thing and the reason found was that these young people feel that their freedom is being curtailed by staying with a near relative, who often
want to, more or less, lay down rules for them and since in all cases they pay for board (even to relatives), they feel that they would be better off living away from them. There is not any break or estrangement of relations and they visit and pay their respects to their relatives and often go to them for advice.

In addition to relatives, these immigrants in some cases have members of their own families here. Two boys have both their parents here. In one case, the father and mother went back to Ireland after being married here and the children were born in Ireland where they lived for seventeen years, and then came back to Chicago and have their own home here now.

In another case three members of a family (three boys) who came from a family of four boys had already emigrated to Chicago and after a period had their mother and father come out here to live, not to make a living, but to be with the majority of the family. One boy has married in the homestead in Ireland, and one of the boys is married here. The parents came here about a year ago and intend to stay. Thirty-five out of fifty-seven men have another member of their family here, either a brother or sisters, while twenty-six have two members of their families here, and twenty have three members of their families and seven have four. It has also been learned that two of them have five members of their families here. Out of forty-three girls, twenty-seven have one member of their families here, and eighteen have two. Thirteen girls have six members of their families here, while four have three, and one has seven. Thus 62 per cent have at least one member of their own immediate families here in Chicago in addition to close relatives while 8 per cent have no relatives. This family solidarity, so to speak, is obviously a great help
to the immigrant because it means that family and home ties are not completely out. It is difficult to tell whether this is a factor in keeping these Irish people together in a national group and separated in their interests from the community at large; however, observation would seem to indicate that where many immigrants came from the same county, district or family, they tend to be clannish, to move in that circle in preference to outside it.

It is difficult to give exact geographical boundaries when speaking of their location as the group is widely scattered throughout the city. On the south side, where the majority live, they range from Forty-Seventh Street to as far south as Ninety-Fifth Street, and from Stony Island Avenue on the east to Medzic Avenue, west. The majority of these live in what might be called the central section of the whole area just mentioned, between Garfield Boulevard and Seventy-Ninth Street, and Ashland Avenue and Halsted Street. On the west side the author found that those interviewed live between Harrison Street and Washington Boulevard, and between Pulaski Road and Austin Boulevard. The area on the north side is not so easy to define, but judging from the samples, the concentration of recent Irish immigrants is situated about 3500 North and between Halsted Street and Western Avenue.

2. ECONOMIC STATUS OF 100 POSTWAR IRISH IMMIGRANTS TO CHICAGO

An economic study of 100 immigrants is difficult to present with great clarity and accuracy because to do so would involve almost a separate account of each case. In this section the following plan which includes three subdivisions will be used:

1. a) the present economic status of the group.
b) their wage scale and living expenses.

c) how they have used their educational background.

2. Their previous experience and history in making a living before coming to Chicago.

a) those who have been in England.

b) those who have worked in Ireland away from home.

c) those who have never worked away from home.

d) a study of the immigrants who have worked elsewhere in the
   United States.

e) those who have been in the Armed Forces.

In each section the economic status of men and women will be treated separately as they differ much in the type of work they do and the amount of wages paid for work.

In interviewing each immigrant the following question was asked, "What is your present occupation?" From the answers received, a broad classification was made (Table X, Page 32) which will be explained in the text that follows.

Out of fifty-seven men only three who work in an office might be called white collar workers. These in addition to carpenters, painters, skilled construction workers (bricklayers and plasterers) and engineers are not strictly manual laborers, while the remainder, which number thirty-three, work at jobs which do not call for any special training or education. This number constitutes the majority of the group, making up fifty-eight per cent of the total number.

Unskilled. Those engaged in factory work which is classed as un-
skilled are doing manual work of some kind. Six of them work in steel foundries, two in automobile plants and in a lumber factory. This work is very hard and requires great manual effort. Those engaged therein are those who have come to Chicago within the past three years and they belong also in the younger age bracket of the group, the oldest being twenty-six and the average age being twenty-four years.

The schedule in these jobs is a forty-hour week and an eight-hour day, with wages ranging from $95.00 to $100.00 per week. All these jobs allow almost unlimited overtime, for which the wage rate is time and a half, and also, allows Sunday work which pays double time, with the result that they can earn very high wages, that is, if they are prepared to work long enough. The general idea among this type of worker, which is true also of manual laborers, especially construction workers, is to work hard for a few years in order to get a good start, and then find a less exacting job which, of course, will not be as well paid. Very similar to this group are those who do manual unskilled labor in construction projects and manual labor in the warehouses of the big chain stores. They work very hard and long hours and make big wages. These, too, are younger men, average age being twenty-five and only one has been here four years, all the others have come within the past three years. In construction work, to a certain extent in the factory work, there is not much certainty or security and none of these jobs provides for the future in the form of pensions or sick benefits. The idea is, if you can work you are paid, and if not, you are out of luck. Another type of uncertainty is weather in construction work. In bad winter weather this type of work cannot go on and there are slack periods in factory work when help is occasionally laid
off for a period, so this makes for a certain amount of leveling off in the annual wage scale. One of these workers gives a good idea of their attitude when he spoke thus:

I came here to Chicago two years ago approximately. I did not have any special training apart from ordinary primary school education, but I was determined to work hard and make as much money as I could. I got a job in the steel mills. The hours were bad, from 4:00 P.M. to 12:00 midnight each day. I was making $100 almost, for five days. Often I work a few hours extra, depending on how I feel, and for that I get time and a half. My two weeks check was often over $250, when I could work on Saturday, for which I got double time. The work is hard but I am strong and not afraid of it. I had plenty of hard work at home on the farm. I will stick this for about two more years if I can and then I should have a nice bit of money saved and I can afford to have an easier job with more security.

Among the twenty men doing these types of work mentioned, five had part high school education, while two had finished in high school, but obviously none have made any use of their education. Having mentioned this point, this is what the writer was told by one individual:

I got my leaving certificate in Ireland (corresponds to high school diploma here) before coming to this country three years ago at the age of nineteen, having found that I could not make a good living at home. My relatives were all enthused about my getting a "nice respectable job downtown," they said. I looked around at a few indoor jobs; banks, offices, etc., and found I could make about $250 to $300 a month for a start. In the meantime I had been talking to some of the boys from home that worked at construction. They told me, "very tough work, but terrific wages." When I heard the wages, I was amazed and I decided that I would be a fool not to try it, and I'm glad I did as I've got a tidy sum saved now, whereas if I went downtown on my relatives advice, I would never save anything. I'll not stay at this work though, as its hard and not very clean. After a year or two I intend to settle down and get married and find an easier job, but somehow I don't think I'll go for an office job if I can't make anymore than $280 a month."

There is another group doing unskilled manual work which is not highly paid, namely those working for the C.T.A. (4), Gas Company (4), truck drivers (3), and elevator operators (2). These jobs differ from the others in
the sense that they are more stable, have more security, and are steady full

time jobs. They are forty hours per week, eight hours a day. The average wage

here is about $75 per week, while truck drivers make about $85, but the work

is harder. Among this group of thirteen, the writer found that these were

older men, the average age being thirty. There were some married men and, ex-
cept for two, all have been in Chicago over four years.

All these workers told me they intended to remain in Chicago to

settle down and make their homes here, while in the previous group, four are
determined to return to Ireland when they have saved a certain amount of money,
sufficient to buy a farm or start their own business.

On the whole, the second group seemed more stable. One man said that

he realized that the Gas Company, which he worked for, did not pay as well as
other jobs, but he felt that it offered him lifetime work and security even in

case of sickness or accident, and furthermore, he did not believe in killing
oneself to make a few extra dollars.

Semi-skilled. Seven of those interviewed did this type of work. It

is difficult to describe the sort of work they do, but as far as the writer
could gather, they are what one might be called "glorified janitors," doing
that type of work in big buildings, hotels, industrial plants, etc. The work
requires some elementary knowledge of heating systems and electrical repairs
and plumbing.

The work is relatively easy, regular and well paid. They work a

forty-hour week or forty-eight, with wages from $100 to $125 per week. It is
difficult to obtain the job and I've been told in all cases that you must

"know" somebody in politics.
All were perfectly satisfied with the work and counted themselves lucky to obtain such a job. One expressed himself thus:

I have been here five years and had different jobs on construction since I came. I heard about this job a few years ago and always since wanted to get in on it. I tried a few times applying to the union and nothing happened, but finally an influential friend of my uncles succeeded in placing me, so I'm all set for the rest of my life now. I work in a hotel building and it's easy. I don't like the hours, 2:00 P.M. to 10:00 A.M., six days a week, but when I go up in seniority I hope to get on days. I intend to get married and settle down here within the next year.

All these in this kind of work have been here a minimum of five years and their average age is thirty-one. As a matter of fact, the oldest one interviewed, forty-one years, has been here seven years and on this job for the past three years, during which time he has got married. One of the group has had full high school education.

Skilled. In this group the writer has placed the following: Factory workers (3), carpenters (5), construction workers (4), and painters (2). These are all what might be called tradesmen, mechanics, carpenters, plasterers, bricklayers and painters. Six of these learned their trades in Ireland, five in England, and the remainder since coming to this country.

It is unnecessary to explain what kind of work they do, except to mention the fact that in some cases the carpenters and construction workers cannot always work, because the type of work is sometimes impeded owing to bad or cold weather, but because they are highly paid when they do work, their annual income is still high. These people are the best paid of all the immigrants spoken to. Their average income ranges from $5000 to $6000 per annum.

Unlike the other groups, they do not belong to any particular age group. They are as varied as the whole group in age and length of time here.
One of the group had full secondary education in Ireland and five had some high school, but all decided that a trade was a more profitable way to make a living.

Office Workers. All of these had full high school education in Ireland and two had part seminary education. One of these cases has already been dealt with in Chapter IV, Page 51.

The other boy had been to an ecclesiastical seminary and came out to Chicago soon after quitting there. He got himself a job in a food store and went to a business college at night for a year to learn business methods and typing. After that, he got a job with a mail order house starting at $300 a month. Now after two years, he told me he has risen to $400 and seems quite satisfied with himself and thinks he has a great future with the firm and plans on making a home in Chicago. He expressed his delight at having come to this country saying:

I felt after I had left the seminary in Ireland I was a failure and did not have any incentive to work, but somehow the outlook changed when I came here and I felt that I had every opportunity to make good here as nobody knew my background.

The third obtained a high school diploma in Ireland before coming here five years ago. He too worked in a store and went to college part time and then full time for a year. He said:

I spent all the money I had saved in school so I had to quit it without getting my C.P.A. degree towards which I was working, but I intend to continue later to get it.

He works in the insurance business with a salary of $390 per month, after two years, but has very good prospects he told me. Unlike the other two he is not satisfied:
I'm sorry I ever came here. I had a good job in a provincial newspaper. If I had stayed I would now be assistant editor, earning from ten to twelve pounds per week, and a car provided also, and that is good money in Ireland and it's certainly the best country to live. I don't like it here at all, but it looks like I'll have to stay now as I plan to marry an Irish-American girl next year.

The cost of living for the average male immigrant might be estimated as follows. The average cost of room and board amounts to approximately twenty dollars per week, adding up to $1,040.00 per year. The immigrants spend approximately $500.00 per year on clothing and laundry. They contribute approximately $100.00 per year to religious and charitable institutions. About $70.00 is spent each year on hospitalization and insurance; about $500.00 on entertainment, and approximately $400.00 annually on a car. Taxes are not included here and the writer understands that a single male would pay approximately $600.00 on a salary of $4,000.00 per annum. This scale is rather high it seems to me and would vary with the individuals. Each one definitely pays twenty dollars for room and board irrespective of whether they are living with relatives or not, so the fact is not pertinent here at all. Among those interviewed all were living thus, apart from those who were married. Entertainment, costing $500.00 per annum, varies very much with each one. Some told me that they spent very little on entertainment—just a few dollars each week and in those cases the figure would be much lower. Obviously, men who do not drink and smoke do not spend as much as those who do. The writer found that twenty-one out of fifty-seven do not drink any alcoholic beverages and fourteen do not use tobacco. In general, he found that those who are the most social among the group, namely, those who belong to clubs and always take part in social activities, spend most money. Thirty-four of the group own cars of
some kind and this expense is avoided, therefore, by twenty-three of the people interviewed. All admit that the cost of living is high here but they also admit that it is by no means out of line with wages and that anybody can save money if he wants to. The author found nobody who complained that it is hard to make a living. Some complained it was very hard to save money but from their conversation it was easy to gather that the fault was their own. Also, the author found that the average salary is about $4,500.00 per annum and a man can save about $1,500.00 per annum.

In contrast to the men who do office work, the ladies (Table XI, Page 33) engaged in this type of work do not receive very high wages. As a group they are paid less than the girls who do any other type of work. The average wage paid to these girls is $55.00 per week. Two girls are paid $300.00 a month or $75.00 per week. These do stenography or secretarial work and both have had full high school education in Ireland and have also gone to business school here for a year after coming. The others are typists or clerks and all have had part high school training in Ireland. These have been here from two to five years here and do not belong to any particular age group, ranging from twenty to thirty years. It would seem that those girls could earn better wages in other types of work and one told me that her reason for doing this kind of work in preference to other better paid jobs was that she did not like to work hard, which she would have to do in waitress work, for example, and this office work was easy and not badly paid she thought as she could save some money.

Waitress work is the most popular among the group studied. There are twelve girls thus occupied and wages and working conditions can be best described by one girl who has been doing this work since coming here five years
I've been working in a restaurant since I came to Chicago. I know the work well but it has never become easier as one is always on foot and at times it's tough on the nerves and one needs great patience. I work six days each week and approximately eight hours each day. I start in the morning at ten and work until 2:30 P.M., then I have a break until 4:30 P.M. and continue working until 8:00 P.M. I am paid $21.00 each week in wages but for the great part of my salary I depend on tips as does every waitress. I average nine to ten dollars each day in tips or fifty-five to sixty dollars per week. This, my weekly wage, is usually in the region of seventy-five to eight dollars per week. That is usually what others make too at this work, working full time. There is another big advantage though, about this type of wage, namely that nobody can tell how much a waitress makes and we don't have to declare our full wage for taxing. So we pay less income tax therefore and can save more money. The average annual salary for a waitress is $4,000.00 and I would say it's usual to pay taxes on $3,000.00 at the very most. In waitress work we eat all our meals on the job and wear a uniform. Consequently, we don't have to buy as much clothes as other girls. I haven't stinted myself since coming here and I have sent money to my parents but I have saved $1,500.00 each year. I plan to get married next year and I may work for a short time after the wedding but not for long as I would not be able to stick this kind of work.

Only one of these girls has had full high school education but she told me she was doing waitress work because she wanted to make money fast and she would have to wait too long in a clerical position to advance. To quote her:

I would be an old woman before I could make this kind of money in an office job. I am not afraid of hard work and not ashamed to serve others if I am well paid for it. I know other girls look down their noses at us waitresses but if we compared bankbooks the attitude might be different.

Domestic service was a common type of work for Irish girls who came to America in the past but it seems they have gone away from it today, the reason is that a girl does not want to give up too much freedom and likes to be free in the evenings and through work at a certain hour. Three of the group interviewed do this type of work. The wage is forty dollars per week
approximately. This wage, the writer remarked, was very small but he was told that they had practically no other living expenses for instance room, board, etc. and also not having as much time as other girls did not spend as much money. One of these girls works in a Catholic rectory. Two work for well-to-do families and all three seemed quite happy in their work and for all it is the only job they've had since coming to Chicago within the last four years.

These girls who do factory work are paid about $60-$65 per week, but they very often get the opportunity of working a sixth day for which pay is double, bringing wages well over $70.00 per week. One girl told me that factory work often means night work which most girls detest. All girls spoken to told the author that they did not like the atmosphere in the factory nor many of the people they worked with. They considered it on the whole unsuitable for a Catholic girl and one was about to quit as a result and find herself another job.

Six girls work as cash checkers in food stores and one as an elevator operator in a hotel. On both these jobs they work six days each week and are paid approximately $60 per week. None of these had any complaints to make and seemed happy in their work.

One girl interviewed works for the Telephone Company. She had this to say:

When I first came to Chicago four years ago I started working for the Bell Telephone Company and I've been on the job ever since. The average wage for a five day week is $55.00, but I always work on Sunday and make from $65.00 to $70.00 per week. The work is easy but I'm not crazy about the hours I work and I'm looking forward to working normal time. At the moment, I work from 8:00 A.M to 12:30 P.M., and from 6:30 to 10:00 P.M. Luckily, the exchange I work at is near where I live so I can get home on my break during the day.
The writer also interviewed four nurses. Three of these are practical nurses and all have part high school education in Ireland. Two have trained since coming here and one has had experience in England but found that she could not get any credits for it here and had to begin as the others did. None of these girls had any desire to get to be a registered nurse. "It takes too much money and too much schooling," one told me. One of them had previously worked in domestic service before taking up nursing and the others began when they came to Chicago and three have come within the past four years, are qualified practical nurses now and all work in Catholic hospitals in Chicago. They said that they do not intend to make a career of it, although they do like nursing. The wages range from $240.00 per month to $280.00 according to experience. This is paid for a five day week. These girls live in the hospital and rates are lower than if they had to live on their own—approximately $30.00 per month. One girl is a registered nurse. She came here seven years ago. She had full high school education in Ireland and had been nursing for nine years in a Dublin hospital. She obtained her diploma after one year in a Catholic hospital in Chicago, where she has been working since. She is the oldest member of the female group interviewed. Her reason for leaving Ireland was as follows:

Just before the war started in 1939 I had finished my training as a nurse in Dublin and had all plans made to come to Chicago to my aunt as my parents had died when I was young and my brother and two sisters had settled down in Ireland at this time. Due to the war I could not leave but I never gave up the idea so I came finally in 1946. Wages in Dublin were about six pounds (eighteen dollars) per week. I make $285 a month here and I live in the hospital. I like nursing very much and I intend to make it my career. I have absolutely no intention of returning to Ireland.
Cost of Living (Women). Cost of living for unmarried women is much lower than that of unmarried men. Among thirty-one, five have rooms and board where they work, eight live with relatives, and eighteen live on their own, namely in flats with other girls. Where they pay room and board, the maximum is $15.00 per week, and more often $12.00. As I have pointed out already, girls who do waitress work get meals free at work. Girls who live in flats have told me they can do so at a cost of $10.00 per week. Most girls do most of their own laundry work, none have automobiles and they spend little or nothing on entertainment in comparison to men, while on the other hand, they spend twice as much on clothes. Taxes, also, are lower for girls, their salaries being smaller. The average single girl spends in the region of $1,500 in paying taxes and all other expenses, and consequently a girl making $3,000 a year would save $1,500, and then in the end is as well off as the man who makes much higher wages but also spends more of his salary.

It might be of interest to note here that twelve of the forty-three women interviewed smoke cigarettes, while eighteen told me they were total abstainers from all alcoholic drinks.

In explaining the wages earned by both men and women, the writer could not be as accurate as he would liked to have been because at least sixty per cent of those interviewed were slow to tell him much about wages or expenses and savings, and in no case could he ask anybody how much money they saved, and what taxes they paid. Among the Irish people such subjects are not spoken of in detail and it is considered prying into another's private affairs to ask pointed or direct questions. Therefore, the writer did not want to run the risk of putting his subjects too much on their guard or antagonizing them.
3. MARITAL STATUS

At the outset of section the reader is referred to page 33 and following of Chapter III where all statistical information on the conjugal status of the one hundred immigrants is given.

Thirty-one per cent of the group studied are married and nineteen per cent are engaged to be married indicating that within a year fifty per cent of the total will have been married.

To the writer's mind it is worth noting that a majority, eleven out of eighteen married, and six out of ten men engaged, have chosen not Irish born but Irish-American girls for their partners while an even bigger majority of the girls act contrariwise. Ten out of twelve are married to Irish-born men and seven out of nine engaged to Irish born. This is not only noticeable among the group chosen, but it's obvious among many other Irish immigrants and it's something that has intrigued the writer very much. He did not receive any explanation from anybody interviewed and they, especially those directly concerned, did not seem to advert that there was anything out of the ordinary in the fact.

It seems strange to the writer that Irish-American girls with a better education than the average Irish immigrant, revert to a lower educational and economical level by marrying an Irish boy instead of trying to advance by obtaining as a partner in marriage an American boy.

The writer has spoken of this to Irish-American girls (single) and one of them expressed her opinion thus, and the opinions of others while not so definite were very similar.
Parents who are Irish insist on their daughters going to dances where they meet mostly all Irish fellows, but they do not worry too much whether their sons go there or not and even if they wish them to, they do not have to go so they are not in the same position to meet Irish girls. American boys are not as acceptable in the home, especially non-Irish. If I took an Italian or Bohemian boy friend home, my parents would not speak to him and I would be in their bad books for weeks, but if I take in an Irish fellow, its fine, because he is their own type and level. American girls find it easier to get Irish-born boy friends as they have more in his eyes than the average Irish girl, while competition with American girls is stiffer and its more difficult to make an impression.

All the married men in the group have been more than four years in the country and also all those who are engaged, with two exceptions who have been here only three years.

Twenty-eight men have been here for more than four years, eighteen of whom are married and eight engaged, almost seventy per cent.

Twenty-nine women have been here for three years or more and this number includes thirteen (all married) and eight of these engaged, seventy-two per cent.

This shows that these immigrants wait some time to get established before getting married and that men wait longer, as a rule, than women and that almost seventy-five per cent of these are married after four years residence.

A look at Table will show the family sizes in all cases and it can be seen that out of fourteen childless couples only three have been married for more than two years.

Six married women work and it is interesting to note that none of these have children and three have been married less than one year and two for less than two years. The other girl has been married three years and she works as a practical nurse. Three of the other girls do waitress work and one does
office work, while another works in a food store as does one woman who is a
twidow. This woman has two boys who are going to high school and she has been
here for four years, leaving home after her husband died in Ireland. She has
her own apartment where she lives with her two boys and both of these boys do
part time work after school. She owns a farm in Ireland which she has rented
and from which she received some income. Two of her brothers and three sisters
are married here in Chicago and she has only one brother who has his own farm
and family home. She came to this country, she said, because she could not
manage a farm and anyway she did not like it, and secondly, she was influenced
in her decision because most of her own family were already here. She likes
this country, but is undecided if she will go back, much will depend on how
her boys turn out. At the moment, one of them aged sixteen says he will go
back to the farm when he is old enough, but the other aged fourteen is typically
American and would not dream of returning to Ireland.

Eighteen men who are married do the following types of work. Four
work for the C.T.A., two are truck drivers, four engineers, one elevator opera-
tor, one office worker, two factory work, three are skilled workers, either in
construction or in factories, and one works for the Gas Company. It will be
noticed that all these have got steady reliable jobs and even those which are
not highly paid have security to offer, which is most important to a married
man. It has been pointed out already that those who make big wages on such
jobs as construction and other hard manual work do not intend to keep it up for
long.

Two of the men who are married were married in England before coming
here, within a year after their marriage. Both have one child and are of the
opinion that it is better here for making a living.

Two married couples of all the men and women interviewed have their own homes, all the others live in apartments, (unfurnished). The average rent paid by these people for such apartments is $75.00 per month (for four or five room apartments). Not all of these who are married are perfectly satisfied that America is the ideal country or Chicago the ideal city in which to raise a family, although without exception, they said they intended to live and raise their families here in Chicago.

Twelve men (married), nine of whom had families and eight women, five of whom have families, said that they would be much happier if they could raise their children in Ireland. The following was their reasons, they said: "Even though wages are very good in this country, the cost of living is very high, especially when it comes to setting up a home and raising a family. It needs great courage to get married and even more to have a big family." Secondly, the worry about how children are going to turn out is great. The city life, which is not familiar to them and in which they did not grow up, exercises an influence for fear and terror over them. The danger of the criminal, the bad companion, and the evil haunts that are accessible, the danger of a non-Catholic marriage or ever of a child losing the faith are very real in the mind of the Irish immigrant in Chicago. One man expressed it thus: "Well," he said, "if we got married back in Ireland, we would have been poorer and our children would not have the same opportunities, but at least we could be sure they would grow up good living people."

The others of the married group spoken to were not blind to these dangers but they did not emphasize them so much but looked rather to the advan-
tages that their children would have in education and to make a good living.

None of the group were pessimistic about their ability to raise a family. All spoke of the "insecurity" of life here and the vital importance of health. One man put it thus:

In this country all you've got is your job and the weekly wage and everything including wife, family and home depends on that. Everything is fine if you get your health, but if you don't, I don't know what's going to happen. At home, in the country especially, on the farm most food was free and there was a wonderful spirit of co-operation and charity, but here it's everybody for himself, and if you fall in the race nobody will have time to pick you up and help out because he too has his own cares to look after.

This outlook was not that of married people alone but was that of almost all interviewed. It seemed to be something that the immigrant had not ever known in life at home, and something that was constantly before his mind in the new life in an American city.

4. SOCIAL LIFE OF THE POSTWAR IRISH IMMIGRANT TO CHICAGO

The economic life of the recent Irish immigrant in Chicago has been treated at length, pointing out how he earns his living and discussing how the working hours are spent. In this section their social life will be dealt with with a view to showing how the immigrant spends his free time. It has been pointed out earlier in this study that all the immigrants interviewed knew some Irish person, either friend or relative in Chicago, before coming here, while the majority had close relatives. Thus the first human associations in an alien city were Irish. Since coming here these people have met many different types of people of many nationalities and the writer was interested in knowing what were their reactions to them if they made friends outside the Irish community. Fifty-two men and forty women told me that outside those people
they had met in their various jobs and the friends they made there on that basis of common occupation that their friends and social relations were exclusively Irish or Irish-American. Eight others told me they had made very close friends among people of "Irish blood," to whom they lived in close proximity and one girl said she has become engaged to an American boy of German extraction. She is very happy and likes his family and friends. Her relatives and friends are not too keen on the idea but she said "It's my own life and I'm suiting myself."

No immigrant interviewed had any objection to other nationalities but the general attitude is when it comes to social life they feel more at home and are more acceptable among their own. Neither did they have any preferences among national groups and the answer received in the majority of cases was, "I don't know enough about them." The writer asked each one what was their attitude to the Negroes. All told him that they thought they were entitled to their rights and to fair play, but not all would concede the same rights. Only two men in the whole group said they would not mind living in the same neighborhood and these seemed to be partial toward Negroes, and to understand them, having known some of them from work. All the others said that they would not want to live with them, while fifty-seven said the Negroes should not associate or have equal rights with white people.

Irish entertainment was popular with all of the group. All those who are not married or recently married go regularly to Irish dances which are held on Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights and all have attended Irish dances even though at the moment owing to the cares of family life they cannot do so except on rare occasions. For the majority those are the only dances they go
to at all and only five girls and eight men have attended or attend American ballrooms and even in these cases it's not frequent. Irish music and songs was more popular than any kind in ninety-six per cent of the cases while the others told the writer they liked modern music best. The vast majority of the men said that as a rule they go only to Irish taverns if they want a drink, because they know it's the most likely place to meet a fellow countryman.

Thirty men have played Irish games either football or hurling at one time since coming to Chicago and sixteen still play these games. All, both men and women, have been to these games since coming here while eighty-five per cent said they go regularly and enjoy them very much. Thirty-four men and twelve women belong to the Irish Athletic Club. Seventeen men belong to the Ancient Order of Hibernians and nineteen belong to various other clubs not so large.

Most of these immigrants have come to Chicago within the last few years and consequently have not too much chance to join clubs and it is noticeable that the younger men, almost all, take a greater interest in athletics and the older section tend to join other clubs such as the Ancient Order of Hibernians. The writer found nobody who is a member of a club with no Irish affiliation or background. On the whole, he found that the Irish girls do not take very much interest in American games. Only eleven had ever gone to one of any kind and none professed very much interest. The same is not true of the men. In general they take a great interest in all forms of sport. They all like boxing. Thirty-five professed a great interest in baseball and football and all these had attended games and watch them regularly on television. Seven said they had no interest in them, but three of these do not care about Irish games either. The majority of those who have not attended those games have
not been more than two years in the country and have not had the same opportu-
nity as the others to get to know them. It is only at the end of two years in America that the writer can follow American football easily although he has always taken part in all types of games in Ireland. Television is quite popular among this group. Thirty-seven men and thirty-two women told him they like to watch television, while the others said they did not care for it at all.

It has been pointed out before that these immigrants do not constitute an educated group of people. Only fourteen per cent received full high school education and consequently it is to be expected that most of these would not be great readers. It was surprising to learn that ninety-one per cent told the writer they never read anything outside of the newspaper or an occasional magazine while fifty-two per cent of the whole group admitted that they liked to read good novels or history in Ireland. The main reason is that there is not much time for reading here and there is always something else to occupy one, especially now with television so common and attractive. This Irish group therefore, might be said to spend most of its free time in Irish circles and this is natural as it's difficult for anybody in the early twenties to adopt new pastimes and amusements when the old ones are readily accessible and popular among associates.

It is difficult to determine apart from what has just been mentioned if there are any important cultural carry-overs from Ireland. It is recognized of course to anybody who knows an Irish person that they bring an accent and idioms of speech which they never lose but most of the customs which are obtained in rural Ireland and belonged to the type of life there are not and
could not exist in America. The family Rosary in Ireland was really an institution but the immigrant leaves the family and cannot have such a custom here until he sets up his own family. It has been found that American families say the Rosary in common but how common the practice is cannot be stated. All the immigrants here said that it is not difficult to practice one's religion but not so easy as in Ireland on account of the many distractions of city life here. Almost without exception they complained that life is too fast here and that it's hard to keep up, having been used to an entirely different life in rural Ireland.

The immigrants do not find everything in Chicago to their liking but they can make a good living here. In the next chapter an effort will be made to set forth in the words of the immigrants themselves what they like and what they do not like about living in the city of Chicago.

5. PAST ECONOMIC EXPERIENCE

Here a brief sketch will be given of the past history of the immigrants studied as an aid to understanding their present position in the city of Chicago.

Five men were employed in other American cities before coming to Chicago and forty-seven came directly to Chicago. Two women worked in other American cities prior to working in Chicago, and forty-one women came directly to Chicago. Seven men were in active service in Korea, four were in Europe while in the service, three were in Japan and two stayed in America during their tenure. Altogether, sixteen were in the United States Army.

In Chapter III further information has been given on those who have
been in England before coming to Chicago. It should be noted that all men in England did unskilled manual work except five, three skilled construction workers and one carpenter and one mechanic. Without exception, they are similarly employed in Chicago since coming here. Five women were employed in England, three as student nurses and two in domestic service. None of these do similar work here. Of the three who did nursing, two are now employed as waitresses and one is now a practical nurse. One is a telephone operator and the other does factory work here.

The men who have been interviewed in this group were unanimous in saying that the work was much easier in England but wages were not as good, although they were better than in Ireland, and food was very bad. All are happy that they came here and agreed that this is a better country all around to make a home in. The average wage in England is about ten pounds per week (thirty dollars) but the cost of living is not as high as in America. Three girls did nursing in England but two gave up the idea and went for waitress work because they could make more money and had less responsibility and more freedom they said. One girl who worked in England as a domestic servant spoke as follows:

I left Ireland to go to England when I was seventeen. There were seven of us in the family. I have four sisters and two brothers and both my parents are living in the west of Ireland. My sister who had gone to England before me was the oldest in the family and I am next. I did housework in London, England, for ten months as did my sister also. I was making two pounds a week (six dollars) but had little other expenses and could save most of my wages. I like the social life in England very much as there were a lot of young people (Irish). I always wanted to come to America and I left England to come here five years ago. My parents did not oppose my coming here and since I came my older sister has come here from England and two other sisters have come from Ireland. I work for the Telephone Company here and have been back for a vacation in Ireland two years ago. I plan to get
married and settle down here next year. There is no comparison between England and America. America is just wonderful and I hated England.

Among the whole group of men and women interviewed only seventeen men and fifteen women had never been employed away from home. In interviewing those people and comparing them with those who had been from home, the writer could not find any difference in the type of employment or wage standard here in Chicago but found that they were in the same kind of jobs and obtained equal wages and the same is true about those who had been to England, neither was there any definite distinction in family size or background of wealth. There is this difference though, that boys or girls who had never been employed outside their homes have come direct to Chicago in all cases and the same is true of those who have been in England. On inquiring about wages in Ireland it was found that wages in comparison to American standards are low even allowing for a big difference in the standard of living. The average was five pounds per week for men and three pounds ten shillings for women. Fifteen and ten dollars respectively.

About those who came to other cities in this country before coming to Chicago there is little to note. The men seemed quite definite in holding that wages here, for the laboring man, (they are all unskilled) are better than the cities they've been previously in, namely, New York and Los Angeles. Two girls have been in Boston and Cleveland respectively. One is doing waitress work here which she did also in Boston and her reason for moving is that she is anxious to see the country and how the people live in the different parts. She intends to move out west to Los Angeles and San Francisco next year. The other girl came here because she did know many Irish people in Cleveland and had no
social life there; she did office work there and is similarly engaged here.
Both agreed that wages were just a little better here. Sixteen of the men
interviewed were in the Armed forces and seven saw active service in Korea.
All said that the army was a wonderful training for them and they admitted that
they are proud to have served but one boy seemed to express the common opinion
when he spoke thus:

I came here four years ago and after a year here was taken into the
army and I spent fourteen months in Korea. It was tough and thank
God I came home safe. Many of my buddies died there and some of them
were from Ireland too. Although I'm proud to have served there's one
grudge I'll always hold against America and her government and I'll
express it thus - We Irish boys were good enough to fight for her and
die if necessary, some of us did, but we were not good enough to be
made citizens when we donned the uniform.

All these boys have gone back to work and seem perfectly adjusted. Four are
now married and six are engaged to be married. It is impossible to give any
idea of these immigrants interviewed from one job to another. Where there has
been a change in work or field of work of any great moment the writer noted it
in the individual cases concerned. All other cases when jobs have been changed
have no important bearing on the life of the immigrant and thus are not worth
noting in this study.
CHAPTER VI

THE LIFE HISTORIES OF SIX POSTWAR-IRISH IMMIGRANTS TO CHICAGO

In the three previous chapters the author has set down his findings on the postwar Irish immigrant to Chicago based on interviews and conversation with these people and on his observations of the Irish immigrant here. He has set forth all the information he could obtain in statistical form; he has dealt with the background of the immigrant, his coming to Chicago, and his economic and social life in this city.

As a help to understanding this Irish immigrant better, the author will give in this chapter essays by six of the people he has studied. This small or select group has not been selected for any special reasons or because of outstanding characteristics of any kind, but because he thinks they represent a cross-section of the one-hundred people studied, and should be more or less typical of the whole group. Statistics and many hard facts, while they furnish the reader with much detailed information, tend to blur the underlying personality because they do not give any indication of the feelings or attitudes of the person studied. The life history gives the personal touch—brings alive and gives face to what has already been portrayed in figures.

In this chapter, six life histories are given; three men and three women, among whom one man and one woman have been married and settled down in Chicago after leaving Ireland. These essays have been written up by the author.
using the information received from the respective immigrants. In them he has used the ideas as spoken by the immigrants in their own words. Each essay is the story as told by the person at the time of interview. None of the ideas, remarks or idioms are the author's, and he has striven to write them exactly as he heard them.

The life histories or essays do not contain all the information and facts concerning the speaker, but rather the philosophy and attitudes of the recent Irish immigrants to Chicago and they should round off and complete the picture already presented in the preceding chapters.

1. LIFE HISTORY 1 - SINGLE MALE

I was born in County Galway, Ireland in 1924. I am the oldest in a family of two boys and five girls. Both my father and mother are still living in Ireland where my dad owns a small farm of 35 acres - typical of rural Ireland. My mother emigrated when she was a young girl and spent nine years in Boston, doing domestic service there. She returned to Ireland to visit and met my father who lived in the neighboring village, and she changed her mind about returning to the U.S., and they were married and settled down on the farm.

I got my education at the local primary school as did all my family. Our parents could not afford to give us higher education, in fact, it was recognized in our local community that after primary school, our education ended. When I finished school, about the age of 15, I worked with my father on the farm until I came to this country four years ago. I was not paid wages and I did not expect any as I felt I owed that much to my parents, but as my
brother and sisters grew up also, I began to see that there was no future for me at home, as I would have to wait many years before I could get married at home as all the others were younger, and my parents too, are comparatively young.

Two years before I left Ireland, two of my sisters left home and came to Chicago, and finally I decided to leave home also, much to my parents disappointment as they expected me to have the homestead and settle down there eventually, but they did not oppose my leaving when I did make up my mind. I myself, would like to have stayed at home, but after all, I wanted to make a living and start my own home when I wanted to, and I don't think that would have been possible in Ireland as the wages I could have made were too low.

Three of my sisters are now here in Chicago, my younger brother is at home along with two of my sisters, and he will someday inherit my father's farm, to which I gave up my right on leaving. I was not happy on leaving Ireland and if I could have made a living there, I would never have done so, and I think that's how most of us Irish fellows feel about it. Looking back on my school days and my school friends from the neighboring districts, very few of them have remained in Ireland and the vast majority of these who emigrated went to England.

In my father's family all the older children emigrated to America and the youngest one got the farm. They all came to Chicago and that is why my sisters and I came here where we have two uncles and four aunts. We all stayed with our aunt when we came and that was a great help as it was really a "home away from home" for us and as her family are all married now she took a great interest in us and gave us all her attention as did here husband who hails from
County Galway also. Their home is on the south side of Chicago. I came to America by boat, arriving here November, 1948. I felt bad on leaving home as I had never been away for long previously, but after I had said good-bye, I began to look forward to a new country and I guess with excitement I didn't have much time to be lonely. New York I thought was tremendous. I was a bit afraid and I was glad to get on the train for Chicago where I would know somebody and be able to talk to them. My uncle got me a job on the streetcars. I was working in the barns on the southside. I did not find it hard to settle down and I soon met and made friends with Irish boys, who like myself, had just come out here. The work was not hard and the hours were nice also. I was working days. The wages were good also. I was able to take home $55.00 per week for five days, forty hours, and I worked Saturday and overtime whenever I got the chance and that was so much extra. I paid my aunt $15.00 a week for board and most weeks I had about $50.00 left. More money than I ever had in my life. I started saving but for the first six months I did not put much away as I bought a lot of clothes and sent home some money to my parents who had paid my way out here.

I was surprised after fifteen months to find that I had saved $1,500 and I did not stint myself and had a pretty good time. I took part in all the Irish social affairs and went to Irish dances only. I was overjoyed to find that there were Irish games here and I played football during the summer as I had done back home. I did not nor did I ever since join any club. At that time I was quite settled down and happy here and then I was called for the Army in 1950. I did not want to go as I was overage, so I decided to take a trip home and stay until I would be outside its grasp. I went home in August,
1950 and stayed until I was outside the draft requirements, which was nine months. My parents were overjoyed as they thought I was coming to stay and I could have stayed, my father told me, and when he told me, I decided that I would give it a try, but I soon found that I would never again settle down to the life that I had been so happy in until two years previously. The work on the farm was distasteful and the living conditions different, and I know I could not make as good a living and I was very unsettled although I did give it an honest try while I was at home. I knew I could never again settle down to the quiet routine at home. America had changed me. I was very mixed up and shocked to discover this, that I could not make a home where I had been for twenty-four years and amongst my own people. It was all different because I had left. I don't mean that I did not like home; I did and being with my friends and going back to all the places I had been as a boy was wonderful, but it was different when it came to making a living, so almost brokenhearted, I returned to Chicago after nine months, knowing that I would not make my home in Ireland.

I got a job then on the Illinois Central Railroad working in the Produce Department. The hours were two until twelve, six days a week working time, and now I can make more money there as I can work overtime. Almost always I can take home $70.00 and sometimes up to $85.00 per week and I think that is great wages and that's the big difference between here and Ireland. If you are willing to work here, you can make a great living, and I intend to make my home here and get married after another year. I'm engaged to an Irish girl from Galway and I think that an Irish boy should choose an Irish girl for his wife, as they have very much in common.
I have an automobile of my own now and I intend to have enough money for a down payment on a new home, not too classy. My girl friend works in a factory and has been there for three years so I think we should make out well if we get good health. I intend to become a citizen. I think America is a great country for making a living, but I think it's very fast and I think if the people did not rush as much, it would be much better. There is one thing that worries me here, namely, that a man depends so much here on his weekly pay and if anything happens to him, it's tough on the family as they have not much to fall back on. In Ireland the farm was always there, so health is very important here. I don't know much about American politics and I have not much interest in them. I think they should do something about the colored people here as it's not fair to have them moving into white neighborhoods and wrecking a man's life savings by depreciating the value of property. I am not against them, but I think they should live in separate places and I do not want to live with them.

I am happy here, but I do sometimes long to be back home and the one thing I miss most outside my parents is the disposition of the people. They were so happy with so little and here it's a race to get more all the time. If somebody were to ask my opinion about coming out here, I would say, if you can make a reasonable living over there, do not leave because if you do, you will never be content there again. The cost of living is high but that does not matter as wages are very good. I am and always will be proud to be Irish and I find that being Irish here is always a help.

I believe it is true from my experience that the young people are leaving Ireland simply because they pay better wages in England and America.
and definitely the people, especially the men in rural Ireland get married too late in life because they must wait to get the farm before they can get married.

2. LIFE HISTORY II - SINGLE MALE

I was born in a country village, about ten miles from Tralee, County Kerry, Ireland. Like most of the boys and girls I knew I had to leave home to make a living and I suppose I will have to spend the rest of my life far away from home, although I still like that and it's many a night I feel lonesome for my own home and native place but there is no use crying for something in the past and so I make the best of life as I find it.

It's hard for me to write the story of my life as I am not much use with the pen and I never cared about going to school but I'm sorry now I did not make more use of my time there.

Twenty-three years ago I was born and a lot happened to me since that time. As far back as I can remember, I heard about people going to America and I think since that I intended to cross the ocean too. There was a big family of us, my father, mother and fourteen kids, eight boys and six girls. I was one of the youngest, number twelve. I have a brother and sister younger and the brother who is next to me is seven years older than me so I am much closer to my young brother and sister than the others as they are twins and only a year younger and all the others are much older than I am and the oldest ones had left home before I went to school. They had to go as it was hard for my father and mother to rear such a big family. So when they were able to work they left home and got work with the big farmers in North
Kerry and Cork and only came home once in a while. My sisters, too, went to
work in the cities, either in stores or doing housework and we younger ones
helped at home when we were able.

The farm we had was small and poor and we had only sheep. In our
part of the country a lot of sheep were raised. The country around was moun-
tainy and barren and not much good for anything else. When I was a boy, I
spent many a day watching these sheep on the mountains for my father, driving
them there in the morning and back again in the evening. It was a grand way
to spend the time and even then I loved the beauty of the wild mountains and
lakes amid the Kerry hills.

As all the other kids, I went to the local school. I liked to go
there mostly because I could play football, but I did as little work in the
classroom as I possibly could and was glad when I was fourteen and could stay
home.

When I quit school I thought I was a man and knew everything, but
now I know that I had to get many hard knocks from the world before I grew up.
I was big and strong for my age and never was a day sick. My oldest brother
was then at home with my father and mother, so there was nothing for me to do
so I went into the town of Tralee, having said good-bye at home. It was my
first time to leave and I felt like crying but I thought that would be childish,
so I kept the brave side out. Then I arrived in town and joined the line of
men on the corner of the market square who were waiting to be hired by the
farmers from the North prairie lands. Tis often I think of this custom which
I never saw outside Tralee or Killarney. It's not like going to the Labor
Exchange in England or the Unemployment Offices here, you just stand in line
with the other young fellows (the same was true of poor girls who wanted to be hired for housework by the better off farmers, they stand in line too), waiting for some old farmer to come along and make his bargain, getting a man for as low wages as possible. I've seen men come up and feel a guy's muscles and say, "I'll hire you, you should be a great one to gather the hay and oats and handle a spade."

This is the nearest I've seen to slavery although I don't know much about it and nothing at all at the time of its happening, and was glad to be hired at all. I was hired anyway and taken home by a farmer and his wife who had a big farm in North Kerry. I got enough to eat and slept in a bed in the barn and got ten shillings per week, ($1.50 here), and I was quite satisfied at that then and I spent two and a half years moving here and there doing that kind of work.

It's no wonder that young people leave Ireland after that kind of treatment and often are bitter against it and even become communists if that's what it has to offer a young guy after leaving school, I don't know why it can boast about being such a great Catholic country and no wonder we leave it. Although, thank God, I never thought of giving up my religion after all, I was big and strong and work came easy to me.

After two and a half years at that kind of work, I got wise and decided I could do better. I went to Tralee and got a job on the Public Works there and I was being paid three pounds a week, a lot of money then, but by the time I had paid for my digs (living quarters) and other expenses I never saved any, and little I could, I spent foolishly. I learned to paint during this time as I was helping a painter on a contract job and this trade has been very
useful to me since. After about one and a half years, I quit that too. I was getting tired of it and fellows back from England told me I was wasting my time for the kind of wages I was getting and I believed them. I went home to my mother and father for a while and then I left for England. It didn't bother me then, England I thought was near and I could come home when I wanted to, but it wasn't that easy although I did make a few trips home while I was there. I went to London and looked up some of the Irish fellows I knew here. At this time two of my brothers and three of my sisters (older) were married in London and I was almost at home there as I had three other single brothers and a sister there also. I got a job painting and was making good money, about fourteen to twenty pounds a week. It was hard to save though, the cost of living was high and food was bad. I stayed in England for three years and I could have done fine there and in a way I'm sorry I didn't stay as I made many friends and spent some great times there, but I wanted to travel, especially to see America. I'll never be sorry I went to England as I learned a lot there, and I could face life in any part of the world now. England is a tough place and a lot of Irish boys and girls lose their faith and go wrong there and it's hard to figure it out, but you know what I said before about the things they come up against in the poorer parts of Ireland sometimes makes them bitter and when they make money, they are inclined maybe to listen to the many enemies who are too ready to blame good living and honesty and the church for all the poverty that is in the world and then, too, the communists are very smart and it's easy to talk an Irish fellow who has poor education into believing their stuff and especially when they start blaming the guys with the money and the wealthier hounding down the poor laborer and so that's what happens. Many a good lad
from a good Irish home and parents goes wrong and it makes me sad to think of it. Thank God I was safe because I was no different from the rest, but I was lucky and I suppose my mother was praying for me. I had my grievances leaving Ireland and still have, but still I know that it can’t be right to give up my religion, that’s not the way to remedy it. The Irish there often had no one to tell them what to do and I think as well that the priests didn’t take enough interest in our parishes.

I came to America a year ago to my uncle in Boston. I stayed there a few months but I knew some pals here in Chicago and I came here at the beginning of the year and have been here since. I was excited about coming here and I didn’t miss leaving home and friends too much, but now I realize that I’m far away from home and it’s not easy to go home like I used to and that makes it tough. Although I’ve been away most of the time since I was fourteen, I still long for home to see my mother and father who are still alive and with God’s help, I will not settle down or get married before I make a trip home and sometimes I even think I could settle down over there if I could get enough money together to buy a little business.

I did not have any trouble getting a job here. After hanging around the city for a week, I went to work for a building contractor as a painter and I’ve been with them ever since. I work five days per week and eight hours a day. I make good money. I take home $90.00 a week, but I have to pay room and board and I spend some on the weekends. When you are living in a rooming house, there is not much to do and you have to go and find your own entertainment and pay for it. Too, even though it’s easy to make money, it’s easy to spend it. From now on I think I’ll be able to save though, as I am settled down and know
my way around the city pretty good.

I have no definite plans for the future. I don't know how I'm going to like it and I have no intentions of getting married for at least four years. Once you get married here, it's goodbye to going home for a long time.

It's not a bad life here and much better than England and I wish more of the young Irish people would come here instead of going to England. The wages are better, the food is better and living conditions are better, and on the whole an Irishman has a better chance to make good here. The Irish here have more of a background and nobody is against you because you are Irish or have a brogue.

That's all I have to tell of myself but here is one thing else I have to say. I saw a lot in England and I became interested in a lot of things and read a lot about communism and labor because I heard so much about it among the workers and the unions. Most fellows know very little about these things they should know, and the same is true in Chicago. The priests don't seem to know the everyday problems or if they do we don't hear much about them. It would be a good idea to have some kind of Catholic labor paper. The communists have theirs, and why can't we have ours. There is a need for it as certainly we don't know the answers and I'm sure there are answers.

3. LIFE HISTORY 111 - MARRIED MALE

I was born in County Mayo, Ireland twenty-nine years ago. My father owned a small farm, about eighteen acres and there were six children in our family, five boys and one girl. My sister was the oldest and I am the second youngest in the family. My oldest brother died when I was seven so that left
five of us. He died after an operation for appendix. I hardly remember him now as I was young then.

As I look back on my boyhood at home there is nothing outstanding to relate about it. Our family was about the same as most of those I knew in my boyhood. We didn't have much I will say, but we were never hungry and always very happy. My father worked hard on the farm and we helped him when we were able to work. Even before going to school we had jobs to do, such as milking a cow or getting the water supply for the day from the well, and after school we had something to do also. Maybe work in the fields or at saving turf in the bog and getting something from the local store for mother.

As I look back on my boyhood at home there is nothing strange about it except that I was happy and carefree, but I never had a holiday and seldom had any money but I didn't need it and could enjoy myself fine in the company of my pals at games or hunting or even listening to the older people tell stories. When my oldest brother was eighteen and I was fourteen he went to England and I remember it well. My mother and father felt bad as he was the first one to leave home. I didn't understand then as I do now, that he had to leave because he could not earn very much at home and my parents needed all the help he could send them. Soon afterwards my sister left for England also, and we, the younger members of the family have a lot to be thankful for, because they sent home most of the money they earned to my parents which was a great help to them and made life easier and more pleasant for us all.

Both my sister and brother are now married to Irish partners in London and seem to have made their homes there.

When I was seventeen I started work with the local carpenter in
order to learn my trade. For the first year I got no pay and after that for
the next two years I got ten shillings per week which was just barely enough
for pocket money. All this time I was living at home with my parents and
brothers and helped at work on the farm occasionally. After three and a half
years I was pretty well up at carpentry and I heard that they were very well
paid in Dublin and I decided to have a go and see if I could make a living
there as I always was determined to stay in Ireland. My brothers and sisters
leaving seemed to have made an impression on me and made me resolve that I
would never leave home if I could. I got a job in Dublin with a building con-
tractor and my wages for a start were six pounds ($18.00) per week and this
I thought was a good wage but I soon found that having paid two pounds for
digs (food & room) and pocket money and insurance in addition to clothing ex-
penses that I could save very little in a week but was quite satisfied as I
had plenty money to spend and could go home when I had time off. I loved city
life in Dublin and would give anything to go back and make my home there.

After almost three years in Dublin I found that I had only saved
180 pounds and I was beginning to realize that at that rate of going I could
never afford to settle down and get married so I decided to go to America, more
or less against my will, and certainly I would never go to England because my
brother advised me against it. I came to Chicago because I have an uncle here.
My parents were not too keen on my coming but they did not oppose me, I sup-
pose they figured I was old enough to know my own mind. I came here in the
month of May and I never forgot that first summer, the heat nearly killed me.
I did not have any trouble getting work, my uncle saw to that and he got me
into the union and then I was secure. Wages were good. I made $2.45 an hour
and about $100.00 a week and some weeks with overtime I make $140.00, as Saturdays are double pay. The cost of living and taxes are high and for a single guy who knocks around with the boys it is hard to save money but it's a big difference from Ireland. When I was two years here I had saved almost $4,000. I don't think I would ever have that much money in Ireland.

Soon after coming here I met a girl from County Clare and after two years we decided to get married. She had been here four years then, having left Ireland when she was nineteen. She made a trip home a year before we were married to see her parents, but I was only a year here then and decided it would be foolish to spend almost $2,000 after such a short time. At the time we were getting married, she had almost $1,200 saved.

We got a flat at $50.00 per month and furnished it. That cost almost $1,000. Our wedding and honeymoon cost us $2,000 (including clothes, reception and honeymoon expenses) but we made $1,800 on gifts and that left our expenses at $800. So starting married life, we had over $200 in the bank and we felt very happy and secure.

My wife worked for almost a year after we were married and her salary was sufficient for us to live on so I could put all mine aside. But, I did not save it all as we decided to get a new car while we could afford to as the old one I had was not much good. With a trade-in it cost me $1,800. After one and a half years our first child, a boy was born, and sixteen months later, three months ago we had a baby girl. Recently we had to have a bigger apartment and now we pay $74.00 per month for five rooms and we live in the South side of Chicago as we both have since coming here.

Since our first year of married life we have not been able to save
very much and since then practically all my wages have gone on paying the hospital, doctor bills, and clothes for the children. Even though insurance helps I think medical care and treatment is very expensive and a man certainly needs to make good wages to take care of a home, wife and family. I'm happy to be married and have a nice home and wife, and I am not afraid of the responsibilities which I know is great and if I get good health and can work I have no fears for the future. I have been lucky since I came here, and I hope my luck continues.

Raising a family here is entirely different from what I knew at home. Children in the country get wonderful care and have everything they want while at home we had little to get but I think we had a happier childhood. My wife and I were both raised in Ireland, but we intend to treat our children as the American children are treated and bring them up the same way. We hope we can make them good Catholics and good citizens of this country. We feel that is our duty. This country has given us a lot, namely, a home and a good living and we have our duty too. We both intend to become American citizens, although for my part and I think I can speak for my wife too, part of my heart in back in Ireland and it would be just perfect if we could have a home like this and as much money in Ireland.

I've seen a lot of crime in this city life and I know many kids from good homes go wrong and meet bad companions. That worries me sometimes, but I'm hoping our kids will be spared this fate.

Since we have been married social life has been curtailed very much and most of the time I am home but I don't mind and like the life very much. We have a television set and that is a wonderful pastime and we have also our
own friends, all Irish or Irish-American, who visit us and we also visit them. Occasionally we get a babysitter and go out to some Irish entertainment or dance and in the summertime we take our boy out to outdoor entertainment.

After three years of married life I truthfully say I'm quite happy here in Chicago and I don't think I would have been as well off if I had stayed in Ireland.

4. LIFE HISTORY IV - SINGLE FEMALE

I was born in County Kerry, Ireland and I am twenty-six years old. Both my father and mother are still living in Ireland. My father is a farmer in west Kerry and owns a small farm. Neither of my parents have ever been from Ireland. There were eight children in our family, six girls and two boys.

The people in my native district were poor and mostly all farmers. The land is bad and really not suitable for cultivation and it is difficult to make a living there so it is a recognised thing for young people to leave home either for England or America as soon as they are old enough to work. As far as I know this has always been the way and I do know that there are very many people from the Dingle country here in Chicago and also in most other big cities in the states and there is one town, namely Springfield, Mass. where almost every Irish person there is from Dingle. All the families I know home were big and our family of eight was nothing out of the ordinary.

At the moment there are four sisters of us here in Chicago, one of them is married to an Irish man, also from Kerry and they have a baby boy. I had one brother here for three years, he was the oldest one of the family, my married sister was next and I'm number three. My brother was taken in the
Army and was sent to Korea. He was wounded in battle there and was allowed to
go home to Ireland. My mother pleaded with him to stay and he did stay al­
though he knew he could never return to America if he did not return to the
Army. He is married at home now but I think he regrets his decision and would
like to come to this country but he can't. My two sisters at home are too
young to come to this country but I imagine they will come here eventually,
as will my younger brother also.

I have been here five years and I do not regret coming here. I
liked Ireland and always will but there was no money to be made over there. I
had grammar school education and one year at a technical school. I liked
going to school but I always knew that higher education was out of the ques­
tion.

Before leaving home I helped my mother and father with their work
on the farm. When I came here I always intended to return at least for a
vacation. I promised my mother I would, but it does not seem that possible
now as I intend to be married in October. My future husband is an Irishman
also. If I were to take a trip home I would spend too much money and we need
all we have to establish a home here, even though we both worked since coming
here. I regret not being able to go home and no matter what people say I think
no Irish person can be perfectly contented in this country and there must
always be a longing in his heart for his home and native land.

Since I came here I worked on three different jobs, all in Chicago.
I've been in a food store, factory work, and now I'm doing waitress work in a
downtown restaurant. All these jobs are hard work and I have no great love
for any of them but I must work to get money. The waitress work is the best
because I make better wages at it but it's hard as I must be on my feet all the time and must be nice to all the customers even though I sometimes am in bad form myself. My two sisters work in the same restaurant as do nineteen other Irish girls in all. That is a good feature as naturally we have much in common and get along very well although we do have our differences at times I will admit. Work starts at 9:00 A.M. for me, I have a break from 2:30 to 5:00 P.M., then I work from 5 to 8 P.M. It is a long day and I would prefer a job where I could get through at 5:00 as most girls do but then most of these jobs I could get like that are not as well paid. My wages are about $75.00 per week including tips and salary and also including taxes.

We get our uniforms for work and all our meals free here at work, so with three of us sisters working here we only have to buy food and cook at home on Sunday, and we do not have to buy clothes for work. We have our own flat (furnished). Living this way is cheap for us and I can save thirty to forty dollars a week, averaging over $1,500 per year. It is not easy to save money though. What you do save you must work very hard for and I never like to work at all if I can help it.

Although I miss Ireland I have never been unhappy here and I'm not sorry I came here because I realize that I could never have at home what I have here, especially nice clothes and enough money and then I hope a nice home. I've always gone to Irish social functions since I came here and I could never dream of going elsewhere to enjoy myself. As for marrying a fellow who was not Irish, well I never even considered that. I don't think I would get married at all if I could not marry an Irishman and I suppose for a girl that's saying a lot.
This country has plenty of faults but they are not big ones. The most important thing in any country is that it affords a good living and America does. Living is fast and it's a big change from Ireland. It used to be so peaceful over there and I think the people were very happy too even though they did not have much money, but I suppose it would be difficult to settle down there after five years in Chicago.

Since I know I must stay here, I am looking forward to getting married and having our own home someday, although we can't afford that yet. I know it's not so easy raising a family here and I think parents must worry a lot about their children here if they are going to be faithful to their religion and God, and also about the company they keep. There is so much crime, divorce, broken and bad marriages and sin around the corner that it makes me shudder at times to think of someone of my family being swept along one of the roads to destruction. It worries me when I think of these things but I hope of the best and I know God will help me to do what is right.

This is the advice I would give to a young girl coming out here. If you can get a good job or a nice boy from Ireland, stay here, but if not, come out here and be prepared to work hard and you will be successful.

As most of the people in my native district emigrate, I can't say anything about late marriages in Ireland, but it seems to me that the Irish boys and girls here mostly get married before they reach thirty.

5. LIFE HISTORY V - SINGLE FEMALE

I was born in North Cork, Ireland twenty-three years ago. There were five of us in the family, my father, mother, one sister, one brother and
myself and I am the youngest. Our home is about one and a half miles from the nearest town, the population of which is about 3,000. It's a reasonably big town in the country. It has two cinemas and three dance halls, but no factory. We were farmers. My father owned about thirty-five acres of land, and it was all good land. We lived in what is known as the "Golden Vale" of Munster which is famous throughout Ireland for its fertile land and very suitable to dairy farming. We were dairy farmers as were all the people in the district around us. Neither my father or mother were ever away from Ireland and emigration was not very common among the people I knew, in fact, most of the girls and boys I knew at home never emigrated, but emigration was not unknown and I do know quite a few people, at least I've heard of them, who went to America.

Our family was different though. My father died when I was ten years old and thus my mother had to take care of everything as we were too young to help much. Running the farm was hard for her and she had to pay a man to do the work in my father's place, so we didn't have much money to spare. My mother was very good to us and deserves great credit as she had to work very hard to raise us kids. As soon as my brother was through grammar school he began to work on the farm but he did not like it and finally at the age of eighteen, much to my mother's disappointment, he left for America and settled in Chicago where we have two uncles.

My sister and myself remained at home and when I finished at the local school I started secondary school at the convent in the nearby town to which I cycled in each morning and home again in the evening. My sister did not go to the convent school but remained at home with mother, anyway she
could not afford to send two of us. After a time my sister too became dis-
satisfied at home as she was not earning any money and said that she never
would if she remained there, so she went to Chicago also. When she left I quit
school as my mother needed me at home, and anyway I was glad as I never cared
about it.

After three and a half years in Chicago my brother decided that he
had been foolish to leave the farm and nice living he could make in Ireland.
He wrote to my mother saying that he had saved $7,000 and meant to come home
to the farm. She was overjoyed and welcomed him with open arms. After a year
at home, during which time he had completely settled down and was doing very
well, he got married to a girl from the neighboring village whom he had known
since childhood. About six months after that I decided to go to America too,
as I was getting tired of home and becoming restless and wanted to travel more
for excitement I think, than to make a living. I had it too nice at home and
being the youngest one, was spoiled by my mother. I always had a good time
and went to dances and entertainments all over the countryside and I have my
pleasant memories of Ireland to look back on. I never had to work hard and I
really didn't know why I left it. My mother pleaded with me not to go, but it
was no use. Her tears and prayers couldn't stop me and I had to have my way.

So I came here to Chicago in May, 1950 and I came to my uncle's
place where my sister was also staying. My uncle is married but has no family,
so they really treated us like we were their own children and were just de-
lighted to have us.

After two weeks here I got a job in a food store, working the cash
register. I was making $55.00 per week and I thought that was a lot of money.
I worked six days a week. When I came first I felt lonely but the novelty and excitement and getting to know the city kept me occupied. I liked the work at first and met many people and got around to Irish dances and social functions with my sister and it was great. That lasted about two months and then I got used to it. Work was not so easy and I had to get up in the morning no matter how tired I felt and I had to be on time and this was a big change from home where time mattered little to me. If I had enough money then, I would have gone back but since I didn't and was too proud to ask for it I stuck it out. When I was three months here my sister's boyfriend to whom she had recently become engaged was called by the army and was likely he thought to be sent to Korea and he didn't want that. He decided to go home and my sister followed him in two months and both were married in Ireland, and with the money they had saved bought a nice business near my home and are doing fine. When my sister went home I really began to hate it here and felt that I too would soon go home. I hated my job and after about eight months I quit it and took up nursing in a catholic hospital studying to be a practical nurse and my uncle helped me out as he saw I was very unsettled and wanted me to get work at which I would be happy. Strangely I liked nursing and I am now qualified and earning $270.00 per month.

I have got used to life here now and I'm more settled down and like my work very much. Social life here I don't care about, although I go to dances quite a bit. My friends are all Irish and I would never feel at home with anybody else. I had a much better time home and I'm still sorry I left although it had done me a lot of good and made me face reality and rely on myself. I still stay with my aunt and uncle and they are both very good to me.
and I have saved good money as I don’t have to spend much.

I don’t know at the moment whether I will stay here in Chicago or go back to Ireland. I have no intention of getting married here yet as I have not met anybody I would want to marry. I plan on going back to Ireland for a vacation next summer and if I still like it as well as I do now I’ll go back to stay hoping to meet and marry some man who has a nice farm at home. As I say, I’m undecided and I want to wait and see. I know if I go to Ireland to live, I won’t have the same kind of money as here, but money isn’t everything. There’s plenty of money here but I’ve seen more happy people and homes in Ireland. It seems nobody feels secure here and they worry too much about money and material things and have little time for anything else. It’s rush, rush all the time and certainly as a way of life, Ireland is far ahead of the American.

I have always been on edge here, I’m scared to leave the house alone after dark, I’m scared to stay in the house alone and I would not dare enter many parts of Chicago on my own even during the day. Certainly I have gained much in experience, but I would be just as well off not to know even though they say it’s part of an education. I’ve heard Ireland criticised in this country and I know it has its faults, one of them being me who left for no good reason, but from what I’ve seen of life in Chicago and comparing it to Ireland the comparison I would make would be that of the hardened criminal to the innocent child.

6. LIFE HISTORY VI - MARRIED FEMALE

I was born in County Leitrim, Ireland twenty-four years ago. Both
my parents are still living in Ireland. We lived in a town with a population of almost 3,000 (as big as most provincial towns in rural Ireland). I have three sisters and one brother. I am the oldest one of the family and my brother is the youngest (age fifteen now). My father is a mechanic in a garage and he makes from six to seven pounds per week now, and in Ireland that is very good especially outside a city. I can remember the time though when he was not making that much when we were young he was earning four pounds at most, but even though wages have almost doubled I don't think he is better off as the cost of living has soared also and I'd say his wages, even though only four pounds per week, go just as far as eight pounds today.

We had a house on the outskirts of the town and about one acre of land in which we grew enough potatoes and vegetables for our own use and my mother also kept poultry so we never bought eggs. My father took care of our garden in his spare time and when we were growing up we did not have much to do in our spare time. In fact, I did not know what hard work was in Ireland. My mother did make sure though that all us girls learned to cook well and for that I'm very thankful. When I was through grammar school I attended high school which was conducted by the sisters in the town, as I was a day pupil. I did not like school and to be honest was not a brilliant scholar. Studies were difficult and I was very happy when my parents allowed me to quit school after two years. I was then sixteen years old and since I had now quit school I did get a job in a draper or clothing store in my native town. I loved the work and could live at home with my parents. Wages were very small by American standards. As a beginner I made two pounds per week for the first year and got a raise of ten a week each half year after that while I was there. I
didn't think it bad though and my mother allowed me to keep all the pocket
money I wished and I had a wonderful time. I can truthfully say that these
were the happiest days of my life. I'm sure if I had stayed at home I could
be just as well off as in this country, not materially, but money is not every-
thing in life. While I was home saving money did not worry me, although I did
save a little. It's not so important there and I have no hesitation in saying
that I would have been perfectly happy and would be assured of a longer life
over there.

After three years of working I decided to go to America and Chicago
was my choice because I have two aunts and an uncle here. I don't really
know why I came as I was happy and had a good time and not much work at home.
I was just restless I guess and wanted to travel, so I told myself. I had
heard a lot about America from relatives here—it seemed wonderful to me then
and finally all the glamour and money I heard about dragged me away from home.
My parents did not seem to mind my leaving and although I was lonely on leaving
home I was not brokenhearted because I was all excited about the new and won-
derful place I was going to. I assured myself I was going to make a future
without much trouble. I did not know any young people who had gone to America
from near home, although many had, but if I did I might not have expected so
much.

That is five years ago now and much has happened to me in the mean-
time. From being a young carefree girl on leaving Ireland I seem to have lived
and seen enough in that five years to make me old beyond my years. Everybody
knows who knows America how wrong my ideas were about it, and when I say it
took me a whole year to get over the shock I got and the terrible disappoint-
ment, I'm telling the truth. I was fed up, I hated the place and work and even though my friends were very kind to me and did everything to make me feel at home, it was no use. I cried and sulked and hardly went to any special functions or dances. I was working in a big store downtown, a department store. Work was harder, time was strict, but wages were good, $55.00 per week. After almost a year here, I finally began to be a normal person again and life since then has improved and now is quite pleasant but I never hope to be as perfectly happy again as I was at home. I'll always miss my parents, sisters, brother and friends.

As I have said I began to like it here after hating it for a year. As I moved among the young Irish people I had made many friends. I also began to realize that I had better make the best of it for a year and save money as I definitely meant to go home as I couldn't see myself settling down in this country.

When I was in Chicago eighteen months I met an Irish boy from County Cork whom I liked and dated regularly. After we went together a year we became engaged. In the meantime I had been saving as much money as I could after I had paid my room, board and other expenses. At the end of three years I had saved $1,500. That money I meant to save for going home but now that I was engaged going home was out of the question. Again I find it difficult to explain why I changed my mind so quickly. I seem to be one of those people who do things quickly without looking at reasons for or against.

At this time my wedding date is set. My boy friend and I did not have too much trouble finding a flat. We got a real nice four room one on the north side of Chicago, actually I had been living in the same neighborhood
with my aunt and her family since my arrival. We decided that I would buy the furniture because I wanted to have the choice myself. That took up $1,000 of my savings but that I didn’t mind as we had our set up.

I should say here that my parents in Ireland were very disappointed when I decided to get married here in Chicago. They expected me to go home and settle in Ireland, especially as they knew how much I disliked it here at the beginning, as every letter I wrote home I complained about it and expressed my longing to be home again. I remember at that time my mother said in one of her letters, that now that I was getting married, she hoped that I realized what I was doing and not acting without using my head as I had done so often in the past.

My boyfriend has been in this country four years and works as an elevator operator in a loop hotel. His wage is about $80.00 per week. At the time of our marriage two years ago he had saved about $2,000. I was lucky to have a wonderful aunt who took care of all our wedding expenses so that it did not cost me a penny to get married and that was certainly a great break to get. Our honeymoon cost us $300.00 approximately. I worked for a year but now that we have a baby girl, aged four months, we will have to depend on my husband’s wages. Although I disliked it very much when I came to Chicago at first, I am very happy now and would not want life any different. I like having a home and cooking, it’s so easy here with all the modern appliances. I know that it’s going to be hard to raise a family on my husband’s salary as it is not very high but with God’s help we can do it. I still would like to go back to Ireland but that’s impossible now and the fact that I may never be able to see my parents and family again at home is the one dark spot in my otherwise happy life.
CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The present study originated from the desire to learn as much as possible about the recent Irish immigrant in Chicago. For the purpose of making the study, the postwar immigrant was chosen because it would not be possible to study all Irish immigrants on account of the variety and size of the group. It was possible to locate over four thousand Irish immigrants, from which number a random sample of one hundred persons were taken, based on the sex ratio in the whole group, namely, fifty-seven men and forty-three women. The study was begun in May 1963 and completed in September of the same year. In the foregoing chapters the author has set forth his findings on the postwar Irish immigrant in Chicago.

Irish immigration to Chicago is as old as the city itself. From the beginning, Irishmen have played a very definite part in its growth. The middle of the nineteenth century saw an unprecedented wave of emigration from Ireland. This was caused by the great famine which took place in 1847 and the years following, which started a tide of emigration from the homeland that has continued to the present day. The famine marks the peak in Irish population, which has continued to decline since then right down to the present day. The same period marks the beginning of a strong Irish population in Chicago. Ever since the time that Irishmen began to work on the Canals and Railroads of the Mid-West,
Chicago has been an Irish stronghold in the United States. The postwar Irish immigrants in Chicago present a very interesting picture in respect to their home background in Ireland. The majority come from the poorer rural districts situated near the South and West Coasts, where the land is rugged and mountainous and living conditions are not easy. Eighty-two per cent come from seven counties, while sixty-four per cent come from three counties. Emigration was familiar to most of these people, something that was accepted as part of life and in many cases awaited as their own lot. Eighty per cent came from places where there is a strong tendency to emigrate due to lack of opportunity at home, where large families are common. Each immigrant was personally acquainted with someone who had previously emigrated to the United States. Fifty-two men and thirty-nine women (ninety-one per cent) came from a rural background; while forty-seven of these men and thirty-eight of the women are children of farmers and in only three of these cases were the farms larger than forty acres and in no case over fifty. Furthermore, those who came from a town or city belonged to families mostly of the laboring class. In the whole group only four came from families of businessmen or teachers. All have received full grammar school education and only few have had further education. Eleven have gone to high school or more advanced studies.

The families from which these immigrants came are large. Five men and four women in the group have come from families of less than four children, while twenty men and eleven women are from families of seven children and over. Among the men it is most unusual for the oldest boy to emigrate because he has the right of inheritance. As may be expected all the immigrants studied are Catholics, from Catholic homes in which practice of religion plays a very
important part in the daily life. Their life in Ireland was simple and so far removed and different from an American city that it is impossible for the outsider to realize how great a change takes place in the life of the immigrant coming here from Ireland. Childhood and adolescence were spent in a rural atmosphere, in which wealth or luxury was not common and living conditions were frugal.

The Irish immigrant which has been studied is of a certain type and from a certain kind of background. The background is rural, family usually large and the education primary. The wealthy and the educated and those from small families do not migrate for obvious reasons. In the writer's opinion, emigration is a necessity for the majority who go into voluntary exile. These immigrants could not have made a good living easily at home and certainly could never have done nearly as well as in Chicago. Only one in the family can remain at home and for the others who try to make a living outside the home the writer found that there was not much economic return, consequently low income is the main reason why young people leave Ireland.

The one hundred studied are all between the ages of nineteen and forty-one, the majority of them being in their twenties. I discovered that there was little of the pioneer about any of these. Almost all had relatives in Chicago and even those who didn't knew somebody in the city prior to coming here. While at the beginning they stayed with an uncle, aunt or relative who helped and advised them in their many initial problems, they prefer after some time to be free from the restraints of this familial authority, which was very familiar to them at home and instead to assert their independence in the American fashion. Only three people out of ninety-two who lived with relatives
after coming here still do so.

Among these immigrants ethnocentrism and the carry-over of clannishness from Ireland is very much in evidence. Very few make friends outside the Irish community. It is even noticeable that people from the different counties tend to stay together, especially if the numbers from a particular county are large. The average immigrant in this group is an unskilled laborer. Only a minority work in offices or in the skilled trades. It was found that many of the men do heavy manual work for the first few years after coming here, the reason being that they are drawn by the high wages and are anxious to get some money saved quickly. They only keep up such work for four years at the most and as they get older tend to obtain jobs that afford more security and stability. Only three men, engaged in clerical work, have made any use of their educational background or have gone to school here. The others have gone for manual work and trades because the wages obtained are very good and because it would take too long, in their opinion, to qualify for an equally well paid clerical or professional job, not to mention the labor involved in studying and the expense also, which they cannot so well afford. Furthermore, coming from a rural and mostly farm background, the Irish boy is not afraid of hard work and is usually better suited to it than a city boy.

The average weekly wage for men is about ninety dollars or between $4500 - $5000 annually. The cost of living for the average single man is about $2500 - $3000 per annum, which would make his annual savings about $2000 or over. The women also engage mostly in manual work, such as waitress work, domestic service, factories and food stores. Seven do office work, which is the lowest paid group, while waitress work is the highest and also considered most
difficult. The average annual salary of girls is about $3000 - $4000, while the cost of living is about $1500 - $2000 per annum, ---lower than men---. Even though they earn less money they save as much as the men because they can live much cheaper. In the group studied fifteen men and five women had worked in England prior to coming here. All agreed that work in England is easier, but wages are lower and food is not good. All admitted too that they were very happy to have come and would prefer by far to make their homes in this country. There is no appreciable difference between those who have worked in England and those who have worked away from home in Ireland and those who have never been away from home before coming here, with regard to the type of work they are engaged in here or in family background in Ireland. Five women have worked in England but only one does the same type of work which she engaged in there. The writer has incorporated in his thesis six life histories of immigrants which should help the reader understand more fully the postwar Irish immigrant.

Emigration plays a big part in the life of rural Ireland and few families therein are not familiar with it. Having studied the postwar Irish immigrant to Chicago, it seems to me that the cause of their emigrating is, in the main, an economic one. They are, for the most part, members of large families from rural districts, who in being faced with making a living for themselves decided to emigrate because they were convinced, either because they learned from experience or were informed by public opinion or tradition, that the wages in Ireland did not measure up to what they consider sufficient for a good living. It should be stated here, nobody claimed that it was impossible to make a living, but in comparing wages with standards in this
country, nobody could be expected to stay in Ireland, they said. In putting
a finger, therefore, on the reason, it seems that in facing the problem of
emigration something must be done about the economic set-up, because while it
may not be the cause in all cases, it certainly plays a very important part
in the emigration question.

In only one case, that of a girl, was found one who left Ireland
because she wanted to travel. In a few cases was found that immigrants did
not have to leave for economic reasons. The writer was very anxious to know
how the average immigrant felt towards Ireland and about his immigrant status.
He found that the average boy or girl is not completely satisfied here. Un-
doubtedly, the most important things are pleasing but it seems that something
important, almost vital, is missing from their lives. They have left home,
parents, the environment and locals, that without doubt, has formed their
characters. That is something that cannot be forgotten or left behind on the
Irish coast, neither can it be replaced by the American equivalent as soon as
foot is set on American soil. The immigrant is, after all, a wanderer, a
stranger. The homeland and its culture is something to which they are drawn
back to, even a standard to which they compare, measure and evaluate most
phases of life here. It is this culture and all that goes with it that has
made them what they are and continues to influence and direct them to a greater
or lesser degree after coming here and throughout their lives. For the most
part it was found that they love to talk about Ireland. Its music, games and
culture still interest them more than American culture. They are loyal to
homeland and especially to family and correspond regularly. Only seven told
me that they had no desire to visit Ireland again.
On the other hand, these immigrants, coming as they do from such a
different environment, seem to have adjusted themselves very well. All agree
that Chicago affords them ample opportunity to make a living that would not
have been possible here and that is really what they seek. It was found that
they are anxious to save money, get married and have their own homes, but do
not have much desire to advance to a higher level, especially socially and
economically, because too much trouble is involved.

Thirty-one per cent of the group is married and nineteen per cent
engaged, so indications are that fifty per cent will be married within a year.
The older members of the group are in the majority among the married and it
was found that all the men have been here four years before entering into ma-
trimony. The age at marriage of both men and women is older than that of
Americans but younger than in Ireland, owing to the fact that immigrants do
not have their parents here they feel that they must have more economic secu-
ritv and consequently have to wait longer.

There is no sufficient reason to hold that late marriage is common
among the postwar Irish immigrant in Chicago, though it may be at home but it
would seem that even there the reason must be sought in the economic set-up
which when changed also changes the marriage age. Speaking of the postwar
Irish immigrant in Chicago it was found that the majority of men are married
before they reach the age of thirty-three and women before they reach the age
of twenty-eight. Whether that age is too late is disputable, but it should be
borne in mind that youthful marriages in America are not an unqualified suc-
cess.

Irish men in this group tend to marry Irish-American girls in pre-
ference to Irish-born girls. Eleven of eighteen have done so and six out of ten are engaged to Americans. The contrary is true of the girls, who often marry Irish-born men. Ten out of twelve in my group have done so, while seven out of nine are engaged thus. This is difficult to explain. It might be described as an index of assimilation, because while Irish girls do not as a rule do so, they do not have the same opportunity of meeting them, because American girls take a more active part in Irish social life than the men. Again it may be that the Irish-born man in considered to make a good husband and more acceptable to the Irish parents of the girls.

The immigrants studied, with the exception of six men and three women intend to make their home in Chicago and to become American citizens. The recent Irish immigrant on the whole is satisfied with life in Chicago. They laud its modern conveniences and settle down to its way of life. Those who are married express a desire to bring up their children as good American citizens and to afford them the same opportunities as other American children.

In speaking with these people, especially those who are married, they spoke of the insecurity of life here, and the total dependence of the laborer on his wages and consequently on his good health to make a living for himself and his family. There is no property or ownership to fall back on.

Almost all agreed that they would not want to live in Ireland, having experienced this country, mostly because of the variation in standard of living. The prevalent idea seems to be "Ireland is fine if you don't leave it."

On the whole the postwar Irish immigrant in Chicago, while not satisfied with everything he finds in the American way of life and while he still
has a soft spot in his heart for the homeland, is happy in his surroundings and in the life he can make for himself here. He likes it enough to become an American citizen, to make his home and raise his family in Chicago.
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APPENDIX

QUESTIONS USED IN STUDY OF 100 POSTWAR IRISH IMMIGRANTS TO CHICAGO - 1945-1953

I. BACKGROUND IN IRELAND

1. Place of Origin?
2. Are your parents living?
3. Parents Occupation?
4. Family size and make-up?
5. Has either parents ever emigrated?
6. Present occupation and marital status of other family members?
7. Extent of parents property?
   a. Size of farm?
   b. Wages?
8. Education in Ireland?
9. Attitude towards school and education?
10. What did you do on leaving school?
11. Did you work away from home? If so, where?
12. Type of work and wages and length of employments?

II. EMIGRATION BEFORE COMING TO AMERICA

1. Have you ever emigrated to any other country before coming to the United States?
2. Where? In what country?
3. Type of work and wages?
4. Why did you go there?
5. Did you like it there? Opinions and attitudes?
6. Why did you leave for America?

III. LEAVING IRELAND

1. Present age?
2. Date of coming to America?
3. Reason for coming?
4. Did you always intend to emigrate?
5. Is it usual for young people to emigrate from your native district?
6. Do they go to any special foreign country or city?
7. Can you tell what was the attitude of your friends and neighbors to your going?
8. Did your parents oppose you?
9. On leaving did you intend to return either for vacation or to take up permanent residence in Ireland?
10. What were your own attitudes at the time of leaving?
   a. Ambitions?
   b. Impressions?
11. Did you regret having to leave?
12. If you could then have obtained a position (good), would you have left?

IV. IMMIGRANTS LIFE IN CHICAGO - ECONOMIC

1. Your first impressions of America?
2. Did you come to Chicago at first, if not, why and where did you go? Reason for change?
3. Work and wages in other city?
4. Did you have relatives here? Did you ever live with them? Do you still?
5. Economic history since coming here?
   a. If you changed your job, why?
   b. Wages?
6. What kind of work do you do now? Wages?
7. How much does it cost you to live?
8. Is it easy to save money?
9. Do you like living conditions and food?
10. Can you compare it with Ireland?

V. SOCIAL LIFE OF THE IMMIGRANT HERE IN CHICAGO

1. Description of your social life?
2. What kind of friends do you have?
3. Do you intend to remain here?
4. Do you intend to become an American citizen?
5. What are your ambitions?
6. Are you married? If so
   a. How long?
   b. Partner, Irish or American?
   c. Children?
   d. Cost of living?
   e. Impressions on married life and raising family here?

VI. THE AMERICAN WAY OF LIFE

1. What do you think of the American way of life?
   a. Cost of living?
   b. Way of living?
   c. City life?
   d. Religion?
2. Would you care to make any comparisons with Ireland?
3. Apart from your parents and immediate family, what part of Irish life do you miss most here?
4. Do you regret coming here?
5. If it were possible to go back after your first month here, would you have done so?
6. If a friend or relative were to ask your advice on coming, what would it be?
7. What is your idea of a good position and a happy life?
8. Did your nationality ever hurt you either economically or socially?
9. What do you think of other nationalities?
10. What is your opinion on the statement that Ireland has a declining population brought about by late marriage and emigration?