

The Irish Make Their Mark in Glendale

by Jack Murray

Between 1840 and 1850 the famine in Ireland caused some 1.7 million people to flee to North America. Another million died there from hunger reducing the population of this little island by nearly half. The immigrants flowed into Canada, Boston and New York ports. Many stayed in the east but large numbers headed west seeking employment and cheap land. The railroads were expanding greatly in the Midwest and this afforded these newcomers both jobs and access to the new territories.

The rivers and canals were giving way to rails carrying goods and people. A rail line was conceived to connect Cincinnati and Dayton. Bonds were floated to finance it and Irish labor was available to build it. The railroad built houses for the crew bosses while the laborers lived in box-cars or tents which became transportable camps.

The Cincinnati, Hamilton and Dayton Railroad was originally to pass through Springfield but that community rejected it and so the tracks

were laid through Glendale instead. Houses for the crew bosses can still be seen such as that at 1060 North Troy.

Many of the Irish workers decided to stay in Glendale and found other work when the railroad was completed. Their wives also worked locally as domestics. They built modest homes along North Troy which became known as 'Little Dublin.' These names from an early Glendale census could constitute a fair sized parade any St. Patrick's Day: Walsh, Dooley, Meagher, Reardon, Collins, Buckley, Boyle, Dillon, Kelly, Hynes, Dorsey, Coleman, Cusack, Nealon, Fogarty, Mulhearn, Mahoney, Ford, Devanney, Duffley and White.

Being Catholic, they sought out the closest church in the area, St. Peter and Paul's in Reading. This was an arduous trek. Some walked the entire distance. It was natural to seek to establish services for the faithful in Glendale. That happened in 1857 when the first Mass was said in Glendale, in the home of Michael Dooley at 1045 Willow Ave., for 27 families.

Two years later Andrew Gross of what is now 140 E. Fountain Ave. (no street numbers were in use in those days) and a Mr. Dietrich of 20 Wood Ave. donated nine acres of land located at the northwest corner of Sharon Ave and Congress St.

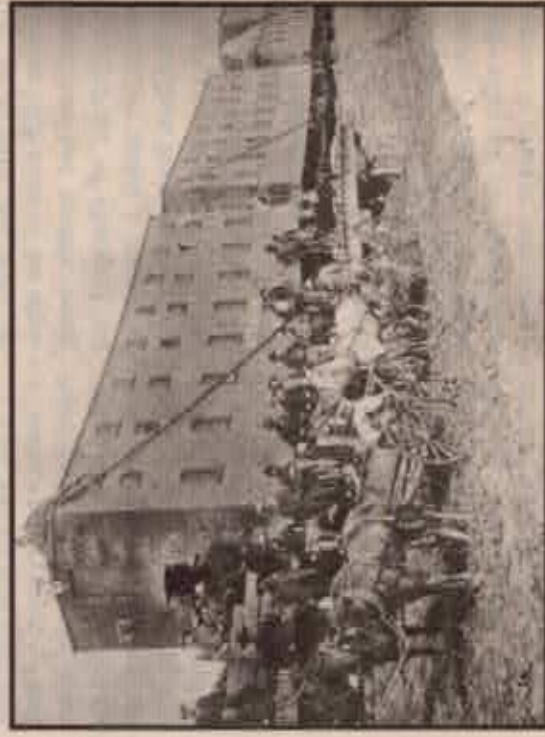
On July 10, 1859 the cornerstone was laid for St. Gabriel Church. The pastor, Father Carey, had no residence until 1864, lived with the Keegan family, then rented from Rudolph Kloth in the interim.

Holy Rood cemetery, located between Church St. and Congress Ave. on the south side of Washington Ave. received the remains of area Catholics from 1869 until the 1920s. A partial list of the names interred there reflect the Irish presence in the community: Logan, Costello, Corcoran, Ahern, Butler, Callahan, Carrigan, Carroll, Collins, Connell, Cummins, Cusack, Devanney, Donohue, Donovan, Dorgan, Dooley and Dorsey.

One of these immigrants, Michael Dooley is worthy of particular mention. Born in Co. Tipperary in 1850, he came to the area as a laborer but by 1880

was established as a lumber and coal merchant. He acquired property in Glendale, Reading and Loveland and built a number of modest homes along Church St. and west. The area became known as Irishtown. Mr. Dooley was also elected Village Marshal four times in the period preceding formation of a police department. He died in 1885 but his name is still prominently associated with the buildings in Glendale's Village Square that he constructed with his partner, H.E. Willis.

A scan of the Glendale directory today shows many oversights or omissions.



Shown above are dormitory cars for railroad laborers which were provided by some railroads to house the construction crews