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The Children of the Diaspora Irish Schools and Educators in Argentina, 1850-1950

By María José Roger

Introduction

In the 1850s, Ireland, for centuries the “isle of saints and scholars”, could be rightfully considered one of the world’s leading producers of immigrants. Due to unsustainable living conditions that exceeded the much debated Great Famine, about 1.5 million Irishmen left their country in search of a better future.

Their first option was to cross the Irish Sea to England and join the scores of workers that fuelled the world’s leading economy. Others crossed the Atlantic and contributed to the rapid growth of the United States. There were some who ventured farther, to the scarcely populated British dominions: Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

But there were those - a mere ten to twenty thousand men and women [1] - who chose another country which yearned for hard working immigrants that would position it as one of the leading nations in the world: the Argentine Republic.

Through the 1840s and up to the 1860s, the landowners of the rich province of Buenos Aires hired skilled Irishmen to tend to their sheep. Encouraged by fellow countrymen who had tried their luck in the *pampas*, entire families - primarily from Co. Westmeath, Wexford and Longford- arrived to find that, although the language and culture differed, they shared a common faith and they had the opportunity to become landowners.

By 1870 approximately 85 % of the Irish immigrants were settled in the countryside. Through contracts that granted them a percentage of the sheep’s offspring, many shepherds created their own herds from scratch. They then leased land or bought it. Successful sheep farmers then became full fledged *estancieros* and mingled with the best of the Argentine society. However, these success stories became increasingly rare during the last quarter of the century ... later arrivals were lucky enough to find a job with their fellow nationals.

The remaining 15 % of Irish immigrants lived in the cities, especially in Buenos Aires: port of entry, capital city and economic engine of the young Republic. Women could easily find employment as maids and cooks, while men usually worked for commercial firms. The increasing prosperity of some *estancieros* meant that towards the 1880s they could afford to have a house in the city.

Buenos Aires was also the home of a key figure in the history of Irish immigration to Argentina: Reverend Anthony Fahy. This zealous Dominican arrived to Argentina in 1844, and during the next twenty-seven years, he laboured for the well being of his countrymen. His tasks were so varied that he once defined himself as “consul, post master, judge, pastor, interpreter and job provider” [2] . He advised many to go to the countryside, save money and then acquire their own lands.

Thanks to the efforts of Fahy, other priests and the more fortunate members of the community the Irish were able to form their own community institutions and preserve their traditions. Local literature, music, sports, Argentine culture as a whole was enriched by the contributions of the Irish-Argentines. As we shall see throughout this article, education was greatly benefited by their efforts in the 1850-1950 period.

Education in the Argentine Republic

Since the times of the May Revolution (1810), education was one of the pillars of the Argentine Republic. Initially entrusted to private individuals, priests and religious congregations, it was gradually absorbed by

the State. However this was a slow process, since the first decades of independent life proved to be difficult. Although independence was achieved in 1816, the definitive National Constitution was only sanctioned in 1853, following decades of external and internal conflicts, which would continue for decades.

The religious congregations had provided, since colonial times, a free education to the children of rich and poor families alike. Their schools were perceived as valuable, and through the mechanism of “incorporation”, the National Council of Education approved their educational plans, giving their degrees and diplomas an official status.

By 1883, only 156.325 children (31 %) who were of school age actually went to public or private schools. The following year, the Act of Common Education (*Ley 1420 de Educación Común*) guaranteed that every child over six would receive a free, compulsory education that would last at least six years. It also opened the long debate between those who supported either lay or religious education. But, in the long run it assured the education of the majority of the Argentines.

Until the end of the 1880s, private schools -most of them linked to immigrant communities- were predominant. Approximately half of the inhabitants of Buenos Aires were foreigners. The government and the local elite, quickly realised that a state-controlled education could result in two benefits: the “education of the sovereign” (future voters) and the assimilation of those Argentines whose parents were immigrants.

In subsequent years, the majority of the immigrants privileged a solid education, rather than an “ethnic” education. This explains the fact that, while the number of public schools grew rapidly, the community schools lost pupils and many of them eventually closed their doors. [3] The situation of the Irish-Argentine schools was an exception to the general rule, and after studying their evolution, we will see the reasons for their survival.

The Irish Immigrants’ Concerns about Education

Since their arrival, the Irish immigrants showed their concern for the education of their young. Although the Argentine state developed a network of public schools, different factors contributed to their reticence to send their children to those establishments. Firstly, the great distances and the need to have their assistance in the rural tasks. Secondly, there existed a certain cultural prejudice. Many parents did not feel comfortable sending their offspring to local schools where they would mix with the “natives”, and absorb their culture and language, leading to the gradual loss of their own.

Thomas Murray, writing in 1919, deplores the effects of this policy, but tries to justify this exclusiveness which delayed the integration of new generations of Irish-Argentines:

“The poor native in those days was a rather lawless and unlovely character, while rich and poor alike in the country districts were, in the eyes of the Irish settlers, shamefully immoral [...]. The Irish father and mother were, therefore, quite satisfied that the less intercourse their boys or girls had with such neighbours the better it would be for them.” [4]

Camp Schoolmasters

Therefore, it’s not surprising to find that, up to the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the majority of the Irish families who lived in the countryside relied on picturesque “camp school masters”, an adaptation of the original “hedge school masters” of Ireland. The first of these masters, to our knowledge, worked for the Handy (or Handley) family, which in 1842 owned an estancia on the banks of the Salado River. [5]

By the 1860s many families had a camp schoolmaster in their midst, and some even became part of local folklore, as the first stanza of “Donovan’s mount” proves:

“I roved round the camp till I met with an Irishman Whose houses and land give appearance of joy, So I up and I asked if he wanted a pedagogue As I tipped him the wink that I was the boy ...” [6]

but this doesn’t mean that these men were fully integrated, since many of them were “undesirable citizens”:

“They were mostly men of poor or scarcely any education; deserters from English or American ships, outcasts from commercial or professional callings, because of their weakness for strong drinks, or once in a while, a ne’er-do-well who taught for a few months here and a few months there merely as resting spots on the vagrant course of life he had marked out for himself.” [7]

Fortunately, most of them did not remain with the same family long enough to influence their students decisively. And we must add that there were some honest schoolmasters who were later successful in other walks of life.

The camp schoolmasters taught reading, writing and some basic arithmetic, always keeping one step ahead of the most advanced students. They were also expected to help in household chores; knowledge of masonry and carpentry were also welcome! Tom Garrahan, who grew up in Lobos, recalled in his memoirs that during recreation, Mr. George Legates, a former Glasgow engineer...

“was always occupied at some mechanical work and always kept me to help him, [...] so I picked up a lot of useful knowledge. He was very good at carpentry and he even made a steam engine, a model in wood. All I learned from him came in handy in after years”. [8]

Children had to learn their prayers and the catechism but parents had little time for this. According to Murray, most schoolmasters would not be useful in this crucial aspect of education, since many of them - especially the English and Americans- were Protestants, agnostics or atheists! [9] Such was the price that many Irish settlers paid to have their children educated in their mother tongue.

As the price that many Irish settlers paid to have their children educated in their mother tongue.

A less known aspect is the education of the children of labourers who had no means to pay for these itinerant teachers. According to an embassy report that explained the situation in the mid nineteenth century, this situation kept a wide sector of the Irish community “at the barely-literate level, and, coupled with their remoteness from urban centres, deprived them of opportunities for advancement in a country that was rapidly becoming prosperous”. [10]

For the members of the Irish-Argentine community with means, there existed an alternative option concerning the education of their children: a boarding school abroad. In 1916, The Southern Cross published advertisements for two boarding schools in Ireland: Saint Enda’s College (Co. Dublin) and Rockwell College (Cashel). The first one was termed “the Irish-Ireland Boarding School for Catholic Boys”, which is hardly surprising, considering that its headmaster was none other than Padraig Pearse, executed by the British that same year for proclaiming the Irish Republic. Many Irish-Argentine parents were comfortable with sending their children to English boarding schools.

The First Schools

In 1856 seven Sisters of Mercy arrived to Buenos Aires. This congregation established by Mother Catherine McAuley in Dublin (1831) has one peculiarity: to the traditional vows of poverty, obedience and chastity, they add a fourth one: “the care of the poor, the sick and the ignorant”. [11]

By 1857, they were in charge of a school for Irish girls in Riobamba Street, city of Buenos Aires. The Irish-Argentine community owed this first school to Father Fahy who had made possible the arrival of the Sisters and the organisation of the *Irish College*. To begin with, it had five classrooms where 20 boarders had their lessons, and a school for the poor girls of the area.

In 1861 Father Fahy informed that the Sisters had “sixty five boarders, all of them daughters of Irish settlers, and also 160 daughters of the natives that received a free education” [12] The 1869 national census, reflects that the school and the Irish Hospital (which was located beside the school) were managed by 28 Sisters. There were 84 boarders (mostly Irish-Argentines), 37 of which were orphans. [13]

In 1865 the Sisters of Mercy opened their second school, *Saint Peter and Paul*, in Chascomús, but in 1868 this rural district was severely affected by the cholera epidemic and the Sisters lacked the necessary medical and religious attention. At the same time, their countrymen started the exodus to the northwestern area of the province of Buenos Aires.

Saint Peter and Paul closed down, and a short time later (1872) they inaugurated another school with the same staff in Mercedes, a flourishing district with 14,000 inhabitants and a resident Irish chaplain. The Sisters bought land close to the train station and built *Saint Joseph’s*, a school that had to close when the Sisters left the country. [14]

The departure was motivated by the uncertainty that followed the closure of the Irish Hospital in 1874 and the violent anti-clerical campaign in which the neighbouring *Colegio del Salvador* was set on fire. The Sisters left the country in February 1880, and eventually arrived to Australia, where they established different institutions.

In May 1880, the Sisters of the Sacred Heart -many of which had Irish origins- took over the convent and school. Their report from September of the following year, informs that they had 75 orphans and 54 boarders under their care and 150 girls at the free school. [15] The aim of the Sisters was to “prepare them for the grave duties and responsibilities of life, and qualify them to hold an honourable position in society” [16] .

To achieve that aim, the pupils received a full programme which included: Christian doctrine, English, Spanish, History (sacred and secular), Arithmetic, and Natural Sciences. To these subjects, standard in most curricula, they added refinement of manners, Piano and Singing, Drawing and Painting, French, and even Astronomy.

We possess fragmented information about the other pioneering Irish-Argentine schools. Murray and Ussher refer briefly to some of them, and *The Southern Cross* published advertisements since its first issue, in 1875.

In 1861 Dr. Patrick Fitz Simons, a very learned Irishman, organised a school for boys in Lobos, province of Buenos Aires, which was later moved to Flores, closer to the capital, named *Saint Patrick's College*. [17] According to Murray, Fitz Simons was not a good educator, since he sought to turn his pupils into good English subjects, teaching them only English history, and nothing about Ireland or Argentina. Argentine authorities had a completely opposite opinion, and actually trusted him with the task of organising and directing the National School of Corrientes which was inaugurated in 1869. [18]

Fahy had established the Irish College for girls, and by 1862 he reckoned that it was the turn of the boys. He therefore bought a plot of land, opposite the girls' school. After the necessary repairs, he entrusted the running of the school to Fathers James Curran and Lawrence Kirwan, but their lack of pedagogical experience and their limited knowledge of Spanish, led to their failure. Fahy then sold the property to the Jesuits who then established the famous Colegio del Salvador, one of the most important catholic cultural centres in the Argentine Republic.

Under Father Michael Leahy's (Irish chaplain of Carmen de Areco) encouragement, 1869 witnessed the inauguration of *Saint Brendan's College*. The school, with a capacity for 60 boarders, was successful until Leahy's death (1893). [19] That same year, Mrs. Colclough Brennan, who had directed a school in Manchester, opened a school for girls at the corner of Maipú and Lavalle streets, in the city of Buenos Aires. [20]

Throughout its inaugural year, 1875, *The Southern Cross* printed various advertisements which announced the services of 3 schools which were presumably Irish.

The *Colegio de la Santa Fe* (Holy Faith School), directed by Mrs. Hine and her daughters offered “a liberal education, including music, singing and other accomplishments, and all that is necessary to qualify them for domestic management”. Its location (Callao, corner of Juncal), “close to the city”, allowed parents to visit their daughters easily. [21]

Meanwhile, Mrs. Macken, argued that her *Windsor College*, facing Lezama's quinta, was situated in the healthiest area of the city. [22] The *Sacred Heart College*, directed by Mrs. R. Galbraith, did not publicize the advantages of its location but limited itself to listing the multiple subjects comprised in the programme. [23]

In June 1876 Father Dillon started in his house on Corrientes Street, a Catholic school both for Irish and other English-speaking boys, which he later moved to Cangallo Street. *Saint George's College* accepted boarders, half-boarders and day-students, announcing that:

“The course of instruction includes elementary, commercial and superior education. [...] The college [affords] facilities for the acquirement of modern languages, the programmes including English, Spanish, French, German and Italian; while particular attention is paid to those boys who are but imperfectly acquainted with the language of the country.” [24]

As from 1884, *The Southern Cross* shows no advertisements of its founder's school. We can speculate that Saint George's was short-lived due to the multiple occupations of dean Dillon. The existence of many Irish schools depended greatly on the determination of their founders. Such was the case of the unsuccessful Saint Patrick's College in San Pedro, province of Buenos Aires.

At end of 1881, Michael Dineen, who had ample teaching experience [25], announced to the readers of The Southern Cross that, on popular request, he would open on January 15, 1882, the afore mentioned school for boys, and presented an ambitious curriculum. However, on January 13, 1883, he dispelled the illusions of the Irish-Argentine parents:

“Owing to the fact that Mr. Michael Dineen, having been appointed co-editor of the Southern Cross, cannot carry his intention of opening a college in San Pedro, he takes this opportunity of thanking the many friends who generously offered their patronage and support.” [26]

Henry Gray (1850-1928), member of the Congregation of Saint Vincent of Paul (Lazarists) opened in 1877 the Colegio de Nuestra Señora de Luján, in Luján, 60 km. north of the city of Buenos Aires. [27] Its purpose was to give “a true Christian education and sound instruction to those young men who are desirous of following the ecclesiastical career or any profession, whether of the free or commercial style”. [28]

The prospectus spared no details, describing the subjects, conditions for admission (which included the presentation of various certificates: birth, good conduct, health) and also the boys’ wardrobe (it even specifies the number of socks that they had to bring along!).

The Sisters of Mercy

After intense negotiations, the Sisters of Mercy agreed to come back to Argentina, arriving in Buenos Aires in August 1890. In 1883, eminent Irish-Argentine citizens had founded the Irish Catholic Association (ICA) which had taken over the school in Riobamba Street.

Up to that moment, the free school for humble and orphaned girls, the school for boarders and the convent shared the same premises. The 1895 national census shows that 18 sisters were in charge of 136 students, which were still mostly Irish-Argentine. [29] The building was rapidly becoming inadequate, and it was sold to the Brothers of the Christian Schools, who founded the *La Salle School*, which still stands to this day.

The Irish Catholic Association and the Sisters of Mercy decided to go separate ways: the association started building *Saint Bridget’s School*, while the Sisters began to build on the corner of 24 de Noviembre and Estados Unidos, the building which would serve as convent and *Mater Misericordiae School*.

Mater Misericordiae was solemnly inaugurated on August 15, 1897. The Sisters would run this establishment for almost 8 years, always seeking to teach Christian values, solid knowledge, physical health and good manners. Many other Mercy schools followed in the next two decades.

At the beginning of the 20th century, two Irish-Argentine ladies decided it was necessary to create Irish schools in San Antonio de Areco, a prosperous town in the northern area of the province of Buenos Aires. *Santa María de la Asunción (Saint Mary’s)* and *Clonmacnoise* stand as testimonies of the generosity of Mary Mooney and her sister Margaret Morgan (née Mooney), respectively.

Saint Mary’s -a girls’ school- was inaugurated on 16 March 1901. Mrs. Morgan had intended to find a male order to run the boys’ school baptised after the well-known monastery of Ireland’s golden age. *Clonmacnoise* opened its doors on 22 March 1922 and was run by the Sisters of Mercy until 1949, when the nuns decided to entrust its care to the Pallotine fathers. Both schools benefited from its easy access by train and the increasing amount of Irish settlers in the area.

The railway would also contribute to the creation of another school. This time it would be in Rawson (Chacabuco department). Mrs. Mary Anne Browne Casey, graciously donated a house in which the daughters of the Irish railway workers could be educated. The Sisters inaugurated *Saint Anne’s* on 19 April 1929. [30] Two years later, they established *Saint Ethnea’s*, in Bella Vista, in the outskirts of Buenos Aires.

Meanwhile, the Irish Catholic Association decided that the new school should be an everlasting tribute to the memory of Father Fahy. With that purpose in mind, the ICA bought 7 hectares in the area of Flores (at that time, the outskirts of the city). The construction of the new building, executed by Inglis & Thomas, caused a big stir in the community and was closely monitored by The Southern Cross.

The result was a grandiose neo-gothic building. *Saint Bridget’s*, so christened after the patron saint of Ireland and of students, which was inaugurated in the presence of hundreds of Irish-Argentines by the archbishop of Buenos Aires, Mgr. Castellanos, on March 19, 1899. The building, which is 3-stories high,

featured bedrooms that could house 250 boarders and enormous gardens. Ten years later, a chapel was added.

Seeking to enforce a “new” educational programme, the ICA entrusted the care of their school to the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart [\[31\]](#) but due to the demands of the Irish-Argentine community, the Sisters of Mercy were summoned and took the reins of the institution by the end of 1902.

In 1926 the ICA informed of 186 students who had passed their exams. [\[32\]](#)

The Pallotine and Passionist Schools

In 1885, as a result of his visit to Mercedes, Father William Whitmee (1851-1909) was able to persuade the authorities of the Pallotine Institute about the convenience of establishing a school in the area, since the Irish settlers accounted for two thirds of the local population and Mercedes was an important railway centre. Besides, they could make good use of the building left by the Sisters of Mercy [\[33\]](#). By mid-1886 Whitmee was assisted by 2 other Pallotines: Bernard Feeney and Joseph Bannin. [\[34\]](#)

Saint Patrick’s School, which also served as the congregation’s first residence in Argentina, opened its doors in February 1887. The school accepted pupils from different ethnic origins and had as its motto: “The fosterage of the best Irish race principles and the high traditions of that race in Argentina”.

Its first head was Bernard Feeney, who added an industrial school as an annex, probably the first of its kind in Argentina. He also started a printing press and published the magazine “Flowers and Fruits”. At the end of 1887, the industrial school was moved to Azcuénaga -a promising village, 40 km. away- and christened Saint Bridget’s. Aided by his 25 students, Feeney launched a weekly publication “The Irish Argentine”. Regrettably, his newspaper ceased to appear and the school was closed in 1889. [\[35\]](#)

In its early years, *Saint Patrick’s* had to face economic difficulties and finance the enlargement of the existing building. Pupils posed another difficulty: up to that moment they had depended on the rural schoolmasters, and therefore it was difficult to classify them by age group or educational level. The Pallotines, with the help of teachers and former students soon put an end to this and managed to teach a wide array of subjects.

The requests of satisfied parents, led the Order to open a school for external students, *Saint Stanislaus*, which worked independently until 1925, when it was once more incorporated into the parent school. [\[36\]](#) We must not fail to mention, that *Saint Patrick’s* brought together the community of Mercedes in its ceremonies and sports competitions.

Another male religious order would open a school in the northern area of the province of Buenos Aires, and run it along similar lines: that is the case of *Saint Paul’s School* founded in Capitán Sarmiento by the Passionist Fathers.

Father Victor Carolan (1846-1898) had originally built a monastery in the area, but later decided to build a school as an annex. *Saint Paul’s* -named after the founder of the order- grew around Saint Patrick’s chapel, built by chaplain “Largo” Michael Leahy in 1868, and was inaugurated on January 7, 1900. [\[37\]](#) Once again, the short distance to an important railway station was crucial for the school’s success.

José de Moal has left us a detailed account of the school in which he taught for decades. Thanks to him we know that the modest amount of 40 students of 1905 were already 107 in 1908. This growth led to the incorporation of former pupils as teaching assistants every single year. De Moal also reminds us that health conditions were different in those days, for example, in 1908 a burst of scarlet fever:

“forces the director to send all the students back home. The building is disinfected using the means that science and law prescribe, with all the care, neatness and goodwill that can be asked for. [...] The boy Michael Cormack died a few days after his father took him back to Arrecifes.” [\[38\]](#)

The Ladies of Saint Joseph’s Society

In 1889, the “*City of Dresden*” arrived to port with 1800 Irish immigrants, despite the repeated warnings that they would receive no help from the Argentine government. After two years of hardship, which caused the death of many, and the discouragement of further immigration schemes, a group of Irish-Argentine ladies decided to deal with the orphaned boys, which resulted from this venture. They formed the *Ladies of Saint Joseph’s Society* and subsequently created the Fahy Institute (May 14, 1891), which fulfilled the cherished project of the notorious Father Fahy after whom it was named.

To begin with, the school had its premises on Cochabamba street, Buenos Aires. It was later moved to Capilla del Señor. [39] By 1895, the Sisters of the Order of Saint Joseph had 70 boys who were between 5 and 10 years old, under their care. Two years later, the Fahy Institute became an industrial school and the Brothers of Saint Joseph of Lyon replaced the Sisters, but since they were not able to teach English lessons, they too were replaced. After years of incertitude, the Marist Brothers were put in charge of the establishment (1908-1933) and were in turn replaced by the Pallotines.

Almost 40 years after its creation (December 16, 1929), the Ladies of Saint Joseph's Society inaugurated new premises in Moreno (49 km. away from the city) and added to its name the defining term "Farm", referring to their key aim: "to teach the young boys to love the land, learning from it while they toiled it" [40]. The new building had a capacity for 200 students. The boys under 10 remained in Capilla del Señor.

The annual balance of 1943 [41] gives us some useful information about the Institute. Two priests, 6 local teachers and 4 prefects in charge of discipline aided the rector. One hundred and seventy three students were matriculated that year. Pupils in the upper courses took English exams in the British Cultural Association and accountancy in the Pisonero Mercantile Academy.

In 1912, Cristina Keating offered a generous donation to build a girls' school in Estados Unidos street, right in front of Holy Cross church, neuralgic centre of the Irish-Argentine community. The new Keating Institute, was entrusted to the Sisters of Mercy, who once again set out to educate the orphaned Irish-Argentine girls. [42] Thirty years later, 6 Sisters and 2 teachers were responsible for the education of 120 pupils. [43]

Later Religious Foundations

For decades, the Irish-Argentines sent their children to the schools administered by the Sisters of Mercy, and the Pallotine and Passionist Fathers, most of which were located in the province of Buenos Aires.

However, during the early 20th century, the urbanisation process particularly affected the ascending Irish and the city of Buenos Aires had a magnetic influence. Therefore it was only natural that most of the new foundations took place in the city or its outskirts.

In the 1920s and 30s, the English speaking Catholics of Buenos Aires, began to feel the need of a school where their children could be educated in the Catholic faith, preserving their mother tongue. Back then, English schools like *Saint Andrew's*, *Saint George's*, *Saint Hilda's* and *Northlands* failed to fulfil the first condition. A 1932 memo explained that most of the 24 British schools of Argentina were Protestant and that the parents of 228 boys were interested in establishing an exclusive Catholic school in Buenos Aires. [44] Two new orders would arrive to educate the children of the wealthier Irish-Argentines.

The Passionists, in particular Father Luis Hochendonner, were instrumental in encouraging the female branch of the order, already installed in Chile, to cross the Andes and establish a school for girls in the suburbs of Buenos Aires. When Mother Margaret Mary Reilly visited the city in 1923 she was a guest at the stately residence of Michael Ham (1857-1924) and Ana María Lynch (1863-1943), distinguished members of the Irish-Argentine community. [45]

The Hams had considered presenting a donation for the future school, but when they realised that the Sisters were unable to find a suitable place for their school, they decided to donate their own house. Its size and proximity to Vicente López train station made it ideal for the purpose. The 17,000 m² property was transferred to the Passionist Sisters in 1924, shortly before Mr. Ham's death.

In 1926, Sisters Scholastica and Aquinas arrived to organise the new school and gave it the name *Michael Ham Memorial College*. It was inaugurated on March 9, 1926, with 22 boarders and 20 day pupils. During the next years, the rooms of the mansion became rooms for the boarders, a library, and a chapel. New wings were added to it and in 1942, the chapel of Saint Anne was built in memory of Ana María Lynch.

During those years, the fame of the school grew. By 1938, there were more than 200 students, 60 of which were boarders. [46] Proof of this growth can be found in the organisation of the *Old Girls' Association* (1935) and the creation of the first (official) year incorporated to the National School of San Isidro (1945).

We must clarify the origin and role of the Sisters. Although the congregation was English, it attracted many Irish vocations. "It was the Irish sisters who gave the school its informal, progressive and joyous spirit" [47]. Once installed in Argentina, many Irish Argentines joined its ranks. Many of its former pupils

entered the Passionist order and were themselves Headmistresses of the school. And there were those who, without entering the religious life, created their own schools. [48]

The Passionist were linked to another important foundation. When Father Fahy established a boys' school in 1860, he had suggested that the Christian Brothers -Irish congregation founded by Edmund Rice in 1802, which devoted itself to education-, should take over it. However, the heads of the Order, did not accept his request. In the following decades, new pleas would receive the same answer; the Brothers were being sent chiefly to the United States and Australia.

In 1946, Father Dominic Moore, provincial of the Passionist Order, visited the Superior of the Christian Brothers in Dublin, and once again defended the case for a new foundation in Argentina. His request was accepted, and in November 1947, Brothers Joseph Ignatius Doorley -founder of various schools in USA- and Cornelius O'Reilly arrived to Buenos Aires. *The Southern Cross* encouraged the community to take an active interest in this visit:

“Our main object now is to ensure the immediate establishment of the Christian Brothers in Buenos Aires, in the knowledge that such establishment must redound to the glory of God, the advancement of Argentina and to the honour of that little isle beyond the sea which throughout the centuries has sent abroad the ambassadors to make God known in every corner of the earth” [49]

Thanks to the incessant cooperation of Father Moore, a suitable building was bought in Belgrano 1548, in one of the busiest parts of Buenos Aires. The founders soon found a name for the new school: Cardinal Newman, after the well-known Englishman who is still an example of Catholic thought around the world.

In February 1948, diverse articles and advertisements were published in the media, announcing the opening of the school on 29 March. The national programme would be followed during the morning, devoting the afternoons to English. Brother Alphonsus L. Pakenham was the first rector, who presided over a community of 7 brothers, 8 lay teachers, and 148 students, 27 of which were boarders.

The Brothers treated their students kindly, working to “form honest, capable men, full of intellectual and spiritual values”. [50] It can be easily understood how the school rapidly earned an excellent reputation, incorporating 200 new students in 1949, which would have been more had there been more vacancies.

Two Educators, Two Dreams

In 1897, Lawrence Dillon established a new school for boys in Montes de Oca 1138-50, on the premises of a *quinta* which could house 50 boarders and included 8,000 m² of gardens and playing grounds.

Twenty years later, *Saint Lucy's* announced proudly that the approval rate in the official exams always exceeded 90%. Dillon, who would direct the school for many decades, was glad to offer “always the system, always the same treatment, and as far as possible, always the same teachers” [51]. Clearly, continuity was a great virtue for the founder!

By 1926, *Saint Lucy's* had moved to a new location, in San Juan 855, closer to the central district of Buenos Aires. At the time, Dillon announced that *Saint Lucy's* had “withstood the acid test of time” and invited parents to find out about the advantages of the school from friends, former students and the *Consejo Nacional de Educación* [52]. He later expressed that many alumni occupied leading positions in the banks and oil companies of Buenos Aires. [53]

But Lawrence Dillon was not the only Irish teacher willing to start his own school in Buenos Aires. In the 1920s, Sean Healy, pharmacist and Gaelic teacher, decided to leave behind the political turmoil of his native land and emigrated to the United States. During the trip he met a Scotsman who convinced him to join him in a rubber plantation in Manaos, Brazil! However, the Brazilian adventure came to an end when Healy contracted malaria and his doctor recommended his removal to a healthier place. [54]

Healy arrived to Buenos Aires in 1928 and started to work at the *Buenos Aires English High School*. He then became director of *Saint Lucy's*. After that experience he decided to create an environment in which he could educate his pupils with humanist ideas.

In the 1930s, most of the Irish schools for boys were located in the province of Buenos Aires. Healy decided to establish his in Gaona Avenue 2855, in the former building of the *Constitución English School*, close to *Saint Bridget's*. Three years later, the school moved to its actual location: Rivadavia 5672, 200 metres away from a train station.

The school was christened Saint Ciaran's, in honour of the Irish patron saint of students, who founded Clonmacnoise abbey -renowned centre of learning- in the sixth century. Classes commenced on March 1, 1933 with the presence of 6 teachers and 35 pupils.

Saint Ciaran's was attended by boarders, day pupils and half-boarders. Some girls were incorporated, but were kept in separate classes. They all had access to football fields, tennis and basketball courts, a vegetable garden and a private chapel. [55]

The staff was highly qualified: professor Weston came from the University of Cambridge, while professor Morris had studied at Oxford and London. Qualified national teachers were in charge of Mathematics, Sciences and Celtic. [56] Despite being a bilingual school, where most of the students did not speak Spanish as their mother tongue, this did not imply the duplication of subjects, since Healy understood this would not be beneficial.

Five years after its inauguration, *Saint Ciaran's* announced its incorporation to National School N° 8 "Julio A. Roca". The kindergarten had just been inaugurated and a sports field had been acquired. Two modern school buses provided "safe transportation from any address in the Federal Capital" [57]. The six original teachers were now fifteen. The 102 primary students who had sat for the national exams had achieved a high average.

By 1943, professor Healy could announce that the spectacular increase in student matriculations -they were already 170- "was no spontaneous development, but the result of ceaseless labour, combined with scrupulous attention to all details of scholastic improvements, trusting more in progressive results and the cooperation of contented parents, than in flamboyant propaganda." [58].

School Life

Up to the 1960s, the schools of the Irish-Argentine community accepted boarders. Girls and boys came from all over the province of Buenos Aires to the Mercy, Pallotine, Passionist and other schools which we have already described. We will glimpse at their lives far from home, by taking as a model the daily routine imposed by the Sisters of Mercy in their schools, and describe the life of their students in the 1920s and 30s. [59]

They woke up at 6 am. After listening to mass (on Sundays and religious feasts) and taking breakfast, girls would comply with the tasks assigned by the Sisters (laundry, cleaning, cooking). The rest of the morning was dedicated to Spanish lessons. It was compulsory for all schools to comply with the official programme and for the students to sit for the exams of the National Education Council in November. Local staff was in charge of this important area in the curriculum.

The afternoons were devoted to English lessons, which were in charge of the Sisters. Subjects included, besides Grammar and Literature, History (including Irish history), Geography, Biology, Maths, Religion, etc. The students sat for the exams of the local English Cultural Association and for the Cambridge exams.

At 3 o'clock they would have tea, a short break and then study hours. After dinner and prayers they went off to bed, at about 8 pm.

The boarders were allowed to receive visitors on Sundays and holidays. If they behaved properly, they were allowed to turn on the radio and improvise small dances. Outings were mostly related to religious occasions, such as Easter, Corpus Christi or Saint Patrick's, which was celebrated by the pupils of the schools located in Buenos Aires at Holy Cross church along with the rest of the community. The International Eucharistical Congress of 1934 was a well-remembered event, since it involved incessant activities.

In all of the Irish-Argentine schools, many hours were spent in activities that exceeded books. Following the principle of "*mens sana in corpore sano*" sports were widely practiced: tennis, hockey and netball by the girls, football and basketball by the boys.

While the American Passionist Brothers taught their pupils to play baseball, the Pallotines relied on hurling to stress the loyalty of their pupils to Ireland, and the Christian Brothers on rugby to promote a team spirit. In keeping with the militarisation of Argentine society in the 1930s, boys started to receive drills from military officers. On a more original note, there were swimming lessons for the girls at Michael Ham which took place in the River Plate!

Furthermore, well-educated girls had to have other accomplishments: they were taught to sew and embroider, French, manners, piano and singing; in some cases, they also performed Irish dances. In the

1930s, typing lessons allowed these young women to become executive secretaries in foreign companies, such as Shell and Esso. [60] Others followed the example of the Sisters and went on to become teachers or take their vows.

Extra subjects for boys included Latin, or in the case of the Fahy school, preparing them for rural activities. The liberal education which they received enabled them to follow professional careers, such as Law and Medicine. Many joined the Army, Navy and Aviation. Some of them joined the ranks of the orders that had educated them. Boys were specially prepared for business activities, through subjects such as accountancy and book-keeping. According to Mr. Luis Delaney, the prestige of the Fahy Institute meant a rapid insertion of its alumni in multinational enterprises [61].

Throughout the testimonies, the true affection and respect that the pupils felt for their teachers is evident. Tessie Farrell explains the deep impression that was left in the former students of her Irish-Argentine school:

“I love Saint Bridget’s and all the people that I was lucky enough to meet there. I was thrilled to study and learn all the good lessons that I was able to apply successfully in my adult life. I was able to overcome the difficult times thanks to the excellent Christian education which I received in my marvellous school, something that I’m truly thankful for. I was so happy at Saint Bridget’s!” [62]

Damasia Becú explains the influence the Passionist Sisters left in their students:

“They mingled with us [...], spoke our language, celebrated our triumphs, cried with us [...] while we were captivated and transformed by them. Our deep and joyous religiosity is their gift. Our love for parties, the organisation of events, the songs ... our love of freedom, of truth, were sown by them. Happy mixture of cultures! They took our spontaneity, our sensitivity, and they left us all their joy, spirituality and discipline!” [63]

Luckily there were plenty of examples to follow and many educators willing to devote their lives to the education of the new generations of Argentine citizens.

Leading Irish-Argentine Educators

It could be argued that many educators linked to the Irish-Argentine community deserve the compliment. It is to be hoped that many of them shared Sean Healy’s vision on education:

“I would not recommend the experiment or experience to those in quest of opportunities for leisure. But I can truthfully assert that few professions offer one such contentment as that of guiding our youth along the thorny path of adolescent life. Its compensations more than counterbalance the exertions and tribulations exacted.” [64]

Many of these teachers were mentioned in connection with the institutions where they acted. Now we will deal briefly with those who shone in the educational field, but not necessarily within the community institutions.

Patrick Fitz Simons, who held a degree in Law and a doctorate in Philosophy, arrived to Argentina in 1862. We have already explained that he founded a school in Lobos and that in 1869 he was entrusted with the organisation of the National School at Corrientes.

As rector of this establishment he sought to form honest Argentine citizens. He also created diverse schools: one for prefects, an elementary school, a night school for craftsmen and one for soldiers. In 1872, yellow fever struck Corrientes; Fitz Simons and his wife aided many families and finally died from the disease. [65]

Patrick was succeeded by his son James (Santiago) Fitz Simons (1849-1925) as rector of the school. In that capacity he organised the secondary school, prioritising a “national, republican education”. In 1891 he was named Inspector of Secondary Education and he elaborated a plan of reforms. The following year he was chosen to preside the General Inspection of Secondary Education. He then moved on to become rector of the Carlos Pellegrini Commercial School, one of the most prestigious establishments of Buenos Aires. [66]

The story of Cecilia Grierson (1859-1934) [67] was quite different. She was the daughter of a rural worker of the province of Entre Ríos. It was there that she started her teaching career, when she was scarcely thirteen years old. She then studied in the *Escuela Normal de Maestras* (Preparatory School for Teachers), in Buenos Aires.

However, she longed to become a doctor and after overcoming the prejudices of her contemporaries, she became the first woman in South America to obtain a Medicine degree. In 1886 she created the first Nursing School in South America. Her lessons on the care of the sick and first aid were widely published. She was a professor of Anatomy and created the course of Kinesiology.

This woman who started the practice of giving out toys to hospitalised children and using fire squad sirens in ambulances, was a unique combination of doctor and pedagogue, in the words of her biographer “an example of love to her country and humanity as a whole”. [68]

Kathleen Milton Jones (1869-1941) also managed to improve the lives of many. Born in Dublin to a Church of Ireland family, she was sent to study Literature at the University of Cambridge. When she was 20 years old, the whole family emigrated to Rio de Janeiro, where she taught English, Music and Arts at the *Colegio Americano Brasileiro*. A yellow fever epidemic and the presence of 2 cousins in Buenos Aires, determined their passage to Buenos Aires in 1891.

By 1894, Kathleen was ready to establish the English School (later renamed *San Patricio*) in San Martín, a suburb of Buenos Aires. It was open to students of every origin. In subsequent years she would educate more than 3,000 students. According to Murray’s investigation she was also an educational pioneer. Her school:

“was a laboratory to test modern educational techniques. Kathleen managed to implement new methods to teach English as a foreign language and, according to the examination results, there was a significant improvement of the students’ knowledge and enthusiasm. Her motivation schemes, including awards to the best students, prompted [them] to work harder”. [69]

Married to Andrew Boyle, a former major in the British Army, in 1899, Kathleen followed her husband’s example and converted into Catholicism. This remarkable woman who also devoted her energies to helping the needy, died in 1941 and is remembered with a street in Villa Piaggio and a bronze bust in the entrance of San Martín cemetery.

Finally, we will deal with Father Juan Santos Gaynor (1905-1963) [70]. He studied in Saint Patrick’s School, Mercedes. He then joined the Pallotines, who sent him to study to Thurles, Ireland. He later became a doctor in Philosophy and Theology.

Gaynor directed *The Southern Cross* for eighteen years (1940-1958), leaving in his writings “evidence of his profound faith, vast culture and constant preoccupation for human problems”. He was also active in the educational field. He was General Inspector of Religious Instruction (1951-1954); Professor of Theology and English Literature; and the founder of the institute that bears his name: *Fundación Juan S. Gaynor* (1958).

The educational philosophy of the Irish-Argentines

An elementary education

The role of Ireland as a guardian of the Western culture and the Irishmen’s love of education are well known. The existence of hedge-schools throughout the island in the 19th century is proof of this. Thanks to these precarious institutions, even the humblest peasants received an elementary education. That is why, it’s not surprising to find that most of the Irish immigrants who arrived to our coasts, knew how to read and write.

The level of instruction among these immigrants is evident in the national census of 1869 and 1895. We can speculate that the figures are not exact, since some of them might’ve felt tempted to hide their ignorance of the Spanish language or their scarce education. However, the data from an urban and a rural area should prove to be useful. [71]

In these two areas, the percentage of literate Irishmen ranges between 82 and 85% (1869), increasing to 90-92% (1895). The progressive instruction of the immigrants is intimately linked with increased schooling: in the first section, the proportion of children over 6 who go to school, moves from 43 to 90%; while in Rojas it moves from 29 to 49%. The difference between the 2 areas is logical: Rojas was a rural district, which had less schools and where children were expected to help with the farming activities.

All of the Irish schools and the national establishments provided an elementary education for the children of these immigrants.

Language

The original language of the Irish is Gaelic. The English eliminated it systematically, since they saw it as a means of transmitting a whole culture which they wanted to eradicate. The measure of their success after centuries of domination can be seen in the low numbers of Irishmen who spoke Gaelic in the nineteenth century.

When analysing the educational programmes of Irish-Argentine schools it's highly unusual to find Gaelic before the years of the "Gaelic Renaissance" in Ireland. Its inclusion usually responded to the personal convictions of the directors, such is the case of Sean Healy, an active nationalist in his native land. Saint Patrick's in Mercedes was another exception.

We will therefore take English as the mother tongue of the Irish immigrants. It's also worthwhile to add that the best examples of Irish authors wrote in this language and that one of them, Oscar Wilde, once said that, while the English conquered Irish territory to exploit it in a selfish way, the Irish adopted the English language to improve it.

There were different factors that contributed to the loss of the native language of different migrant communities and the adoption of Spanish. Argentina's educational policy was one of the key factors. In 1884 the new educational law enabled the children of immigrants to learn Spanish and come into contact with the "natives" and create permanent bonds with them. Furthermore, the policies known as "patriotic education" (1908-1915) exalted the national feeling through the use of patriotic emblems, the commemoration of key dates and the thorough study of Argentine history.

The reduced size of the immigrant community could also conspire against the conservation of the original language. However, we know for a fact that the Irish kept their language up to the fourth and even fifth generation. This was due to different factors, such as the international prestige of English, the cultural level of the group, and of course, the creation of institutions which sought to maintain traditions. [72]

Most of the Irish pioneers were reluctant to adopt the ways and language of the "natives". This helps to understand why they resorted to camp schoolmasters whose greatest virtue was, in many cases, to speak English. Gradually, the surrounding environment led them to adopt Spanish as a second language, establishing its predominance at the onset of the 20th century. By 1919 Thomas Murray regretted that:

"Parents have in too many cases passed from one extreme to the other in their ideas as to the language their children should know first, and English, such a very useful tongue to know, is frequently neglected where its imparting would cost no more effort than its daily use by the parents within the family circle. Irish-Argentines are very fortunately placed, they can [...] endow their children with the very great advantage of the two principal languages of the world, they will be acting very foolishly if they do not fully avail themselves of this good fortune." [73]

This change is also evident in the curriculum. While the advertisements of Saint Patrick's School in the 1920s considered Spanish "a subject of great importance", those of the 1930s highlighted the application of the official programmes and considered English "a subject of great importance".

Complaints and curriculum changes aside, bilingualism was one of the strong points of Irish-Argentine schools. Despite integration to their country of adoption and mixed marriages, Irish-Argentines kept the English language, not only because for cultural reasons, but also because they appreciated its possibilities. It was soon evident that the alumni of Irish-Argentine schools were offered secretarial and accounting posts in British and American enterprises.

We could also argue that many other schools assigned equal or more importance to English. Graham-Yooll provides us with a chronicle of the English and Scottish schools [74]. But most of these institutions were founded and directed by Anglicans and Presbyterians, and linked to the churches of these confessions. The majority of the Irish who arrived to Argentina were Catholic and they demanded a Catholic education for their offspring.

The Catholic Faith

In the 19th century, Gaelic had practically succumbed to the English onslaught, but the faith of the Irish people remained steadfast. Actually, the Catholic faith drew the Irish and the Argentines together. Where culture and language created differences, religion united and permitted a growing amount of mixed marriages.

An article, which appeared in *The Standard* in 1925, stated that:

“Wherever the Irish settled, their priests went with them to direct their progress and share their trials. In Argentina, the priests made sure that the first Irish immigrants who had become wealthy farmers donated land to build chapels which became not only places of worship but also schools and social centres for the whole community.” [75]

A quick look at the schools described previously should suffice to demonstrate that the majority of the Irish-Argentine schools were linked to religious orders. The example of Father Fahy, the visionary Dominican who founded the first Irish-Argentine school, was followed by the priests he had formed and brought from Ireland, such as Patrick Joseph Dillon and Michael Leahy.

The Sisters of Mercy occupy the first place in the “Honour roll”: besides establishing numerous schools (*Mater Misericordiae, Saint Ethnea’s, Saint Mary’s, Clonmacnoise, Saint Anne’s*, etc.), they also administered others, such as *Saint Bridget’s*. The Passionist Fathers founded *Saint Paul’s* in Carmen de Areco, while the Pallotines created *Saint Patrick’s* in Mercedes. The Passionist Sisters established *Michael Ham Memorial College* and the Christian Brothers, *Cardinal Newman*. And let’s not forget the religious orders connected with the schools of the *Ladies of Saint Joseph’s Society*!

In the period we are studying, very few schools were private enterprises. The first schools established by private individuals had a short life. Lawrence Dillon and Sean Healy were more successful. Beyond the religious or non-religious origin, the great majority of these establishments have religious names, resorting often to saints.

If we study the programmes, we confirm that religion is part of the curriculum of every single Irish-Argentine school, both before and after the secularisation of education (through the *Ley 1420* of 1884). We have mentioned the religious practices of the girls’ schools which included masses, rosaries and peregrinations. Sacred history is also mentioned in the advertisements of different schools.

The Southern Cross also admonished the parents about the necessity of educating children in the faith of their elders. The newspaper joined other media in deploring the sanction of the *Ley 1420*, receiving it as the triumph of “godless education”. [76]

In a pastoral letter addressed to the Irish-Argentines, Monsignor Espinosa warns that:

“The great evil of these times is the religious indifference with which our environment is saturated, and even the most pious families suffer the consequences of this evil, if parents don’t show the necessary concern for the formation of their children’s heart. Do not entrust them to the cares of non Catholic teachers, since the impression caused on your children when they see that people they respect do not profess the faith of their parents, is usually undeletable. When choosing a school always favour catholic schools, that devote themselves especially to the religious instruction of their pupils.” [77]

“Every Catholic child in a Catholic school” was the slogan that the author of the section “The Catholic World” proposed to adopt in his article of March 19, 1926. He compared the “disloyal and disobedient” Catholics who sent their children to secular schools” to those “good” Catholics who “gladly made sacrifices to safeguard their children against the perils to faith and morals, so common in a society which is fast persuading itself that it can get along better without God than with God.” [78]

The rejection of secular education is present in a 1933 article that urges to follow the example of Brazil - where religious education had been reinstated- and which states:

“Till the clear idea of God and the duties of men towards Him pervades in our national life, we shall not have real civilization. Our educational system is growing powerless before the evils of the times. Our youth are growing up into a race of criminals. Our schools are seriously endangered by Communism and sane and sound patriotism is on the wane. The only real remedy is implantation of religion in our schools.” [79]

Closely connected to the religious formation is moral education, which stems out from the former. Sean Healy expressed his point of view:

“[...] education is a far greater matter than the mere acquisition of proficiency in scholastic subjects. The good teacher is constantly preoccupied with the formation and development of character, the inculcation of moral values such as self-discipline, the virtues of truth, courage, loyalty and honesty, which form the

basis of life's successes or failures. [...] Neglect of this phase of a child's education, often leads to disastrous consequences, swelling the ranks of the unemployed and social detention centres." [80]

Patriotism

For the majority of these immigrants and their descendants, being Irish was unmistakably linked to the Catholic faith. Therefore, religion and patriotism were complementary, and were sometimes intermixed. Priests and nuns encouraged in their pupils a deep affection for the land of their ancestors. Thus, we see that every end of the year ceremony included Irish songs and dances, which in the second quarter of the twentieth century, included the Irish anthem *The Soldier's Song*. Irish dances and Irish history were generally part of the educational programmes.

Therefore the duty of Irish-Argentine parents went beyond sending their sons and daughters to Catholic schools, these had to provide an "Irish atmosphere", and this was only possible in the Irish-Argentine schools. From the pages of *The Southern Cross* support of these schools was encouraged, since they were as good, if not better, than all others and besides they were "our own and for our own". [81]

Once more, we resort to Monsignor Espinosa to clarify the relationship between faith and patriotism. In his pastoral letter he exhorts the Irish-Argentines to:

"carry on being faithful to your faith and your principles, passing them on to your children, so that studying your glorious history they might learn to love the Catholic faith, the land of their forebears and this their homeland, which you have contributed to form with the vigour of your intelligence and the strength of your arms". [82]

But patriotism doesn't just apply to the Emerald Isle, but also to Argentina. Monsignor Santiago Usher explained this clearly:

"All should love and serve the land in which they were born. And for Argentines, Argentina comes first; but Irish-Argentines also love Ireland, the ancient land of their race, and [in the Irish schools] the laudable traditions of our race are preserved and love of Argentina and Ireland are inculcated as well as the high principles of our religion." [83]

The Irishmen who settled in Argentina, rapidly made it their home. Their descendants were Irish-Argentines, not Irishmen born outside their homeland. The quality of their adaptation can be measured by the reduced figures of Irish immigrants who went back home. In other words, they didn't come here to get rich and go back home. They settled here, worked hard, formed their families and died here.

This profound affection for the Argentine soil gave them the right to criticise the lack of patriotism in the educational programmes:

"Argentine nationalism is in danger of being swamped, unless something is done to bring up the youth of the country, the authentic Argentines, in the Argentine spirit. [...] It's strange to say it is in the teaching profession, that which of all others is dedicated, as a substantive part of its work to the propagation of Argentine patriotism, to the theories and persons of the internationalists and no-country men, have found a home." [84]

Women's role

A 1926 article addressed the girls -future wives and mothers- and recommended the fostering of certain domestic skills:

*"Every girl should know how to sew and make dresses.
To cook and clean.
To mend her own and household things.
To dress neatly and becomingly and daintily.
To keep a secret and respect confidences.
To be self-reliant and not helpless.
To keep her house tidy and have a place for everything.
To respect old age.
To be above gossip or listening to slander.
To control her temper.
To care for the sick and the young."* [85]

Around the same time, another article underlined the importance of Irish-Argentine mothers in the upbringing of their children. Referring to the epigram "the hand that rocks the cradle rules the world", the

author posed that mothers had a superior and noble mission in life. “The home is the initial and the greatest primary school [...] [where the] principles of honour and virtue are instilled”. [86]

These two visions, expressed by men, describe the archetypal housewife and mother. However, we must remember that many Irish-Argentine families were true matriarchies. Women worked side by side with their husbands. When the men were away on a journey, or passed away, women were unafraid of taking command. They administered their properties, and they raised their children with discipline, preparing them for life’s struggles.

When it came to formal education, girls and boys had the same rights. As a matter of fact, Father Fahy, solved the matter of the girls’ education first, sending for the Sisters of Mercy. It should also be noted that, at the time when the two articles we just quoted were printed, the schools run by the Sisters offered commercial courses that allowed their students to become secretaries in multinational corporations and earn their living.

Conclusion

After studying the birth and evolution of the Irish-Argentine schools throughout the 1850-1950 period, we confirm that their common origin gave them similar characteristics. It would be useless to go over the names of the institutions created since Father Fahy inaugurated his “Irish” College back in 1857. It should suffice to say that many of them proved their excellence with their continuity [87], and especially through the unattainable number of women and men who attended them and who, years later still cherish fond memories and a sincere affection for their schools and teachers.

The educational philosophy of the Irish-Argentines has rarely been explicated, but it is always present in its institutions and educators. As we have already seen, it has five pillars:

- An elementary education for all the Irish-Argentine children.
- Defence of the English language as a means of keeping the Irish identity and due to its usefulness as the world’s commercial language.
- Catholic education, including the traditional Irish religiosity.
- Patriotism, which involves love for the ancestral land and the Argentine soil.
- Equality between men and women as far as education is concerned.

This philosophy is partially summarised in Luis Delaney’s reflection on the years he spent at the Fahy Institute: “we were taught English in the mornings and to love Argentina in the afternoons”; a lesson which many Argentine schools have yet to learn!

It is impossible to praise adequately the bravery and resolve of those educators who offered their lives for the education of the new generations of Irish-Argentines, transforming them into worthy heirs of their ancestors and builders of a new nation. This explains, to a great extent, why, being so few, they achieved so much. This investigation is a modest tribute to their incessant and generous labour.

Notes

[1] The lowest figures respond to EDUARDO COGHLAN’s *El aporte de los irlandeses ...*, p. 15-22 and J. C. KOROL & H. SABATO’s, *Cómo fue la inmigración irlandesa ...*, p. 194; while the highest were estimated earlier on by SANTIAGO USSHER, *Los capellanes irlandeses ...*, p. 19-22.

[2] SANTIAGO USSHER, *Los capellanes irlandeses*, p. 130.

[3] FERNANDO DEVOTO, *La inmigración*; in: ACADEMIA NACIONAL DE LA HISTORIA, *Nueva Historia de la Nación Argentina*, vol. 4, p. 102.

[4] THOMAS MURRAY, *The Story of the Irish in Argentina*, p. 281.

[5] WILLIAM MAC CANN, *Viaje a caballo por las provincias argentinas*, p. 114.

[6] “El monitor de la Campaña”, N° 33. Capilla del Señor, 1874.

[7] THOMAS MURRAY, *op. cit.*, p. 283.

[8] GARRAHAN, Tom, *Memoirs*.

- [9] See THOMAS MURRAY, *op. cit.*, p. 286.
- [10] TIMOTHY HORAN, *The Irish in Argentina*. Report of the Irish Embassy in Argentina to the Foreign Affairs Department, July 22 1958, p. 12.
- [11] Interview with Sister Isabel Mac Dermott. Buenos Aires, November 11, 2001.
- [12] SANTIAGO USSHER, *Padre Fahy*, p. 105.
- [13] See CENSO NACIONAL DE POBLACION DE 1869, séptima sección, vols. 20 y 21.
- [14] *The Southern Cross*. Buenos Aires, January 11, 1957. Year 82, N° 4242, p. 11.
- [15] Data taken from THOMAS MURRAY, *op. cit.*, p. 428.
- [16] *The Southern Cross*. Buenos Aires, March 25, 1881. Vol. II, N° 8, p. 3.
- [17] THOMAS MURRAY, *op. cit.*, p. 208-212.
- [18] We return to Dr. Fitz Simons' achievements on page 23.
- [19] See SANTIAGO USSHER, *Los capellanes irlandeses ...*, p. 168-174
- [20] THOMAS MURRAY, *op. cit.*, p. 381.
- [21] *The Southern Cross*. Buenos Aires, January 21, 1875. Year I, N° 2, p. 4. This location is now in one of the busiest parts of the city of Buenos Aires.
- [22] *The Southern Cross*. Buenos Aires, February 18, 1875. Year I, N° 6, p. 4. This quinta would soon become the National History Museum, and its gardens, a public park: Parque Lezama.
- [23] *The Southern Cross*. Buenos Aires, March 4 , 1875. Year I, N° 8, p. 2.
- [24] *The Southern Cross*. Buenos Aires, March 14 , 1879. Vol. V, N° 10, p. 8.
- [25] See EDUARDO COGHLAN, *Los irlandeses en la Argentina*, p. 250.
- [26] *The Southern Cross*. Buenos Aires, January 13, 1882. Vol. VII, N° 50.
- [27] SANTIAGO USSHER, *Los capellanes irlandeses*, p. 147.
- [28] *The Southern Cross*. Buenos Aires, March 1, 1878. Vol. IV, N° 8, p. 8.
- [29] See CENSO NACIONAL DE POBLACIÓN DE 1895, séptima sección, vols. 504 to 509.
- [30] See SANTIAGO USSHER, *Las Hermanas de la Misericordia*, p. 95.
- [31] This congregation had been recently established by Mother Francisca Cabrini.
- [32] *The Southern Cross*. Buenos Aires, April 9, 1926. Year 52, N° 2666, p. 21.
- [33] See above *Saint Joseph's School*.
- [34] SANTIAGO USSHER, *Los capellanes irlandeses*, p. 223.
- [35] SANTIAGO USSHER, *Los capellanes irlandeses*, p. 134-5.
- [36] *The Southern Cross*. Buenos Aires, May 31, 1957. Year 82, N° 4261, p. 12.
- [37] *The Southern Cross*, Centennial edition, p. 91.
- [38] JOSÉ DE MOAL, *Historia del Colegio San Pablo y del Monasterio desde 1900 a 1940*, p. 11.
- [39] See THOMAS MURRAY, *The Story of the Irish in Argentina*, p. 462-463.
- [40] FEDERACIÓN DE SOCIEDADES ARGENTINO-IRLANDESAS, *XVII Peregrinación Argentino-Irlandesa a Luján*, p. 8.
- [41] *The Southern Cross*. Buenos Aires, July 2, 1943. Year 69, N° 3561, p. 7.
- [42] See SOCIEDAD DE SEÑORAS DE SAN JOSÉ, *Breve historia ...*, p. 12-13.
- [43] *The Southern Cross*. Buenos Aires, July 2, 1943. Year 69, N° 3561, p. 7.
- [44] REV. W. MURPHY, *Present situation affecting education of English speaking Catholic Boys ...*
- [45] EDUARDO COGHLAN, *Los irlandeses en la Argentina ...*, p. 633.
- [46] ASOCIACION DE EX ALUMNAS DEL COLEGIO MICHAEL HAM, *Old Girls' Bulletin*, junio de 1993, año XVI, N° 34, p. 12.

- [47] ASOCIACION DE EX ALUMNAS DEL COLEGIO MICHAEL HAM, *Old Girls' Bulletin*, septiembre de 1979, año 3, N° 9, p. 20.
- [48] Nelly Durand de Scanlan (Saint Brendan's), Diana Mateo and Beatriz Peroni (Saint Nicholas), Elena Ortíz de Maschwitz (Godspell College), Margarine and María Moreno (Holy Cross School).
- [49] *The Southern Cross*. Buenos Aires, 21 de noviembre de 1947. Año 73, nro. 3800, p. 12.
- [50] CHRISTIAN BROTHERS (coord.); *Colegio Cardenal Newman – 50 años*, p. 26.
- [51] *The Southern Cross*. Buenos Aires, January 21, 1916. Year 42, N° 2373, p.
- [52] *The Southern Cross*. Buenos Aires, January 1, 1926. Year 51, N° 3853, p. 24. The same advertisement was still published in 1942.
- [53] *The Southern Cross*. Buenos Aires, October 5, 1934. Year 60, N° 3105, p. 42.
- [54] Interview with Brian Healy, Sean Healy's grandson. Buenos Aires, April 28, 2001.
- [55] *The Southern Cross*. Buenos Aires, February 3, 1933. Year 58, N° 3018, p. 24.
- [56] *The Southern Cross*. Buenos Aires, October 5, 1934. Year 60, N° 3105, p. 58.
- [57] *The Southern Cross*. Buenos Aires, December 30, 1938. Year 64, N° 3326, p. 24.
- [58] *The Southern Cross*. Buenos Aires, December 24, 1943. Year 69, N° 3586, p. 31-32.
- [59] The information concerning Mercy students has been taken from PATSY FARRELL, *Nuestros años en Santa Brígida*, and the interviews to Mrs. Lizzie Ussher de Rush and Sister Isabel Mac Dermott.
- [60] See PATSY FARRELL, *op. cit.*, p. 17.
- [61] Interview with Luis Delaney. Buenos Aires, February 5, 2002.
- [62] See PATSY FARRELL, *op. cit.*, p. 22.
- [63] D. BECU, *La comunidad pasionista*, in: *Michael Ham Memorial College – 75th Anniversary*, p. 21.
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- [65] See *The Southern Cross*, Centennial edition, p. 44.
- [66] *The Southern Cross*, Centennial edition, p. 44.
- [67] Facts taken from ALFREDO KOHN LONCARICA, *Cecilia Grierson. Vida y obra de la primera médica argentina* and *The Southern Cross*, Centennial edition, p. 45.
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- [69] MURRAY, Edmundo, *Catalina Street in Ciudad de San Martín, Buenos Aires*.
- [70] *The Southern Cross*, Centennial edition, p. 14.
- [71] Section 1 of the city of Buenos Aires and the district of Rojas. See National Population Census for 1869, vols. 1-3, and 108; 1895, vols. 466-469 and 817-818.
- [72] For a detailed analysis of the factors affecting immigrant groups and their language see MARIA BEATRIZ FONTANELLA DE WEINBERG, *Lengua e inmigración*, p. 13-28.
- [73] THOMAS MURRAY, *The Story of the Irish in Argentina*, p. 291.
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[82] Archbishop M. A. ESPINOSA, *op. cit.*.

[83] *The Southern Cross*. Buenos Aires, December 24, 1926. Year 52, N° 2701, p. 15.

[84] *The Southern Cross*. Buenos Aires, March 3, 1933. Year 59, N° 3022, p. 12.

[85] *The Southern Cross*. Buenos Aires, April 23, 1926. Year 52, N° 2668, p. 18.

[86] *The Southern Cross*. Buenos Aires, January 30, 1925. Year 51, N° 2837, p. 13.

[87] Although Saint Lucy's, Saint Paul's and the Keating Institute closed their doors forever, the Mercy schools, Saint Patrick's, Michael Ham, Cardinal Newman survive –mostly under the command of other religious orders or lay headmasters- until this day. Saint Bridget's remains as the emblematic Irish-Argentine School, while Saint Ciaran's is now under the guidance of Sean Healy's grandsons.

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Table 1: Irish-Argentine Schools 1850-1950

School	Location	Founders	Religion Order	Established	Closed
Cardinal Newman	Belgrano 1548 (City of Buenos Aires) E. Reclus 1133 (Boulogne)	Christian Brothers		29/3/1948	-----
Clonmacnoise	San Antonio de Areco	Sisters of Mercy	Sisters of Mercy (1922-49) Pallotines (since 1949)	22/3/1922	-----
Holy Faith School	Callao 246 (City of Buenos Aires)	Mrs. Hine	----- -----	before 1875	?
Saint Bridget's Industrial School	Azcuénaga	Father Bernard Feeney (Pallotine)		1887	1889
Holy Cross College	Corrientes 595 (City of Buenos Aires)	Father Byrne		1881	?
Fahy Institute	City of Buenos Aires (1891-93) Capilla del Señor (1893-1950) Moreno (since 1929)	Ladies of Saint Joseph's Society	Sisters of Saint Joseph (1893-97) Brothers of Saint Joseph of Lyons (1897-9) Marist Brothers (1908-1933) Pallotine Fathers (1933-1999) Fund. Apostólica Mariana (1999-hoy)	14/5/1891	-----
Keating Institute	Estados Unidos 3141 (Buenos Aires)	Cristina Keating St. Joseph Society	Daughters of Mercy (1912-66) Dominican Sisters (1966-82)	1912	1982
Irish College for Boys	Callao, corner of Tucumán (City of Buenos Aires)	Padre Fahy	Rev. James Curran and Rev. Lawrence Kirwan	1862	1864
Irish College for Girls	Riobamba 1857 (City of Buenos Aires)	Padre Fahy	Sisters of Mercy (1857-80 y 1890-97) Sisters of the Sacred Heart (1880-90)	1857	1897
Mater Misericordiae	24 de Noviembre 865 (City of Buenos Aires)	Sisters of Mercy		15/8/1897	1977
Michael Ham Memorial College	A. Alvarez 1099 (Vicente López)	Michael Ham Passionist Sisters	Passionist Sisters	1926	-----
Nuestra Señora de Luján	Luján	Rev. Emilio George	Lazarist Fathers	1877	?
Sacred Heart College	Parque 585 (City of Buenos Aires)	Mrs. Galbraith	----- -----	before 1875	?
Saint Brendan's	Carmen de Areco	Rev. Michael Leahy		1869	?
Saint Ciaran's	Gaona Ave. 2855, Rivadavia 5672-90 (City of Buenos Aires)	Sean Healy	----- -----	1933	-----
Saint George's	Corrientes 235 Cangallo 1127 (City of Buenos Aires)	Dean Patrick Joseph Dillon		1876	c1884
Saint Joseph's	Mercedes	Sisters of Mercy		1872	1880

Saint Lucy's	Montes de Oca 1138-50 and San Juan 855 (City of Buenos Aires)	Lawrence Dillon	----- -----	1897	c1954
Saint Patrick's	Mercedes	Pallotine Fathers		2/1887	-----
Saint Patrick's College	Lobos / Flores	James Fitz Simons	----- -----	1861	c1868
Saint Paul's College	Capitán Sarmiento	Passionist Fathers		1900	1960
Saint Peter and Paul	Chascomús	Sisters of Mercy		1865	1870
Saint Stanislaus'	Mercedes	Pallotine Fathers		c1900	1925
Saint Anne's	Rawson (Chacabuco)	Sisters of Mercy		19/4/1929	?
Saint Bridget's	Av. Gaona 2068 (City of Buenos Aires)	Irish Catholic Association	Missionaries of the Sacred Heart (1899-1902) Sisters of Mercy (1902-79) Sisters of Saint Martha (1979-99)	19/3/1899	-----
Saint Ethnea's	Bella Vista	Sisters of Mercy		11/1/1931	-----
Saint Mary's	San Antonio de Areco	Sisters of Mercy	Sisters of Mercy (1901-88) Dominican Sisters (since 1988)	16/3/1901	-----
Windsor College	Defensa 613 (City of Buenos Aires)	Mrs. Macken	----- -----	before 1875	?



'You May Die in Ireland'

By Michael John Geraghty

“St. Patrick was a gentleman who came from decent people”, sings Christy Moore, the legendary Irish balladeer and song writer, “he built a church in Dublin town and put it on a steeple.” “His father was a Gallagher, his mother was a Grady” continues Moore who is better informed than most about the legendary saint who is certainly a legend but may never have been a saint.

In actual fact, no one really knows where Patrick came from, who he was, or if he even ever existed. To make matters worse some modern scholars even go as far as to say there were two, three, four, or even more St. Patricks, that none of them brought Christianity to Ireland because it was already there when they arrived, and that the image of the great Irish apostle was invented by the Celtic church as part of its propaganda campaign in the dispute - about the date of Easter and the shape of the tonsure – with the Church of Rome that ended at the 7th century Synod of Whitby.

To make matters worse still, most of what is said about Patrick is simply not true. The yarn explaining with a three-leaved clover the most holy and undivided Trinity, one of Christian theology’s most profound mysteries, is a bit too much even for the Irish who are famous for their tall tales. The two books and famous prayer Patrick is said to have written were penned by someone else and so it should come as no surprise to know that the snakes he banished from Ireland were never there in the first place, we Irish are a hot-blooded people and snakes would have no business amongst us. Nevertheless, we do know that the mighty man who may never have existed is buried at Downpatrick Cathedral in Ireland’s lovely county Down and that that cathedral in the course of history abandoned the Church of Rome and went over to the reforming protesters.

Yet Patrick is one of the world’s most popular saints and getting more popular by the day all over the world not only with the Irish and their descendants but also with the hosts of others who become Irish for at least one day in the year, today, March 17, St. Patrick’s Day. The 17th of March was chosen because some say it was Patrick’s birthday, others say it was his death day, others say it was both, and according to “The Birth of St. Patrick,” by Samuel Lover, the 19th century Dublin-born writer and painter, the 17th was chosen to stop a fight between a group of boys who said Patrick was born on the 8th and another group who said it was the 9th:

“Ah!

Says Fr. Mulcahy,

Boys, don’t be fighting for eight or for nine,

Combine the two

and seventeen is the time,

So, let that be his birthday?

Amen!

said the lads and

Then they all got blind drunk,

Which completed their bliss,

And we keep up the practice

From that day to this!”

No matter why the 17th of March was chosen, it is the day for the wearing of the green in your clothes, on your face, in your hair, on your fingernails, in your ears, on your lips, and on anywhere else your fancy takes you. It is also a day for the drinking of the green as pubs and bars all over the world dye their beverages and Paddy's boisterous lads and lassies cannot get enough of it.

The day will start with parades and finish with parties everywhere and it is only right, because St. Patrick's Day began not in Ireland but in Boston in 1737, that the biggest parade of them all will be New York's 242nd St. Patrick's Day Parade, up 5th Avenue from 86th to 44th streets, to the music of bagpipes and high school bands. Grand Marshall James G. O'Connor and a host of politicians and presbyters will follow the 165th Infantry (originally the glorious 69th Regiment of the 1850's), the Ancient Order of Hibernians, 30 Irish county societies, clan by clan, Irish nationalist societies, and nearly 150,000 others proudly wearing the green, as millions gawk along the parade route or watch on TV a wonderful spectacle of Irish pageantry. This year's parade will stop at the reviewing stand at 5th Avenue and 64th Street for New York's Edward Cardinal Egan to pray for a peaceful solution to the conflict with Iraq. Everyone who is anyone will be in that parade except, of course, the Irish Gay and Lesbian Organization. The Mayor of New York, Michael R. Bloomberg, will march too, although he has publicly voiced his disapproval of the banning of the Irish homosexuals who are not allowed to march "because their lives do not conform to Catholic teaching." Wow!

Over in the White House, which was actually designed by an Irishman, US President George W. Bush, one of America's 18 presidents of Irish descent, already drowned the shamrock a little early this year on Thursday, March 13, at the US President's annual party for Ireland's Taoiseach or Prime Minister, the only politician in the world who is guaranteed a yearly meeting with the US President. It may all sound like a bit of a joke but it is not. The Irish-American lobby has tremendous political and corporate clout and with William Jefferson Clinton it did more than anyone else to prepare the way for peace in the six counties of Northern Ireland. This year Taoiseach Bartholomew "Bertie" Ahern told George W. Bush that the best way forward in the conflict in the Middle East is through the United Nations, which was, Ahern insisted, set up precisely for this kind of stand off.

Most of Ahern's cabinet also travels abroad for St. Patrick's Day to promote Ireland and although this year none of them will travel to Argentina where some half a million Argentines claim Irish descent, St. Patrick's Day will be well and truly celebrated here. Celebrations start at the metropolitan cathedral where the Irish Argentine Federation will pay homage to General José de San Martín, the Liberator, and then homage will be paid to Admiral William Brown at his monument nearby. One of the Argentine Navy bands will be present to play the Argentine and Irish national anthems, and St. Patrick's Day in the morning, one of their insignia tunes, which the intrepid Brown is said to have ordered his drummers to play every time he sailed into battle, although by all accounts the Mayo man was more concerned with guns than drums on battle day.

After all the honors are rendered and the music has died away it is open season for the revelers. The wise go home, the more mature and not so mature head to the American Club which has been putting on a St. Patrick's Day do for as far back as I can remember. The craic, as the Irish call fun, really starts later on in the evening around the many Irish pubs that have sprung up in the city and environs over the last 30 years with Argentina's only Irish-born publican, Cork-born Jack Murphy, very much to the fore with his aptly named Shamrock Pub where it is St. Patrick's Day every day. It will be next to impossible to get into any of these havens of modern holiness as they fill to the brim with worshippers of the man who may never have existed and who started it all so many years ago in the Ireland he was abducted into as a slave, escaped from, and thence could not sleep at nights from the noise the pagan Irish were making in his head calling him back to save them from sin and Satan. Patrick stood up to be counted and the rest, as the fella said, is history. He was, after all, no matter how little we know about him, "a gentleman who came from decent people."

Sláinte agus saol agaibh, agus bas in Eireann, or in English: health and life to you, and may you die in Ireland.

Michael John Geraghty



The Irish Road to South America Nineteenth-Century Travel Patterns from Ireland to the River Plate

By Edmundo Murray

The nineteenth-century Irish emigration to Argentina has been studied from different perspectives. There are a growing number of historical, demographic and cultural studies focusing on diverse aspects of this migration, which together with Quebec and Mexican Texas, produced the only Irish settlements in non English-speaking territories. However, with a few exceptions, most of these studies concentrate on the settlement and the life of the emigrants from the time they arrived in the River Plate (Argentina and Uruguay), thus neglecting the preparations for their journey and the material details of the voyage. How did the Irish emigrants travel from their townlands and rural villages to the most important ports in Ireland and England, and from there to the River Plate? What means of transport did they use on land and sea, and how had those vehicles changed with the technical advances of the century? How expensive were the fares and how comfortable was the accommodation? Which were the most common emigrant ships to Argentina and what were their usual travel patterns?

In order to answer these questions we need to recall some facts of the Irish emigration to Argentina. During the nineteenth century, forty to forty-five thousand emigrants left Ireland to settle in Argentina and Uruguay [1]. Approximately 20,000 re-emigrated to the United States, Australia, Ireland or other areas, and 20,000 settled in the country. A majority of the emigrants bound to Argentina came from the Irish Midlands (Westmeath, Longford and Offaly) and from Co. Wexford. According to Peadar Kirby, they 'came from two clearly defined areas, south-east of a line from Wexford Town to Kilmore Quay in Wexford, and from a quadrangle on the Longford/Westmeath border stretching roughly from Athlone to Edgeworthstown, to Mullingar and to Kilbeggan. Virtually the whole population surrounding the town of Ballymore, which stands roughly at the centre of this quadrangle, emigrated to Buenos Aires in the 1860s' (Kirby 1992: 105) [2].

As early as 1842, during his ride through the Buenos Aires province, William McCann estimated that 'at least three-fourths of the [Irish] emigrants are from the County Westmeath' [McCann 1853: 195]. In his study of the Irish migration to Argentina, Patrick McKenna argues that 'the numbers from Westmeath and south Longford were to make up about two-thirds of the total number of Irish emigrants to Argentina' [McKenna 1992: 69]. The same author, based on Coghlan 1987, estimated that 43.35% emigrants were from Westmeath, 14.57% from Longford and 15.51% from Wexford [81]. These were the typical origins of the emigrants who established themselves in Argentina until September 1889, when poor urban families and labourers from Dublin, Cork and Limerick were induced by Argentine government agents to emigrate to Buenos Aires in the steamer *City of Dresden*.

I will firstly analyse the inland transportation patterns of Midlands and Wexford emigrants, then the journey to Liverpool and the stay at this port, followed by the journey to the River Plate

Emigrating from the Midlands

In general, early migrants were 'the younger, non-inheriting sons, and later daughters, of the larger tenant farmers and leaseholders. Usually, they were emigrating from farms which were in excess of twenty acres, and some were from farms considerably larger' [McKenna 1992: 71]. These farms were typically located in the rural areas of Ballymahon, Abbeyshrule, or Edgesworthtown (Longford), Multyfarnham, Ballinacarrigy, Moyvore, Ballymore, and Drumraney (Westmeath), and Kilmore, Kilrane and other towns in Co. Wexford.

In these areas, and in those social segments, nineteenth-century Argentina enjoyed at that time a reputation similar to that of the United States. The real or perceived prospect of acquiring land in Argentina (generally called at that time *Buenos Ayres* or the *Provinces of the River Plate*) was a powerful appeal to

children of tenant farmers in Ireland, who would never have other means to climb the social ladder. As Graham Davis put it for the Irish colonists from Wexford in Mexican and Revolutionary Texas:

Where previous histories have fostered an image of oppressed victims driven into exile from their native land, I argue that emigrants were able and willing to make their own choices, weighing up future prospects against their own situation. These emigrants were predominantly small farmers from some of the most affluent parts of Ireland and possessed sufficient capital to finance the trip and buy provisions for a year. Surviving letters point to their belief that they would do better in acquiring several thousands acres in Texas than renting a few acres in Ireland, if not for themselves, then certainly for the next generation [Davis 2002: 71].



The 'Westmeath' and 'Wexford' sending areas (Patrick McKenna 1992)

Many factors contributed to create the reputation of Argentina as a region where land acquisition was easier than other places, particularly, letters and news from early emigrants, newspapers articles in English published in the British Isles and in Argentina, and travel handbooks. Additionally, since Argentina was not part of the formal British Empire (though connected to England by strong trade and social links up to the 1930s), most legal burdens at home would not annoy the emigrants in their adopted country. Therefore, it was perceived by the emigrants that in Argentina they would be free from debts and other commitments that obliged them in Ireland.

Once they made the decision to emigrate to South America, the preparation was very complex, and represented for the emigrants a detailed exercise of travel planning. Departing from the Midlands or from Co. Wexford, the usual road taken by the emigrants bound to Argentina ended in Dublin. From there the emigrant crossed to Liverpool, and took a ship sailing to Rio de Janeiro, Montevideo, and Buenos Aires. However, McKenna argues that 'a considerable number of the first Irish emigrants, who were travelling under sail, may well have travelled along the established trading routes between Ireland and the United States and then used the trading route between the US and Argentina to complete their journey' [McKenna 1994: 154]. This may have been especially valid for the first decades of the nineteenth century, when the South Atlantic ocean was still dominated by Spanish and Portuguese ships. Occasionally, the ports of Dublin and Cork were used to sail directly to South America when ships were chartered to this purpose. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that after 1840 and until the 1880s the vast majority of emigrants used Liverpool as their port of departure due to the greater availability of shipping lines, frequencies, fares and accommodations. There is also circumstantial evidence that some of them have gone from the port of Southampton, but Liverpool was the preferred port during the nineteenth century [3]. Fifty-four percent of 6,447 Irish emigrants who arrived in Buenos Aires in the period 1822-1929 boarded at Liverpool, followed by Queenstown (today's Cobh), with 28 percent [Irish Argentine Historical Society, Database of Irish Passengers to Argentina].

The land distance from Mullingar, Co. Westmeath, to Dublin is 81 kilometres, and other ports are farther than Dublin: Cobh (220 km), Rosslare (200 km), Belfast (220 km) and Larne (130 Km). In order to reach Dublin, there were two major means of transport for the typical emigrants to Argentina, canal barges towed by horses from 1806, and later, from 1848, the railway. Of course, poorer emigrants would use less expensive means or just walk to save the fare. But the greater part of the emigrants paid their tickets, some of which were paid by their new employers in Buenos Aires. In 1806, the Royal Canal reached Mullingar from Dublin. The Longford branch was opened in January, 1830. In total, the Royal Canal had an extension of 145 km from Dublin to River Shannon, including 46 locks. [4]

Between 1806 and 1848, emigrants from counties Westmeath and Longford 'would have travelled to Dublin by canal boat. The journey time from Mullingar to Dublin was around thirteen hours in the early years of the canal service. By the 1840s, faster boats (known as the 'fly boats') cut journey times to eight hours' [Illingworth 2002]. Canal barges lumbered sedately at five or six kilometres per hour. For about thirty years following its completion the Royal Canal enjoyed modest success. Goods traffic 'built up to 134,000 tons annually by 1833, but this was far short of the business which the Grand Canal was attracting. Traffic on the upper reaches of the Shannon was disappointing and the anticipated trade from Lough Allen did not materialise. However, a branch line to Longford town was completed in 1830 and hotels were built at Broadstone in Dublin and Moyvalley in Co. Kildare' [O.P.W. Waterways 1996: 19].

The journey was relatively comfortable, even if the traveller had to sleep on deck. But as emigration increased during the Famine years, the boats were often overcrowded. In 1845, six passengers died when one boat capsized in Longford Harbour. Some emigrants would have also travelled by the Grand Canal, with a branch to Kilbeggan, Co. Westmeath, which was older and busier than the Royal Canal. In Kathleen Nevin's semi-fictionalised memoirs *You'll Never Go Back*, the character Kate Connolly recalls how she emigrated in the 1880s from Granard, Co. Longford, to Argentina. She travelled in the company of her cousin Bessie and friend Nancy Dwyer. They went to Athlone, and from there to Dublin. The narrator does not mention the means of transport they used, but they could have gone from Athlone to Kilbeggan or Tullamore and sailed down the Grand Canal [Nevin 1946: 12].

Edward Robbins, who emigrated to Argentina in 1849, wrote that 'at that period [1837], there were a Mail coach, a Day coach and a Canal coach passing and repassing through the town daily' [Robbins 1860]. According to an 1807 passage-boat timetable published by the Royal Canal House, there were two boats daily. The first one 'will leave Mullingar every morning at five o'clock, and arrive at the Broad Stone Hotel [Dublin] at five o'clock in the evening and the second one will leave Mullingar every day at two o'clock, and arrive at half past six o'clock the same evening at Moyvalley Hotel [Co. Kildare], from whence she will start at four o'clock every morning, and arrive at Broad Stone Hotel, Dublin, at half past eleven o'clock same day.' The same timetable includes the fare for the section Mullingar-Dublin (65.2 km): 12s-6d in first cabin and 7s-7d in second cabin. Departing from Mullingar, a passenger would have passed by the following stations: Thomastown, Boyne Aqueduct (over river Boyne), Moyvalley Hotel, Newcastle, Ferns (17th Lock), Kilcock, Maynooth, Rye Aqueduct, arriving at the Grand Canal basin in Dublin.

Writers at the turn of the century had a particular fascination with some enclaves of the Royal Canal. 'The Irish/Argentine William Bulfin, the intrepid traveller and editor of *The Southern Cross* approached Abbeyshrule [Co. Longford] by the line from Tenelick. He stopped to chat to a denizen of the locality and realised to his astonishment that he was in the famous Mill Lane of which he had heard many a time and oft far away on *The Pampas in corral or chiquero* when the sun-tanned exiles of Longford and Westmeath recalled some story of Abbeyshrule and its Mill Lane' [McGoey 1996].

Baggage used by the emigrants would have been trunks and boxes for well-off travellers and simple bags for the poor emigrants. Kate Connolly in *You'll Never Go Back* mentions that her party's baggage was a couple of trunks, and that Dick Delaney, the sign painter, 'painted our names on both. I remember how just the two boxes looked, standing on the kitchen floor before the dresser, with "The Misses Connolly – Buenos Ayres" on one, and "Miss Dwyer – Buenos Ayres" on the other. [...] Nancy had said she wanted to see her name on a trunk, no matter whose trunk it was, so we agreed, and she was wild with delight at the sight of it' [Nevin 1946: 12].

In October 1848, heralding the decline of the importance of the Royal Canal, the Midland Great Western Railway Company (MGWR) reached Mullingar and in August, 1851, the line extended to Athlone. The railway age 'signalled the demise of the canal. In 1845 the railway company purchased the entire canal for

£298,059, principally to use the property to lay a new railway. It was legally obliged to continue the canal business, but inevitably traffic fell into decline. Passenger business ceased totally within a few years and by the 1880s the annual goods tally was down to 30,000 tons' [O.P.W. Waterways 1996: 19].

By November 1855, the railway reached Longford. From 1848 onwards, the railway replaced the canal as the main mean of transport to Dublin. In the 1850s, emigrants travelling on the MGWR line had a choice of four trains daily to Dublin. The number of trains to the capital increased in the 1860s with the extension of the line to Galway and Sligo. Journey time to Dublin was around two hours. Those who travelled by third or fourth class would have had an uncomfortable journey: the 1850s fourth class carriages had neither heat nor sanitation, and were little better than cattle trucks, sometimes without seating.

In the Midland Great Western Railway line, the stations between Mullingar and Dublin were Killungan, Hill of Down, Moyvalley, Enfield, Ferns Lock, Kilcock, Maynooth, Leixlip, Luran, Clonsilla and Blanchardstown, with a total distance of 83 kilometres. A timetable sheet of December, 1853, includes six daily trains (arriving at Dublin 5.15 A.M., 9.45 A.M., 11.30 A.M, 2.00 P.M., 9.00 P.M., and 10 P.M.) and two Sunday trains (arriving at Dublin 5.15 A.M. and 10.00 P.M.). Fares were 8s (first class), 6s-6d (second), 4s-9d (third), and 3s (fourth). Most of the emigrants 'would have purchased third or fourth class tickets to Dublin' [Illingworth 2001].

Those emigrants who lived at a distance from the railway would take a coach to reach the rail station. The village of Ballymore, which was the epicentre for the Midlands emigration to South America, is about twenty kilometres west of Mullingar on the now road to Athlone. The nearest railway stations 'were Athlone and Mullingar, and stage coaches passed through Ballymore on the way to Mullingar and Dublin' [Illingworth 2002]. By the late 1840s, *Bianconi* coaches, [5] each capable of carrying up to twenty passengers, provided the means by which emigrants could reach Longford, Mullingar and Athlone from the countryside, and from the small rural villages and townlands of Westmeath and Longford. Smaller stage coaches travelling directly from Athlone and Mullingar to Dublin were also used by emigrants up until the 1850s. Horse-drawn stagecoaches moved at about twelve kilometres per hour, with frequent stops to rest both horses and passengers, 'who sometimes needed it more after long bumpy rides over rough roads' [O'Cleirigh 2002]. A traveller who went by coach from Strabane to Enniskillen in 1834 tells that:

At first it drove on at a rapid rate, carrying about twenty-eight passengers, ten inside and eighteen on the outside, noisy and inebriated fellows... My feet had got numb with cold... When we had arrived within two yards of Seein Bridge, between Strabane and Newtownstewart, the lofty vehicle was thrown into the ditch, within two yards of a dangerous and steep bridge. If the vehicle had advanced about three yards further we would have been dashed to death [O'Cleirigh 2002].

The Bianconi's 'Car and Coach Lists' of 1842 includes the timetable of the stagecoaches connected with the Royal Canal boats to Dublin, and intermediate stages. From Ballymahon, the coach departed 4.08 A.M. arriving at Mullingar at 6.11 A.M.

In the 1850s, William Mulvihill of Ballymahon, Co. Longford, was the agent for the River Plate Steamship Company in the Midlands. [6] Prospective emigrants would buy their tickets from Mulvihill's grocery store. From Mullingar, the emigrants could book a direct rail plus boat ticket to Liverpool for £2-2s. 'The fact that emigrants [to South America] were advised to bring a revolver as well as a saddle may not have deterred farmers who had been forced to protect their stocks from starving labourers' [O'Brien 1999: 55]. This would indicate that some of the emigrants bound to Argentina – who were able to pay a high fare to South America – were also able to ride a horse, a skill that would be very useful for them in the Argentine pampas.

Once in Dublin, emigrants would stay a night at a local hotel. The Broad Stone Hotel was the establishment of the Royal Canal Company in Dublin. In October 1807, under the management of John Rooney, the fare for one bed for one person in a room containing two or more beds was 2s-2d.

In order to cross the Irish Sea from Dublin to Liverpool, there were at least three boats daily and the journey took twelve to fourteen hours. There was a fully developed shipping trade between Ireland and Liverpool. The first quarter of the nineteenth century witnessed technological developments in the application of steam power to shipping which led to the strengthening of the connection between Ireland and England. From the 1820s onward, 'Liverpool was connected with all the main Irish ports by a fleet of

relatively fast, cheap steam vessels, mainly paddle-driven but some screw-driven [...]. The leading company of the Dublin-Liverpool trade was the Dublin and Liverpool Steam Packet Co. According to the company's estimate, 'they carried more than 100,000 passengers from June 1853 to June 1854' [Préteseille 1999]. The crossing was a traumatic experience for passengers. There was little cabin accommodation. Moreover, 'most ships were carrying animals below deck and they were usually taken better care of.' William Watson, managing director of the Dublin and Liverpool Steam Packet Company gave evidence when he was questioned by a Parliamentary Committee:

- *If you have both cattle and passengers you give the cattle preference?*
- *We cannot have them both in the same places.*
- *But the cattle would be sheltered, and deck passengers would not be sheltered?*
- *Yes [Préteseille 1999]*

Few ships had steerage accommodations so most passengers had no shelter. They were therefore exposed to the weather and often arrived exhausted, scarcely able to walk. Most of the time, steamers – whose average tonnage was 500 to 700 – were overcrowded. Other emigrants bound to Liverpool sailed in boats headed to Holyhead, and then travelled by stagecoach to Liverpool (about 145 km).

Emigrating from Co. Wexford

Already in the late seventeenth century, Wexford was an international port with heavy trade to Liverpool, Dublin, Bristol, and other ports of the British isles and the continent. The modern quay front 'began to take shape in the early part of the [19th] century' [Rossiter 1989: 13]. The Quay Corporation was responsible for the maintenance of the many wharfs and quays, as well as the pilotage control, piped water supply, and cleansing of the streets. The Quay Corporation 'had the power to levy rates on vessels using the port' [13]. Later in the 1830s, 'the Redmond family opened a dockyard in Wexford causing Lewis, in his Topography of Ireland to remark: "Shipping interests have been materially promoted by the construction of a patent slip and shipbuilding yard at the southern end of his embankment"' [14]. Wexford town was well connected to the county villages and townlands through Bianconi and carts.

From Wexford Quay there were steamer-boats sailing directly to Liverpool. In 1861, the *Wexford Steam-Ship Co.* sailed 'their magnificent paddle steam ships *Troubador* (Capt. Edmond Roach); *Vivandiere* (Capt. Chas. McKenna); *Prince of Wales* (Capt. Wells); or other suitable vessel, weekly between Wexford and Liverpool' [*The People* 28 December 1861]. Departures from Wexford were every Thursday at 6.00 A.M. and Saturday at 7.00 A.M., with an estimated sail time of twelve hours. There were accommodations for cabin and deck passengers. Other choice was to sail to Dublin and from there to Liverpool (*British & Irish Steam-Packet Co.*).

In the 1880s, Lamport & Holt's agent in Wexford was William Timpson, who would sell tickets to Liverpool with connections to the River Plate sailing every fourteen days [Bassett 1885, 104].

The Liverpool Experience

A dreadful experience awaited those disoriented Irish arriving in Liverpool in order to get a passage to South America. Indeed the arrival in Liverpool did not guarantee the next leg of the journey. Some of Liverpool residents were notorious for tricking the inexperienced travellers out of their passage money or even seducing women emigrants into employment in the city's brothels. During the Famine period, 'ma notorious for tricking the inexperienced travellers out of their passage money or even seducing women emigrants into employment in the city's brothels. During the Famine period, 'many rural emigrants never escaped the slums of Liverpool. The Irish now had to survive the streetwise con-men and racketeers' [Préteseille 1999]. Before getting on board, emigrants had to deal with ship-brokers, runners, boarding-house keepers who overcharged them, keepers of spirit vaults and provision stores who sold them bad food and drink at high prices. They also had to pass a medical inspection.

When arriving at Liverpool, emigrants from Dublin and Wexford landed in Clarence Dock. Since most of the emigrants bound to Argentina would have already purchased their tickets in Ballymahon, Mullingar or Wexford town, their money was secured and just had to take care of their lodging until the boarding time. During the days of sailing ships, vessels were 'expected any day now' and, if the wind was against them, they could be up to three weeks late. From the many boarding-houses in Liverpool, those for poor emigrants were to be found in the neighbourhood of Waterloo Dock and northwards of the Clarence

Dock, 'more especially about Denison Street, Regent Street, Carlton Street, Porter Street, Stewart Street, and Great Howard Street' [Préteseille 1999].

The two biggest ones were ran by Frederick Sabel (Union Hotel) and Frederick Marshall, at 28 Moorfield and at Clarence Dock, respectively. In the 1850s, Sabel's charged one shilling a day for bed and three meals. Marshall's charged four pence a night. Most emigrant boarding houses were of the filthiest kind. Emigrants sometimes even had to bed down in cellars that were as destitute of comfort and convenience as they were overcrowded, with the landlord making a profit on each warm body.

From 1851 onwards, before the day of departure, emigrants had to go through a medical inspection by government doctors. The examination was undertaken by government decree to prevent any outbreak of contagious disease on board. However, doctors worked at factory speeds, going automatically through the ritual of examining as many tongues and feeling as many pulses as it was possible to do and still keep within the letter of the law. On Monday, which was the busiest day, sometimes more than 1,000 emigrants were waiting outside the office (known as the Doctor's Shop), in which there were two inspectors. Lodging-house keeper Sabel called this inspection a farce: doctors 'start behind a little window, and when the people come before them they say: "Are you quite well? Show your tongue," and in the mean time their ticket is stamped' [Préteseille 1999]. The stamp proved that the emigrant had been inspected and sometimes as many as 2,000 or 3,000 people were inspected in a day.

Most emigration vessels departed from the Waterloo dock, and 'passengers where entitled to board the ship twenty-four hours before departure' [Préteseille 1999]. However, since most of the emigrants bound to South America boarded cargo ships, their captains often did not allow the passengers to board until the last minute, when the cargo had finally been stowed in the hold. In fact, the captain often started to move his vessel before emigrants had time to get on board. When the captain was doing so or when the passengers arrived too late (which was quite common), that is to say after the gangplank was raised, then they went to the dock-gate.

The entrance of the dock was narrow and ships were detained there for a short time while other vessels were going out. During that time,

Men, women and children were scrambling up the sides of the ship. One could see hundreds of people confused, screaming. Luggage and boxes were flung aboard, followed by the passengers. When they or their luggage missed the ship and fell into the water there was usually a man in a rowing boat ready to rescue and get his reward. But sadly there was not always someone there to rescue and consequently a few people drowned. Those who did not manage to get onboard at the dock-gate had no choice but to hire a rowing boat to catch up the ship down the river Mersey. The boatmen would not do it for less than half a sovereign (10 shillings). Getting on board a ship was really rough, even for the cabin passengers [Préteseille 1999].

There were usually a large number of spectators at the dock-gates to witness the final departure of the ship. The sad scene of the departure was described in the *Illustrated London News* in 1850: 'The most callous and indifferent can scarcely fail, at such a moment, to form cordial wishes for the pleasant voyage and safe arrival of the emigrants, and for their future prosperity in their new home. As the ship is towed out, hats are raised, handkerchiefs are waved, and a loud and long-continued shout of farewell is raised from the shore, and cordially responded to from the ship. It is then, if at any time, that the eyes of the emigrants begin to moisten' [in: Préteseille 1999].

Trans-Atlantic Crossing

Once the emigrants managed to get on board the ships, the following stage in the emigration process was to cross the Atlantic ocean. The Irish emigrants who departed from Liverpool, sailed back the way they had come, towards Ireland, with the winds dictating their routes: north around Mallin Head, or south by the Waterfront Estuary, Cove and Cape Clear. The sea crossing was not an easy voyage. It was long, taking between one and three months, and the sea was a strange environment to most emigrants, especially for those from rural areas in Longford and Westmeath. [7]

Aboard many ships bound to North America the risks were so great that there were numerous deaths, and these ships became known as 'coffin ships'. There is no evidence that the journey to South American ports like Rio de Janeiro, Montevideo, or Buenos Aires, was as dangerous as that of the emigrant ships bound to North America. In fact, due to insurance requirements, the ships sailing from Liverpool to the River Plate were mostly first and second-class, i.e., surveyed and judged as best or good quality in terms of age,

condition and seaworthiness, whilst many of the coffin ships were third-class vessels, a status which prohibited any but short voyages. In addition to this, most of the vessels in the North American seaway were built in Canada or the US, while those destined for the South American trade were built in England by more experienced dockyard workers. Ships sailing the South Atlantic routes often had purposes other than the transport of emigrants, such as: mail, cargo, and cabin passengers. Emigrants were often piled into steerage. It wasn't until the late 1880s that the emigrant trade proper emerged in the South Atlantic, when crowds of emigrants – especially from the Mediterranean countries – began to escape from the poor conditions in their home countries in order to find a new life in Buenos Aires and other South American regions.

We can divide the nineteenth-century transatlantic transport between the British Isles and this region into two periods that correspond to advances in navigational technology: sail (1824-1850) and steam (1851-1889).

The sail period begins with the opening of the British mail packet route to Buenos Aires, and the arrival at this port of the first packet, *Countess of Chichester*. The majority of ships were wooden sailing vessels. The *Countess of Chichester* sailed from Falmouth, England, and 'reached Buenos Aires on 16th April [1824], having called at Montevideo one or two days previously' [Howat 1984: 42]. This was the result of the negotiations between Woodbine Parish (1796-1882), the first appointed British Consul-General to Buenos Aires, and Bernardino Rivadavia, then Minister of State of the Argentine Provinces and two years later President of the Republic for 18 months. The agreement, a good example of British-Argentine diplomacy, 'worked up into a set of regulations, [and] proved to be so advantageous to Britain, that the English packets had an effective monopoly for at least 25 years to carry all overseas mails to Europe, apart from those taken by trading ships' [Howat 1984: 42].

In spite of an incident which nearly marred the auspicious occasion of the *Countess of Chichester*, [8] the Buenos Aires route was successfully opened in 1824 and ships arrived from Falmouth approximately every month during eight years. The packet's stay in Buenos Aires was from 10 to 14 days to allow reply mail. The hazards of navigating the River Plate between Montevideo and Buenos Aires were described by Richard Poussett, one of the British vice-consuls in Buenos Aires:

We had a good proof of the dangerous navigation a day or two afterwards when the *Cossack* of Liverpool, Alexander Keir master, who had been up and down the River twice or thrice, was totally lost on the 19th and now lay sunk in five fathoms water on the southern extremity of the Ortiz Bank' [Howat 1984: 48].

The direct route from England to Montevideo and Buenos Aires was 'discontinued as one of the consequences of the Report on the Packet Service at Falmouth by Vice-Admiral Sir Pulteney Malcolm, published in January 1832 [...]. By placing two branch sailing packets on permanent station at Rio de Janeiro to take onwards the River Plate mails, it was possible to reduce the total number of packets needed for the South American service from twelve to eight' [Howat 1984: 87]. However, a mandatory stay at Rio de Janeiro was introduced and the time taken to reach Buenos Aires slowed down from an average of 62.5 days in 1826 to 77 days for the first combined Brazil and River Plate mail (dep. Falmouth 7 September 1832 in the *Lady Mary Pelham*, arrived Buenos Aires 24 November 1832 in the *Cockatrice*).

During the sail period, the numbers of Irish people emigrating to Argentina were still small. According to Eduardo Coghlan, between 1822 and 1850, only 1,659 Irish immigrants were registered at the Buenos Aires port, with an exceptional peak in 1849 (708 immigrants) [Coghlan 1982: 16]. From 1851 to 1889, this number increased to at least 5,419. [9] Some of the ships used by the emigrants in the first period were *Cockatrice* (1832-1844), *Spider* (1832-1850), and *Griffon* (1846-1848).

Other ships, owned by private cargo companies, were important at this early stage of the Irish emigration to Argentina. For instance, the *William Peile* (or *Peele*) sailed at least twice to the River Plate. The first voyage was in the Spring of 1844, with 114 Irish passengers on board. Seven years later, she sailed again through the South Atlantic seaway and arrived at Buenos Aires with 48 Irish emigrants. The *William Peile* was, according to the *Whitehaven Herald* of 20 May 1843, 'a handsome new barqued called *William Peile* in honour of the senior partner of that firm' [Peile, Scott & Co.]. She was a small three masted-barque of 279 tons burthen, square-rigged on the fore and main masts, and fore-and-aft rigged on the mizzen mast. The ship was built in Workington, Northeast England, and launched on 13 May 1843. Her maiden voyage was from Workington departing 27 June 1843 for Cádiz and Montevideo, and then returning to England, with Liverpool as her first port of arrival, which she reached on 26 February 1844.

On 21 April 1844, the William Peile weighed anchor again at Liverpool under Captain Joseph Spratt's command. He was a veteran of the North Atlantic and Pacific seaways. The ship called on 13 May 1844 at Saint Jago (Cape Vert islands, about 620 km off the west coast of Senegal). After crossing the South Atlantic Sea, she probably called on Bahia, and Rio de Janeiro, and finally arrived in the River Plate on 25 June 1844 [Lloyd's List & Index 1844]. Other journeys were longer. John Brabazon emigrated in 1845, and observed that the ship in which he travelled, Filomena, 300 tons registered and commanded by Captain Robert Bell 'arrived here after three months voyage from Kingston [today's Dún Laoghaire], Ireland, to Buenos Aires' [McKenna 1994: 145].

Conditions on board for the sail period can be reduced to three features: bad food and water, lack of space and hygiene, and poor medical care. On most journeys, the staple diet was 'a concoction of water, barley, rye, and peas, which became saturated with moisture on board ship' [Préteseille 1999]. Passengers had to do their own cooking on deck. Food was often either half-cooked or not cooked at all, since when the weather was bad they were not allowed on deck. In some ships, every crew member:

got a pound of biscuits big coarse items called Water Biscuits, a day. These were known as blabs in Wexford but aboard the old sailing ships were called pantiles [...]. These biscuits were as hard as rocks and full of maggots and weevils and every kind of insect. In order to eat the biscuits, they put them into a canvas bag and pounded them with an iron pin. Then they mixed the crumbs with whatever water could be spared from the daily ration and ate them that way. On the odd days that marmalade or jam was given out, it was mixed in. That was the sailors' breakfast at about 7.30 A.M. along with a mug of coffee. Sometimes they baked the mashed biscuit and water; this was known as "dandyfunk". Each Friday a sailor was given either a pound of butter or a pound of marmalade but not both. For dinner at 12.30 each man got half a pound of boiled corned beef or corned pork. This menu alternated and on pork days pea soup was added. In the early days of a voyage potatoes would be served at dinner but when they ran out, which was quite rapidly, only the remains from the pound of blabs was eaten with the meat' [Rossiter 1989: 17].

Routinely, steerage passengers had the same or worse food than crew members.

Berths were simple spaces consisting of wooden bunks, usually six foot square and built into the ship's timbers on either side of the hold, with a gangway down the middle. Each adult was usually allotted one quarter of a bunk, or 18 inches or bed space. There was no bedding, which is why passengers were often advised to get a mattress before going on board. Decency and comfort were almost impossible.

The living quarters were dark, cramped and dirty. They were never or very rarely cleaned. The fact that passengers had no means of changing their clothes or bedding, provided ideal condition for the spread of body lice and the typhus fever they carried. Typhus was the most deadly disease, and it was called ship fever. Most passengers tried to remain on the deck as much as possible to escape the lice and odours below but when there was a storm, they were forced back in steerage without fresh air as there was no ventilation. As doctors were seldom present on board, emigrants often had to doctor themselves and took their medicines, such as Holloway's pills – which were widely advertised at the ports.

Some of the Irish emigrants to Argentina experienced fatal consequences from these conditions. In 1849, Edward Robbins (1802-1866) from Clara, Co. Offaly, and his family emigrated to Argentina via Liverpool:

Early in the month of March, I left for Liverpool and I arranged for a passage to Buenos Aires for myself and family with Michael McDonnald. On the 4th of April, all my family arrived at Liverpool and were kept there until the 8th of May, on which they sailed. There was much sickness on board from the neglect of the Government Inspectors at Liverpool: one man and a child died at sea. My family and myself suffered very much, [but] had a good passage and arrived at Buenos Aires on the 13th of July. [We were] in quarantine until the 22nd on which day we landed. It was a Sunday. My family and myself counted 13, of which 10 had to go to the Irish Hospital [Robbins 1860: 11]. [10]

On 10 August 1849 the Robbins left the Buenos Aires Irish Hospital, but the outcome of the trip was appalling for the family: Edward's wife Ann Ryan died on 21 August, their son Bernard died on 29 August, and Ann Ryan's daughter Mary Ann Coffy died on 4 September.

The effects of the voyage in the passengers' health were still alarming by the end of the century. Thomas Murray, who emigrated in 1892, complained 'of the dreadful conditions experienced in the quarantine station. "The treatment given to people is an outrage to humanity". The third class passengers in particular

appear to have been deplorably treated. The food was "the dirtiest slop ever offered to a human being" [McKenna 1994: 150].

Every sailing vessel 'was compelled to carry livestock. Cows and calves, sheep, goats, pigs and hens were carried in the larger vessels and the noises they made and the smells from their quarter did nothing to improve the conditions [Greenhill & Giffard 1974: 14]. Even the smallest vessels carried a few animals on voyages likely to be of any duration. In the tropics, 'this heat, added to the closeness, made our cabins very oppressive; the foul air came up the hatchway in the form of smoke, and the captain even sent some one down to see whether the ship was not on fire' [Greenhill & Giffard 1974: 14].

On these long voyages to South America, averaging from four to six weeks, the modern passenger would be faced with interminable tedium. For most of the travellers, boredom and monotony were annoying aspects of the journey. The first Sisters of Mercy in Argentina (who afterwards would be in charge of the Irish Hospital) had a typical journey in one of the British Packet (Lampont & Holt) vessels:

Cheerfully did they bear the heat of the torrid zone, the monotonous days, the trying tediousness of that lengthy voyage. While most of the passengers, enervated by the fierce tropical sun, lay stretched out as if dead, they [the Sisters] were up and doing. The cooler waters of the South Temperate Zone and its beautiful, starry skies were a relief and a joy to them. After a prosperous but uneventful voyage, their vessel cast anchor in Rio, where they were detained a fortnight for the repair of the coasting steamer in which they were to continue their voyage to La Plata [Murray 1919: 172].

In *You'll Never Go Back*, Kate remembers that in Liverpool they boarded a steamer. At first she and the other girls 'were very, very sick [...]. It was a long voyage, and after a fortnight the weather became very warm. One day was so like another that I began to wonder whether we were ever to see anything again but green water swinging up and down, and the sky above, so still.' Promiscuity on board presented moral dangers to young women. Kate and her friends sailed 'under the Captain's protection, at least he told us so [...]. He protected Nancy the whole way out, telling her not to trust the officers, and putting her on her guard against some of the gentlemen who were married and who wanted to have a bit of fun because their wives were not on board' [Nevin 1946: 12-13].

A sailing vessel, especially a square-rigged sailing vessel, 'of course took the routes where the winds were most favourable because to do so was to save time and trouble in the end, even if it mean going thousands of miles out of the way' [Greenhill & Giffard 1974: 20]. In 1834, a vessel of 420 tons, flush-decked and with three masts would have been mastered by a crew of about twenty persons: 'the master, two mates and the steward [...], the carpenter cooper and one apprentice [...], the cook, ten seamen and three apprentices' [Greenhill & Giffard 1974: 24].

Fares to the River Plate varied with shipping company and accommodation, and they 'ranged from £10 to £35' [Illingworth 2002]. An average price paid by the emigrants can be established in £16 [McKenna 1992: 71]. Later in the 1880s, an advertisement placed by The Pacific Steam Navigation Co. (Lampont & Holt), announced fares of £25 to \$30 in first class, and £10 to £15 in third class [Bassett 1885: 104]. On an announcement in The Standard newspaper of Buenos Aires, 29 June 1873, we read that the fares from Buenos Aires to Southampton were £35 (first class), £20 (second), and £15 (third) [Howat 1984: 120].

If a regular wage for an Irish rural labourer at that time was 7½ shillings a week, he should have been forced to save during about an year to pay for the passage ticket. This is the reason why McKenna and other authors argue that emigrants from the Irish Midlands and Wexford were tenants and farmers with relatively higher income than the emigrants to North America and other parts of the world, who were primarily labourers. However, labourers without the funds to purchase their tickets to South America were financially assisted from sheep-farmers in Argentina who were looking for skilled shepherds in Ireland. John James Murphy from Salto, Buenos Aires, addressed ship captains in 1864: 'If you choose to bring out to this country any passengers that my brother (Martin Murphy of Haysland) arrange for, I shall hold myself accountable for the payment of same on their arrival out here.' In an enclosed separate communication to his brother, Murphy suggested to avoid 'letting others to see it [the note]. But this I consider only fit for the ears of my own friends in Haysland or at least the greater part of it.' In this way, he did not risk the expensive cost of tickets on unskilled or unreliable workers [Murphy to Murphy, 25 March 1864].

The Steam Period

The second period, 1851-1889, is marked by iron and steel sailing ships and, in particular, by steam. 'The major effect that steam power appears to have had was that it reduced the length of the journey from around three months to about thirty days' (McKenna 1994: 147). The shorter journey was used in private letters as an argument to convince others to visit Argentina. On 28 August 1863, Fr. Anthony Fahy, the Chaplain of the Irish in Argentina, wrote to his superior Fr. Goodman: 'I wish you would think of taking a trip out here when you are relieved from the cares of office - the steamers from Liverpool arrive here in twenty six days now! - Seven thousand miles is great travelling!' [Ussher 1951: 103].

Steamships were far superior vessels, to such a degree that the last sailing ships were built by 1855. Sailing packets carried emigrants to South America for another twenty years but they steadily lost ground to steamers. The transition from sail to steam was radical. The introduction of steam packets 'on the Brazil and River Plate trade route in 1851 brought an immediate speeding up of the pace of communications' [Howat 1984: 147]. For instance, the Royal Mail Steam Packet Co.'s Teviot left Southampton on 1 January 1851 and arrived at Buenos Aires on 18 February of the same year (49 days). Thirteen years later, a letter from John Murphy was stamped on 27 May 1864 in Buenos Aires, 4 July in London, and 5 July in Wexford (39 days).

In spite of the better speed and efficiency of the steamers, even in the late 1880s conditions on board for poor emigrants did not improve. 'Many of the emigrant ships had, [Fr. van Tricht, a priest defending the rights of emigrants] asserted excellent first and second class accommodation, but no cabins or partitions of any kind for the emigrants. Between decks a forest of iron poles, on which the hammocks, sometimes 1,000 in number, are slung in three layers, for men, women, and children together, with no possible privacy of decency, spreading a moral contagion to which he could only allude before his present audience, and inducing an atmosphere which baffles description. Such was often the emigrants' accommodation, in spite of Government Regulations ordering the separation of the sexes and families. He attributed the deaths which invariably occur during the passage out to the over-crowding and utter disregard of all sanitary and hygienic rules which prevail on board many of the emigrants ships. [Fr. van Tricht] had been assured by many of his correspondents that the food, though sufficient in quantity, was execrable in quality, and often quite uneatable' [Vivian to Salisbury, 20 April 1889].

From 1851 onward, the Royal Mail Steam Packet Co. was the major carrier of cargo and passengers from the British Isles to the River Plate. The service was inaugurated with the above-mentioned ship Teviot. 'The gently shelving estuarine shores of the River Plate presented difficulties in the landing of passengers and goods at Buenos Aires. Bushell [...] reports how the Esk anchored about 12 kilometres off the city, with the passengers and mails being transferred to a tiny steamer to steam to within 3 kilometres of the shore. The next transfer was to an open whaler, which was sailed or rowed to about 200 yards off the shore. The long-suffering passengers were then taken by a horse-drawn, large-wheeled cart to a wooden jetty and, at last, reached terra firma' [Howat 1984: 111]. Murphy adds that 'in those days [1844], sailing vessels anchored far out in the river; from there they came as far as possible in rowing boats and then on in carts. When the tide was high, the boats came in as far as the Merced Church, and were tied up to iron rings in the wall of the church. For many years after, those rings were still there' [Emily Murphy 1909: 1].

During the 1860s and 70s, which marked the peak of Irish emigration to Argentina (with the exception of 1889 Dresden), the most active shipping company was Lamport & Holt, or Liverpool, Brazil and River Plate Steam Navigation Co. Lamport & Holt was established in 1845. In 1863, they began to sail to and from Brazil and the River Plate. In that year, 'the Company despatched 2 vessels to South America from Liverpool; in 1864, 8; in 1865, 24; and in 1866, 41' [Howat 1984: 159]. Their business was carefully planned, as part of the migration market that began to increase significantly during those years.

The number of British settlers in these States [Uruguay and Argentina] is immensely large – and, unlike most other fields which attract Emigration, they comprise all classes of society from Upper middle class downwards. A very great number of the estancias and saladeros (ranches and meat-salting plants) in the country are the property of and managed and worked by Englishmen [Lamport to Scudamore, 15 June 1868, in: Howat 1984: 161].

In 1868, Lamport & Holt signed the contract with the Royal Mail to service South American ports. The fifth article of the agreement established that 'the voyage from Liverpool to Buenos Aires was to take no more than 34 days, including the stoppages at Rio de Janeiro and Montevideo' [Howat 1984: 162]. Indeed, that year the average journey was 30.5 days, and in 1869, 30.8 days. Later in the late 1880s,

Lamport & Holt vessels sailed 'from Antwerp under the Belgian flag, and call at Shouthampton, it being stated that they do not carry more than forty-nine passengers (emigrants)' [Board of Trade to Foreign Office, 15 April 1889].

Later in 1892, 'the voyage direct, in 22 days, is not so amusing as when the steamer touches at various ports. In the former case Madeira is generally sighted on the fifth day, and Montevideo 17 days later. Nine times out of ten the sea is as calm as a mill-pond, except crossing the Bay of Biscay. The distance from Southampton to Montevideo is 6,126 nautical, equal to 6,739 English statute, miles' [Mulhall 1892: 67]. The same source adds that:

"...Lisbon is reached on the fifth day from England, [...] the Canary Islands are 4 days from Lisbon, Cape Verds are 3 days from the Canaries, Fernando Noronha (a small, rocky island used as a Brazilian penal settlement, and has a lighthouse) is sighted on the seventh day from Cape Verds, the first point of the continent visible is Cape San Roque, which juts out into the Atlantic, 200 miles N. of Pernambuco. [...] From Pernambuco to Bahia is only 36 hours by sea, distance 450 miles. Rio Janeyro is 860 miles from Bahia, the voyage taking 3 days. From Rio Janeyro to Montevideo is 1,100 miles, and takes from 4 to 5 days, according to weather. Stiff pamperos are sometimes met with off the mouth of the River Plate, where the numerous sandbanks made the navigation so difficult in the old times of sailing vessels that sailors called it Boca de Inferno. Even before land be in sight the colour of the ocean is changed by the volume of fresh water from the River Plate, 52 million cubic feet per minute. [...] Montevideo is seen to great advantage from the bay, the Cerro completing the picture. [...] At Buenos Ayres the customs officers are very polite, but will certainly charge duty on whatever may not be for personal use in the passenger's baggage [Mulhall 1892: 67-73]".

The records transcribed by Eduardo A. Coghlan [Coghlan 1982, Table I], show that almost all Lamport & Holt vessels carried Irish emigrants to Argentina:

<i>Ship</i>	<i>Irish passengers 1851-1880</i>	<i>Years of Operation</i>
Hipparcus	60	1869-1873
Tycho Brahe	24	1870
Flamsteed	-	-
Kepler	39	1864-1868
Pascal	20	1869
Copernicus	54	1869-1873
Biela	51	1870-1878
Agamemnon	8	1870
City of Rio de Janeiro	7	1871
Galileo	37	1865-1874
Leibnitz	48	1867-1877
Helvelius	4	1876

Other vessels frequently used by the Irish were the following [Coghlan 1982, Table I]:

<i>Ship</i>	<i>Irish passengers 1851-1880</i>	<i>Years of Operation</i>
La Zingara	581	1860-1869
Raymond	312	1861-1863
Bess Grant	170	1849-1861
William Peile	161	1844-1851
Uruguay	155	1863-1869
W. Wilch	116	1857
Vanguard	99	1849
Istria	89	1858-1866
Crossdale	81	1849
Fortitude	57	1829-1849
Hamstead	65	1866-1873
La Belle Poule	61	1859-1864
Williams	61	1838-1865

Before the 1880s, the most important ship in terms of quantity of Irish emigrants was La Zingara, the smallest vessel of Thomas B. Royden & Co fleet. She was built in 1860, in Liverpool, and was registered in the Lloyd's Register of British and Foreign Shipping in 1861. The rigging was a barque, sheathed in yellow metal in 1860, fastened with copper bolts (287 tons). The captain was George Sanders. John Murphy remarks that 'passages on La Zingara are cheaper than other vessels like the Raymond from Dublin (Captain Lenders)' [Murphy to Murphy 1864].

The City of Dresden was the ship that carried 'the largest number of passengers ever to arrive in Argentina from any one destination on any one vessel' [Geraghty 1999]. This event was the outcome of a deceitful immigration scheme managed by the Argentine government agents in Ireland Buckley O'Meara and John Stephen Dillon, a brother of Fr. Patrick J. Dillon, founder The Southern Cross, National Deputy for Buenos Aires, and notorious leader of the Irish-Argentine community. The affair 'became infamous and was denounced in Parliament, press and pulpit' [Geraghty 1999]. These emigrants came from poor urban areas of Dublin, Cork and Limerick and most of the adults were city labourers and servants. Upon arrival, some were assisted by Irish-Argentine families well established in the country or found jobs in Buenos Aires, but most of them were deceived by unscrupulous agents and were abandoned in remote areas. Paradoxically, some of the emigrants (especially children) died in Argentina of hunger and related illnesses, which were typical of the miserable situation they left in Ireland. The bad press got by this sad events was enough to stop the Irish emigration to Argentina almost completely for some decades

The City of Dresden arrived at Buenos Aires from Queenstown (now Cobh) and Southampton on 15 February 1889, with 1,772 passengers on board. According to their only friend, Fr. Gaughran, they

were allowed to land on Saturday when the authorities well knew there was no accommodation for them. Many hundreds of these poor people had not received orders for the [Immigrants] hotel before leaving the ship, and weary hours were spent in the struggle to get to the table where these orders were issued. Then, the orders obtained, strong men could fight their way through the throng of Italians [who arrived the same day in the Duchesa di Genova] into the dining hall, but the weak, the women and children were left supperless. It was soon evident that unless some special arrangements were made even the shelter of a roof could not be obtained [...]. Men, women and children,

hungry and exhausted after the fatigues of the day, had to sleep at best they might on the flags of the court-yard. To say they were treated like cattle would at least provide them with food and drink, but these poor people were left to live or die unaided by the officials who are paid to look after them, and without the slightest sign of sympathy from these officials. I am told that as a result a child died during the night of exhaustion. In England those responsible would be prosecuted for manslaughter, but in this land of liberty no one minds' [Murray 1919: 443-444].

The British chargé d'affaires in Buenos Aires, George Jenner, reported that 'the Argentine officers are mainly responsible for the mismanagement of the Irish immigration. Their offices in Ireland have, in more than one instance, allowed the propaganda for emigrants to fall into the hands of totally untrustworthy persons, who have recruited numbers of worthless characters, including prostitutes and beggars, and many shiftless individuals and families utterly unfit to carry on the struggle for existence in the Argentine Republic' [Jenner to Salisbury, 21 February 1889].

Due to bad press created by the Dresden Affair and to the financial crisis of 1890, during the last decades of the nineteenth century and the first decades of the twentieth century, relatively few Irish emigrants selected Argentina as their final destination. In the 1920s, there was yet a new peak of arrivals from Ireland (76% of 1900-1929 Ireland-born passengers arrived in the 20s), in which the majority of immigrants were educated urban professionals, with a high proportion of Church of Ireland religion. This increase may have been a consequence of political, social, and economic turmoil in Ireland. However, it ended in late 1929, as a consequence of the global financial crisis that seriously affected economic growth and employment rates of Argentina and other countries.

By this time, the sheep-farming opportunities of the 1840-80s decreased due to changes in the international markets, in which cattle and cereal became the increasingly dominant agriculture export. Irish-Argentine estancieros began hiring immigrants of other origins, particularly from Italy, as tenants to till their land. At the same time, Irish-Argentine families joined the urban bourgeoisie of Buenos Aires and other cities in an unique acculturation process that would last until the 1982 Falklands/Malvinas War between England and Argentina. As a result of social and economic factors, migration flow changed its direction and is today increasingly growing from Argentina to Europe and the United States. At the present time, it is reported that some of the Argentine descendants of Irish immigrants are re-emigrating to Ireland. However, with the remarkable changes in the intercontinental journey after the World War II, their major struggle will be to obtain work permits in Ireland.

Conclusion

Between forty and fifty thousand Irish emigrants mostly from the Midlands and Co. Wexford settled in Argentina during the nineteenth century and up to 1930.

During the first half of the nineteenth century, in order to reach Dublin, most of the Irish emigrants from the Midlands bound to Argentina used a combination of Bianconi coaches and Royal Canal barges. From Dublin, they took the steam-ship service to Liverpool. Emigrants from Co. Wexford would sail directly from Wexford town to Liverpool. After a short staying at Liverpool's boarding houses, those emigrants bound to Argentina would take sailing vessels to the River Plate. Fares were relatively high, and in some cases were paid by Irish employers in Argentinian sheep-farms.

From 1851, the railway was the preferred mean of transport from the Midlands to Dublin. More or less at the same time, steam replaced sail in the South Atlantic seaway. In this way, the journey shortened to little more than one month, and turned more secure for passengers. This facilitated the higher rates of emigration in the 1860s and 1870s. After that, in 1889, the Dresden Affair almost put an end to Argentina as a destination of the emigration from Ireland, with unimportant numbers at the turn of the century and a small peak in the 1920s.

This article explored some material aspects of the transportation used by the emigrants. Other findings await the researcher of the Irish emigration to Argentina. For instance, the pioneering work done by Coghlan (1982) in establishing a data base of almost five thousand passengers for genealogical purposes has not been exhaustively integrated into any further cultural-historical study. Other passenger lists, for instance, CEMLA database (Centro de Estudios Migratorios Latinoamericanos), add up to seven thousand passengers. These lists could be explored with a focus on relations among passengers, including kinship, friendship, class, gender, and religion. I would suggest that we should attend to the material and social

nexus that supported the traffic in immigration in order to disclose a few of the pertinent experiential features of the emigrant's world.

Edmundo Murray

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Notes

[1] According to Sabato and Korol 'between 10,500 and 11,500 Irish immigrants settled in Argentina in the nineteenth century' [Sabato and Korol, 1981: 48]. Patrick McKenna, based on sources indicating the existence of significant segments not recorded by the other authors, argued that the numbers were significantly higher, 40-45,000 emigrants. He said that Sabato and Korol's calculation 'was based on the assumption that Coghlan (1982) captured 100% of the Irish emigrants in his work on the census of 1869 and 1855. They analysed Coghlan's figures using statistics to build in assumptions for mortality and out-migration and further in-migration up to 1895 to arrive at their figure. The fact that there is such a difference between their figures and mine (especially when I allow for the possibility that my figures may be low) gives some indication of the room which exists for argument about the numbers of Irish who emigrated to Argentina during the nineteenth century' [McKenna, 1994: 210]. [2] Ballymore was once known as 'the village with two ends and no middle': all the houses in the middle disappeared after their owners emigrated to Argentina (Irish Parliamentary Debates – Official Report: Dáil Éireann - Volume 433 - 08 July, 1993).

[3] In 1848, a family called Cunningham from near Ballymore sailed to Argentina from Southampton [Illingworth 2002].

[4] Nowadays, there is a restoration scheme in progress and the section Dublin-Abbeyshrule is again navigable by small boats.

[5] Named after Charles Bianconi (*the king of the Irish roads*), who started the first Irish mail coach service in 1815, beginning from the Hearn's hotel in Clonmel, Co. Tipperary, to Thurles and Limerick. By 1825, Bianconi had 585 route miles and two decades later he had trebled. In 1836, long cars with twenty passengers capacity were added to the service. He had rivals but, where they often competed with the canal boats, Bianconi tended to run connecting feeder services, a move which enabled him to outstay many other operators.

[6] Under 'Mulvihill, William' there are two entries in Leahy 1996: 166 (*County Longford Survivors of the Great Famine: a Complete Index to Griffith's Primary Valuation of Co. Longford 1854*), and one in Leahy 1990: 151 (*County Longford and its People: an Index to the 1901 Census for County Longford*).

[7] One of the extreme cases mentioned by Eduardo Coghlan was 'Luke Doyle, from Mullingar [...], who arrived in Buenos Aires after a five and a half month journey' [Coghlan 1987: 279]. Even longer was the journey of Sarah Elliff (née Flynn). She arrived in Buenos Aires on December 1848, after a six-months journey. Her ship weighed anchor at Liverpool on 20 June 1848, with 600 passengers on board. Thirty died during the journey, and many others stayed in Rio de Janeiro (Coghlan 1987: 306).

[8] According to Woodbine Parish's letter of protest to Bernardino Rivadavia, dated the same day, the captain and the Vice-Consul 'embarked in their boat to proceed ashore with the bags of the Despatches and Letters. They hardly left the Packet when a shot was fired at them by the [Buenos Ayrean] Brig of War, and this was repeated a few minutes afterwards with Ball which struck the sea at a very short distance from the boat' [in Howat 1984: 74].

[9] Including the 1,772 immigrants of the City of Dresden in February, 1889.

[10] *On 23 July 1849, the Buenos Aires port authorities registered twelve members of the Robbins family, who arrived in the Vanguard* (Coghlan 1982: 96).

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