THE UNAUTHORIZED HISTORY OF

THE AMERICAN CONFERENCE FOR IRISH STUDIES

[PREVIOUSLY KNOWN AS OMNIA HIBERNICA:

HOW THE ACIS BROUGHT IRISH STUDIES TO THE ACADEMY]

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ACIS PRESIDENT, 1995-97

The Unauthorized History of the American Conference for Irish Studies,

Or, of the ACIS Brought Irish Studies to the Academy

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INTRODUCTION

Despite my having accepted the commission to assemble this account, it is primarily a labor of love. The ACIS has been my guild, my fraternity for forty-four years, since I first heard the late Bernie Benstock talk about *Finnegans Wake* in Cortland, May 1, 1968. Attending the annual meeting has been a priority ever since, although I did not make every one. The annual conference has been an on-going, moveably intellectual feast, influencing and shaping my understanding of important issues and persons, from Newgrange to Neil Jordan. I was present when many events described here took place, and in a few I was a player. In a preliminary draft I felt as though I was writing a memoir, except that I had not been everywhere. Retained from that discarded approach are the informal tone and the lack of specific documentation. My model was an article in the *New Yorker* rather than one in *Éire-Ireland* or *New Hibernia Review.* Some moments and some interpretations I know to be accurate, even if they cannot be documented. I also hoped such a tone might invite more readers. Nonetheless, the Works Cited lists nearly 170 items referenced or consulted.

For a while I thought the history of the ACIS should be an iteration of the national and regional meetings, emphasizing the brilliant, hilarious or outrageous things said in sessions or corridors. Soon it became clear that some of the best anecdotes were apocryphal, or it was arguable who said them. Further, I had not heard all of them, and it was impossible to rank them. Eventually, I had to recognize one had to be there to appreciate them and reading several pages of such accounts could be wearying for the newcomer. Nearly all those darlings were murdered.

More costly in the time of the author was the failed attempt to make Chapters 2-5 chronological, as Chapter 1 is. When the ACIS grew to a large and dispersed membership, events on the program turned out not to be coordinated with the fight to develop new courses and programs, or with failed attempts at a journal and annual. Running on different tracks also were responses to the crises in Ulster, the embrace of academic feminism, or the development of the study of Irish America and Irish-American literature. Out of this evolved the organization the reader finds here.

History subsists on omission. I am regretful that I am using a tiny fraction of the material stockpiled in my office, and an even tinier fraction of what's available in the ACIS Archive in Burns Library of Boston College. Too many people who served generously in offices, hosted conferences and just made things go are not mentioned. This would be a much, much longer book if they were. On the other hand, I am delighted at some news I do not have to report. No officer was ever forced from office for misuse of funds. None suffered public humiliation, as happened in a sibling organization (see Chapter 2). For an outfit that has embraced thousands of members over fifty years, there have been relatively few disputes, either personal or political. Their damage was minimal and did not hamper the progress of the whole.

After fifty years we can see that the goal of the founders, to bring Irish studies to American academia, has been richly achieved. Our courses are now offered widely. Our books have been

published. The spirit of inquiry into every aspect of Irish history and culture—later Irish-American history and culture—*omnia hibernica*—has been vigorously encouraged. It has been an honor to be the chronicler, president and member of the American Conference for Irish Studies.

James MacKillop

Syracuse, NY

May 1, 2012

Addendum. The 57,000-word commissioned history you have here, submitted in May, 2012, was rejected by the ACIS executive in January, 2013. No objection was made to imputed factual errors. The fault was in the tone, judged to be "glib" and "sarcastic." After that judgment this text was retitled *The Unauthorized History.*

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The ACIS Executive, 2005-2007, John P. Harrington, President, generously granted the honorarium that made this quest possible. Without their blessings nothing would have happened.

Many thanks to the Burns Library of Boston College, keepers of the ACIS Archive, under the direction of David E. Horn, who have so much of what we need to know. BC Dean and friend Thomas Hachey provided valuable liaison. And students Justine Sundarum and Benjamin Killips gave matchless logistical assistance. Robert G. Lowery provided a complete run of the *Newsletter* early on. The late Emmet Larkin shared papers from his personal files.

Larkin and co-founder Lawrence J. McCaffrey filled me on things not written down during several productive days in Chicago. Especially forthcoming were such colleagues as: James E. Doan, James E. Donnelly, Jr., Audrey Ey1ler, Thomas Hachey, Robert G. Lowery, Maureen O'Rourke Murphy, Cóilín Owens, Robert E. Rhodes, Catherine B. Shannon, Alan J. Ward.

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The Unauthorized History of the American Conference for Irish Studies

Previously Titled:

[***Omnia Hibernica:***

How the ACIS Brought Irish Studies to the Academy]

Chapter 1

ORIGINS, DEFINITIONS, BEGINNINGS

In any history of Irish Americana, 1961 leaps out as an *annus mirabilis.* On January 20 of that year, the United States inaugurated as president the child of immigrants from Wexford and Cork. Not just someone whose family had emigrated from Ireland, like Andrew Jackson or William McKinley, but an offspring of the formerly oppressed native stock. John F. Kennedy, the second son of a millionaire ambassador to the Court of St. James, walked and talked like a Boston Brahmin. But he wanted all citizens to know that he was a *fíor-ghael*, a true Irishman. The Kennedy ascendancy did not change social history as much as it announced subterranean transformations that were already taking place. Two centuries of social experience that gave us such colloquialism as "thick Mick,""paddy wagon" and "old biddy," had pretty well come to a close. For a new generation Irishness was not a burden but a choice.

Anyone, *fíor-ghael* or not, who chose to know about Irishness in 1961 had to be an autodidact and a determined one at that. The history curriculum of the time so marginalized Ireland, placing it a bit ahead of Albania or Latvia, that a university student would be fortunate to have read one paragraph on the Famine in progress toward a baccalaureate degree. Celtic, or "Seltic," was the name of a basketball team, and most students would be unaware that the ancient Irish language boasted an extensive, artistically complex literature. The esteemed modernists, William Butler Yeats and James Joyce, enjoyed academic acclaim and were often assigned reading for students, but usually shorn of their Irish settling. In the *Norton Anthology* of that time the monarch of Yeats's "Madness of King Goll" was glossed unhelpfully as a "minor eighth century Ulster king." That Goll bore an unmistakable resemblance to Suibhne Geilt, "Mad Sweeney," was deemed either unknowable or not worth pursuing.

To pursue self-instruction in Irish history or literature in 1961 called for tenacity and inventiveness, virtues often unrewarded by recognition. Most metropolitan and university libraries shelved few Irish books, and those that could be found were not always reliable. A common item was Seumas MacManus's romantic nationalist *The Story of the Irish Race* (1921), which asserted credulously that Fionn mac Cumhaill was an historical personage of the third century. Travel to one of the dozen or so major libraries in North America, or a special collection like that of the American Irish Historical Institute, could be rewarding, but most aspiring scholars needed to maintain accounts with Irish booksellers like Hodges, Figgis or Brown & Nolan. Short scholarly articles were difficult to place, often having to horn their way into journals devoted to British history and literature or in Catholic publications, not an ideal forum for discussing Sean O'Casey. The academic labor market still favored the job seeker at that time, but the recent doctoral student with a dissertation in Irish history or literature often found him- or herself at a disadvantage when competing with applicants who had written on English or American topics. How was such a person to use his or her expertise in the classroom? If the young scholar persisted, there was some question whether a published monograph on Robert Emmet or Liam O'Flaherty was a strong asset in arguing for tenure or promotion.

Yet one did not have to have a wet finger in the wind to feel that change was imminent. Post-War prosperity had fostered an unprecedented expansion of campus facilities with thousands upon thousands of new buildings and hundreds of completely new campuses. Student populations in 1961 were not only the largest in American history, but they drew increasingly from segments of society not represented in the class of 1941. The Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, usually called the "G. I. Bill," delivered free higher education to all veterans, motivating the siblings and neighbors of veterans to follow the same paths. The 1961 curricula in history and literature, however, remained largely what they had been twenty and forty years earlier and gave primacy to English tradition. The ability to name the

six wives of Henry VIII or to explain why Robert Browning's duke had disposed of his young duchess were still the marks of an educated person. Then again, with the advent of the baby boomer generation to undergraduate populations only two years off, there was also a sense that incalculably greater transformation lay ahead.

Conflating change with choice, 1961 was also the year that launched the ACIS. Then called the "American *Committee* for Irish Studies," "committee" implying both small numbers and advocacy, the dual initiations were modest affairs. The newly-founded ACIS co-sponsored two sessions, one at the American Historical Association in Washington, one at the Modern Language Association in Chicago. These were and remain the leading professional organizations for American professors of history and literature, weightily establishmentarian, and before 1968 not the places where anything untoward or newsworthy in the daily press was likely to take place. The AHA hosted two papers, both on Ireland's relations with the Roman Catholic Church. The speakers at the AHA were, Robert E. Burns of Notre Dame University, "Parsons, Priests, and the People, 1785-89: The Rise of Irish Anti-Clericalism," and Emmet Larkin then of Massachusetts Institute of Technology, "Church and State in Nineteenth Century Ireland." Robert Hall Stewart of Western Reserve University chaired the session, and R. Dudley Edwards of University College, Dublin, responded. There was only one speaker at the MLA in Chicago, Harvard's John V. Kelleher, a name that will appear often in this narrative, speaking on "Early Irish History and Pseudo-History," with David H. Greene of New York University chairing.

The chief exhilaration of both meetings was the mere act of going public, of seeing that both sessions drew large and enthusiastic crowds. Lawrence McCaffrey, then of the University of Illinois and secretary of the nascent ACIS, attended both sessions and worked the crowds to sign up members. By the time the two meetings had ended, the core members assembled from mailings and telephone calls had swollen to eighty-three. By February, 1962, treasurer Emmet Larkin reported that another twenty

people had joined, so that there were now more than one hundred members. This was sufficient to incorporate the American Committee for Irish Studies as a non-profit in 1962. Membership was $2.00 per annum.

TWO FRIENDS

Although McCaffrey is cited only as Secretary of the new organization, and Larkin as Treasurer, they were the movers and shakers that made things happen. Looking over the whole history of the ACIS, one finds their names again and again, playing active roles for more than forty-six years. A phalanx of others may have raised money, hosted meetings or stuffed envelopes, but they are the Jefferson and Adams of the ACIS, or, better, the Romulus and Remus. Instead of being adversaries or siblings, they have been best pals for more than half a century. Both are historians, although in different fields, and both are the urban-born children of immigrants. McCaffrey's family is from Co. Cavan, and Larkin's father, Emmet Sr., although born in Chicago, returned to east Galway to serve as an I.R.A. guerrilla in the Anglo-Irish War and the Civil War. Both were beneficiaries of the G. I. Bill, McCaffrey serving in the Coast Guard and Larkin in the Army. Academic success came easily to both young men, who progressed through three degrees without unseemly delay, McCaffrey at St. Ambrose College in Iowa (B.A.), Indiana University (M.A.) and the University of Iowa (Ph. D.), Larkin at New York University (B.A.) and Columbia University (M.A., Ph. D.). Larkin, in addition won a Fulbright to attend the London School of Economics.

At ACIS meetings McCaffrey and Larkin were so often seen together that "Larry 'n Emmet" often sounded like a single entity. "'Larry 'n Emmet' met the ambassador at the reception." "Even 'Larry 'n Emmet' couldn't get coffee before the first session." Forty-six years after the ACIS launch, they could usually be found somewhere near the lobby or registration desk schmoozing with friends, checking up on former students or hearing reports from the up to eight parallel sessions at any given hour. In person, however, there was an easily discernible ying and yang split between them. McCaffrey is shorter

and fairer-haired. His deceptively soft-spoken delivery at the lectern belies the capacity to fire a blistering riposte if provoked. An often smiling demeanor does not mask the pleasure he takes in playing the gadfly. In his several professional assignments, McCaffrey was always a popular undergraduate lecturer. He has never driven an automobile. Darker and taller, the young Emmet Larkin bears some traces of black Irish genes centuries past, and as a young man often wore black as well. A one-time newsie from the streets of Murray Hill, Manhattan, Larkin speaks in tones that cannot be ignored in the most clamorous of rooms. If asking a question from the floor, even in the most ingratiating rhetoric, his voice commands attention. Moving from M.I.T. to the University of Chicago in 1966, where he has labored for more than forty years, Larkin has also been during his professional lifetime the best-positioned historian of Ireland in North America. His work and that of his brigade of worshiping former graduate students also command attention.

The greatest difference between McCaffrey and Larkin runs much deeper: attitudes toward the Roman Catholic Church. The product of Chicago parochial schools, St. Mary's and Leo High, the Irish Christian Brothers school, and a church-affiliated undergraduate school, St. Ambrose, McCaffrey is a life-long, practicing Catholic layman. His longest professional appointment, twenty-one years, was with the Jesuits at Loyola University, Chicago. In a lifetime of study of Irish Americana he came to see the Catholic element as defining. His seminal study *The Irish Diaspora in America* (1975) was revised twenty-two years later as *The Irish Catholic Diaspora in America* (1997). In conversation he often remarks on the condescending sting from the many academics toward Catholicism in general and specific Roman Catholics. Emmet Larkin, the author of a projected twelve volume series on the Roman Catholic Church in nineteenth century Ireland, is an agnostic. Although raised in a household where his mother and sister were practicing believers, young Emmet inherited some of the antagonism toward the Church of his father, the I.R.A. guerrilla, who had been excommunicated, as were all rebels who fought against the Free State. His academic work, beginning with his study of labor leader James Larkin (no relation),

intensified his distrust of the Catholic influence in Irish life. In Emmet Larkin's view, the Irish bishops and priests showed nothing but indifference toward the plight of the urban poor and only antagonism to the Irish labor movement, particularly during the 1913 general strike and the employers' lockout. As a professional historian focused on the Church, however, Larkin has often written favorably of Catholicism's power to bring consolation, hope, discipline and cultural and national identity to an oppressed people. And he contrasts the Irish Catholic Church with several Continental manifestations always more closely allied with aristocratic privilege and property. An overheard conversation of January, 2006, dramatizes their differences. The headline of the day was that Samuel Alito had just been appointed to the United States Supreme Court. "Think of it," McCaffrey enthused. "This means that fully *five* members of the Supreme Court are Roman Catholic," leaving unsaid that the court was once thought a Protestant preserve, just as the most exclusive universities had been. Larkin nodded politely, acknowledging his friend's historical point, but he could not bring himself to say he shared his friend's delight.

The whole McCaffrey-Larkin dialogue on the Church has helped shape ACIS discourse. Aggressive anti-clericalism, as one finds often among Irish intellectuals, has been extremely rare. National and regional conferences frequently take place on the campuses of Catholic colleges and universities. Scholars who happen to be priests or nuns participate freely in the organization at all levels, including as members of the Executive. The many roles of the Church in the lives of Irish people and Irish Americans are frequent subjects for discussion. Unlike Irish fraternal organizations, however, the American Committee/Conference for Irish Studies has been a secular organization.

McCaffrey and Larkin were graduate students in their twenties when they first met in July, 1953, while researching their dissertations at the National Library of Ireland in Dublin. They hit it off immediately and began a lengthy correspondence when they returned to the United States and started

their careers, meeting only at the annual AHA conferences. Even then, as documents in Larkin's files show, he was already thinking of ways that Ireland might take its rightful place in the academy. In undated papers from 1952-53, Larkin, then twenty-five, proposed the establishment of an Institute for Irish Studies at some major university. In a 250-word "Prospectus," he argued that massive immigration to the U.S. had made significant as yet unexamined contributions to American life, that the burgeoning of America had deeply affected Irish life, and that England's subjugation of the Irish and Ireland's long effort to free itself of English control had important, also unexamined, reverberations in British history. Lastly, he added that Irish culture, literature and history held a great fascination and charm in themselves that had already attracted scholarly attention in countries where Irish persons were not often found, such as Sweden, Germany and France. A graduate student without connections could hardly bring this vision into being, but Larkin's use of the phrase "Irish studies" was unmistakably prescient; few in Ireland or North America would ever have heard it at that time.

Four years later in September, 1957, McCaffrey was back at the National Library, when he received a dinner invitation from R. Dudley Edwards, Professor of Modern Irish History at University College, Dublin. Edwards (1909-88) had co-founded the Irish Historical Society in 1936, bringing the highest contemporary standards to the field, and was widely admired for his books, *Church and State in Modern Ireland* (1935) and *The Great Famine* (1956), co-edited with Desmond Williams. After some complimentary words about McCaffrey's and Larkin's scholarship, Edwards suggested that there should be a branch of the Irish Historical Society in the U.S. and Canada and that McCaffrey should set it in motion.

Then an associate professor at the College of St. Catherine in Minnesota, McCaffrey did what he could. A year's appointment at Iowa and a move to the University of Illinois widened his reach. He began by enlisting an older fellow graduate student from Iowa, the avuncular Gilbert Cahill, who had since

taken a position at the State University of New York-Cortland. Together with Larkin, this committee of three reached out to what people they knew working in Irish history. They were Thomas N. Brown from the British-Irish desk at the U.S. State Department, later with the University of Massachusetts-Boston, Helen Mulvey of Connecticut College and Arnold Schrier of the University of Cincinnati. Meeting in McCaffrey's tiny room in Washington's Mayflower Hotel at the 1958 AHA, they agreed to work to form a North American Irish Historical Society. Over the next year Larkin, Cahill and McCaffrey had growing misgivings about whether the project could fly. Perhaps there were too few people working in Irish historical studies, if they could be found, and even fewer teaching the subject. So at the AHA meeting in Chicago in 1959 the team began to think about an interdisciplinary Irish studies organization, seeking alliances with scholars in other fields.

Over the entire history of the ACIS, McCaffrey and Larkin were to learn, sessions on all aspects of literature have greatly outnumbered those on historical topics, but there is a perceptible logic in why historians should have taken the lead at the beginning. Selected Irish writers, such as the titans W. B. Yeats and James Joyce, were already being studied under whatever critical school prevailed at the moment, but Irish history was undergoing an intellectual revolution in which all the received wisdom of previous generations, even when held by a few, was being overturned. The revolution was initiated in Britain by scholars like Sir Lewis Namier in such books as *The Structure of Politics at the Accession of George III* (1929) and focused on methodology. Through detailed studies of the lives of members of Parliament including such seeming trivia as paid club dues, Namier determined that rival parties, the Tories and Whigs, actually cared very little about ideology. Instead, the two parties could be shown to be collections of ever-shifting small groups whose stances moved on an issue by issue basis. In short, self-interest trumped the parties' professed ideals. The approach was essentially an application of the scientific method in that the researcher put aside preconceived expectations and investigated the widest body of evidence with open eyes, and then based hypotheses on examined hard data. Theodore

William Moody (1907-84), R. Dudley Edwards' co-founder of the Irish Historical Society, strongly endorsed Namier's approaches in the journal *Irish Historical Studies* under his editorship, 1938-77. The single most influential monograph following the new historiography was arguably Conor Cruise O'Brien's doctoral dissertation published as *Parnell and His Party* (1957). The interpretations of post-1961 American historians of Ireland were often destructive to the pieties of romantic nationalism, frequently espoused by self-taught Irish history buffs in America. As Emmet Larkin has said, "We are all revisionists." Under the more rigorous methodology, the great failure for the historian was to be a partisan, a booster or a fabulist, or in Larkin's damning phrase, "a St. Patrick's Day Irishman."

In seeking cohorts for the new enterprise, Larkin approached David H. Greene of New York University and John V. Kelleher of Harvard. Greene, an eighteenth century specialist, was widely known for *1000 Years of Irish Prose* (1952), edited with Vivian Mercier; it had achieved astonishing market penetration and was often used as a textbook for self study in Irish literature. Kelleher, a dazzling polymath, held a unique endowed chair at Harvard and had such clout with the University that he persuaded it to hire short story writer and high school drop-out Frank O'Connor to teach creative writing. McCaffrey sent announcements to leading journals of history and literature, emphasizing the new venture's interdisciplinary purpose.

The ACIS's unofficial existence began in 1960 when volunteers took offices and their names were printed on a letterhead. Gilbert A. Cahill (1912-85) was named president, Kelleher, Greene, and Harold Orel of the University of Kansas were Vice Presidents, Larkin became treasurer and McCaffrey secretary. Offices were divvied up without much deliberation, but the assignments have much to tell about how the ACIS would take shape. No one was from an institution known to have a large Irish-American student population, like Notre Dame, Boston College, Catholic University or Villanova, although those schools would soon have an emphatic presence. Instead, Irish scholars emerged from

wherever they happened to have pitched their tents. This was also true of the first generation of stalwarts to join, Thomas Hardy critic Harold Orel of the University of Kansas, folklorists John and Betty Messenger of Indiana University (later of Ohio State), and political scientist Alan Ward of the College of William and Mary. It was also notable that the sole Ivy Leaguer did not automatically go to the head of the roster. McCaffrey and Larkin's unwillingness to assign themselves the top slots signaled a resistance to governance by clique. As so often happens in the course of human events, several factions or coteries have tried to control policies or programs or offices over the years, and there have been bruising battles with volatile personalities, but once terms of office were limited to two years, no one has been able to reshape the organization around a single personality. Cahill's selection as president demonstrated that the top officer need not reside in a major research institution to do important work. More than a decade older than McCaffrey and Larkin, Cahill had recently published a well-argued essay, "Irish Catholicism and English Toryism, 1832-1848" in the selective *Journal of Politics* (vol. 3, 1957, pp. 62-76). His home base usually known as "Cortland State" (it has had a series of official names) is a former teachers' college in a Central New York rust-belt town with a minuscule Irish population. Through Cahill's influence, Cortland State hosted two national conventions, 1968 and 1978. Cahill brought in his younger colleague in literature, Robert E. Rhodes, a later ACIS president, 1985-87, and for whom the Rhodes Book Prize in Literature is named. Cortland State would also be the alma mater of Maureen O'Rourke Murphy, another later president, 1987-89, and one of the most visible and beloved personalities in the ACIS over four decades.

COINAGE OF THE PHRASE

Irish history, Irish literature, Irish music, Irish art, Irish archaeology and certainly the Irish Language were all known subjects, even if they were rarely taught in North America, but "Irish studies" was something that had to be defined as the ACIS developed. In 1961 academic disciplines still tended to

be discrete, and inter-disciplinary approaches were looked upon with suspicion. Why should Joyceans, the most secure academics in the young ACIS, feel they have anything to gain from hearing about excavations at Newgrange or the flourishing butter export trade of eighteenth century Cork? And so it was with the major European nations. In 1961 an American student might study the languages or history of France, Germany, Spain, Italy or Russia, but there was little effort to coordinate the two disciplines and anything beyond that was a gratuity, perhaps a picture of Filippo Brunelleschi's dome in an Italian grammar text or a sampling of native foods to raise spirits at exam time. The notion of integrating all studies appears to have begun in Scandinavia, where folklore and oral tradition were important components in national identities. It is from the north of Europe that the concept enters North American academic discourse. The Society for Advancement of Scandinavian Study was established at the University of Washington in 1911. Implicit in the name is a sense of advocacy, with the word "advancement," because Scandinavian history and literature were generally marginalized in the academy. Immigrants from Norway, Sweden and Denmark suffered little discrimination, however, and many of them enjoyed economic and social success in the New World. Their Society was well funded and their journal *Scandinavian Studies* was also launched in 1911. In most of the articles from the first few decades, we find that "studies" means the parallel examination of history, literature, linguistics and perhaps archaeology with very rare interactions between the disciplines. The cultures of East Asia also suffered neglect in North American universities, a lacking addressed by the founding thirty years later of the Association for Asian Studies in 1941. Its journal, *Far Eastern Quarterly,* is now called *The Journal of Asian Studies.* Once again the rubric "Asian studies" allows a forum for parallel discussion of, say, Japanese literature and Korean history, not that the two fields have anything to say to one another.

Real dialogue between disciplines begins with American studies, which developed in a collaboration between Harvard and Yale Universities in the 1930s. Henry Nash Smith wrote the first dissertation in American Studies at Harvard in 1940, titled *The Virgin Land.* Smith adapted the famous

"thesis" of Frederick Jackson Turner, that American character had been formed by interaction with open spaces, the "frontier," as it was once called. Smith's argument tended to elevate novelists like James Fenimore Cooper, out of favor with contemporary readers, but Smith did indeed present new ways of looking at a huge body of literature. *The Virgin Land* was not published for another ten years but it became a commonly required text for students in those decades of growth, the Fifties and Sixties. The American Studies Association was chartered in 1951, with a journal, *American Quarterly*, and currently has about 5000 members. For all that American studies has to contribute it remains a diminutive sibling of American history and American literature. Novelist Tom Wolfe (b. 1931), who chose the field as his major while at Yale, frequently speaks of his training with derision, "I hold a degree in something called 'American studies,'" as if it were an ill-defined weak sister.

HARVARD

The first citations of the phrase "Irish studies" date from the first decade of the twentieth century, denoting the philology of the Irish language, what we would today call "Celtic studies." Academic acceptance of the study of the Irish language, even if pursued by a tiny number of students, probably stems from its enjoying the imprimatur of Continental universities. Following Johann Kaspar Zeuss's epoch-making *Grammatica Celtica* (1853), scores of German, French and Italian academics built that field of Irish studies, and the results of their labors are still with us. These were the people who decided that the narratives of early Ireland should be classed into three cycles, the Mythological, Ulster and Fenian. The first chair of the Irish language in the United States was funded by the Ancient Order of Hibernians at Catholic University of America in 1896. This was only three years after the founding of the Gaelic League in Ireland (1893). In 1896 also Fred Norris Robinson (1871-1966), holder of the Gurney Professorship in English Philology at Harvard, began to offer instruction in Old Irish and continued for the next forty-three years, sending out dozens of students who then offered instruction at intervals all

over the United States. Shortly before Robinson retired, a Boston attorney and philanthropist named Henry Lee Shattuck (1879-1971) was visiting Ireland where he shared a lengthy conversation with Douglas Hyde, playwright, poet, translator, co-founder of the Gaelic League and then President of Ireland. He praised Robinson's work and lamented that it might not continue. In 1940, through the offices of the Charitable Irish Society of Boston, Shattuck donated $51,410 to establish a chair for the study of Celtic Language and Literature. Kenneth H. Jackson of Edinburgh became the first chair of the department, which has been offering instruction in Old, Middle and Modern Irish ever since, along with lesser emphasis on the other Celtic languages. Following Harvard's and Catholic University's lead, other major universities such as the University of Illinois, University of Wisconsin, City University of New York and UCLA, offered regular instruction in Old Irish and even more institutions did irregularly. The rigors of mastering Old Irish, with its notorious irregular verbs, have meant that those who succeed with it often feel more scholarly kinship with masters of other early languages, such as Old Norse, Old Church Slavonic or Sanskrit, than with people devoted to Irish culture written in English from recent centuries. The cost of admission to this club is high. A substantial number of Old Irish scholars have, nonetheless, participated on ACIS programs over four decades. And the ACIS has reserved seats on the Executive for Celtic Studies and Irish language specialists. But discourse on Irish language scholarship, Old and Modern, has tended to run in separate channels. Many Irish language specialists have felt more at home in the Celtic Studies Association of North America, CSANA, founded in 1976, or The North American Association for Celtic Languages Teachers, founded 1994.

The study of other fields of Irish culture had more difficulty entering academia. Some of this story is well known. Cardinal Newman's Catholic University of Ireland contracted Eugene O'Curry (1794-1862) to deliver the seminal *Lectures on the Manuscript Materials of Ancient Irish History* (1855-56, published 1861), but much of the recovery of distinctive Irish culture was led by ambitious, often

patrician, amateurs, like the fanciful "historian" Standish James O'Grady (1832-1915) and two of his admiring readers.

We all know of the labors of Lady August Gregory (1852-1933) and William Butler Yeats (1865-1939), neither of whom could qualify for a university position. Yeats forged a usable literary past with the discovery of early nationalist poets like James Clarence Mangan (1803-49) and persuaded fashionable English readers that there was much literary merit in Irish Fairy and Folk Tales. A lack of certification in the Irish language did not prevent Lady Gregory from introducing large audiences to *Cuchulain of Muirthemne* (1902) or Fenian heroes in *Gods and Fighting Men* (1904). UCD graduate James Joyce (1882-1941) studied the Irish language extra-murally and discovered the beauties of James Clarence Mangan's poetry on his own. When the study of Irish history was addressed by academics, there was some question whether it was really Irish. Trinity College's great W. E. H. Lecky (1838-1903), from a Unionist landlord family, may have refuted the calumnies of Hibernophobe historian A. J. Froude in five magnificently documented volumes, but they were first issued as part of the eight-volume *History of England in the Eighteenth Century* (1878-90).

The worth and beauty of Irish history were recognized readily by Scandinavian academies, but there is some question how much influence European antecedent had in North America. Swedish linguist Carl Marstrander compiled the first fascicle, the letter E, for the Royal Irish Academy *Dictionary of the Irish Language* in 1913, sixty-three years before native lexicographers completed the task. Scandinavia's most eminent folklorist of his era, C. W. von Sydow (1878-1952), took a keen interest in Irish subjects, wrote commentaries on them, including the *Táin*, and encouraged his students at the University of Lund to uncover secrets buried in Irish tradition. It was at Uppsala University in 1950 that Birgit Bjersby produced *The Interpretation of the Cuchulain Legend in the Works of W. B. Yeats*, arguably the world's first dissertation in what we now call Irish studies. Written in English and co-published in

Philadelphia, her study was reprinted four times here, rare for any dissertation, and is still shelved by more than one hundred libraries in North America. Bjersby, later Bramsbäck (1921-95), went on to a long and prolific career, and became active in IASAIL (founded 1970), the International Association for the Study of Anglo-Irish Literature, later IASIL, a friendly rival of ACIS. There had been so much activity in all northern academies in the in eventful year of 1961 that S. B. Liljegren published a short pamphlet outlining part of its history, *Irish Studies in Sweden*. Emmet Larkin's 1952 prospectus for an Irish institute cited the recognition given to Ireland in Sweden and elsewhere, but in interviews he and Lawrence McCaffrey say their founding of ACIS did not draw upon any Scandinavian examples.

Apart from the high place given to the Irish language for a small number of select graduate students, other subjects had more of a struggle for recognition. This despite such prominent advocates as Theodore Roosevelt, who while a sitting president (1907), advocated the academic study of things Irish in the pages of the popular *Century Magazine.* An admirer of Lady Gregory and Emily Lawless, Roosevelt also gave a series of speeches urging the study of Irish literature and history at such venues as the meeting of the Society of the Friendly Sons of St. Patrick and at Holy Cross College.

JOSEPH CAMPBELL AT FORDHAM

Roosevelt's call was not answered for nearly twenty years until the Belfast-born poet and playwright Joseph Campbell (1879-1944) settled in New York City. Best-remembered for the words to the song "My Lagan Love," Campbell had immersed himself in every aspect of Irish culture. A Catholic with strong nationalist sympathies, Campbell played a subsidiary role in the Easter rising and had been interned for eighteen months by the Free State government before arriving in New York in 1925. After giving a lecture on the "Timelessness in the Irish Epics" to an audience of one hundred at the National Arts Club, Campbell moved to establish the School of Irish Studies—an Irish Cultural Centre. It would be

housed at 6 East 12th Street just off Fifth Avenue but affiliated with Fordham University. Of more than a dozen persons cited as the coiner of the phrase "Irish studies," claims often made in obituaries, Campbell's seems to be the strongest. With his wide-ranging energies, he was a one-man anticipation of the ACIS. He offered instruction in Modern—not Old—Irish, seminars on interpreting contemporary Irish plays and offered concerts of traditional Irish music alongside European chamber music. Campbell offered courses of instruction with titles like, "Irish Dramatists from Congreve to O'Casey," "The Hidden Ireland," "Folk and Fairy Tales of Ireland," "The Irish Note in Edgar Allen Poe," and so on. *The New York Evening Journal* featured these efforts in news stories, and Campbell even appeared in radio broadcasts. But the School for Irish Studies was not a paying concern. Campbell did not have what we call today a tenure track position, and his salary was barely subsistence. He was forced to take on adjunct teaching at nearby New York University and eventually was reduced to pawning his old watch for $12.00 to keep food on the table. More irksome, the School for Irish Studies was not represented on the Fordham Examining Committee.

Despite his financial distress in the midst of the economic Depression, Campbell still enjoyed some upmarket connections, escaping for a while on a fellowship to the Macdowell Colony in New Hampshire. He continued to publish poetry and prose and in 1934 launched *The Irish Review,* an illustrated monthly that lasted through two issues. The School for Irish Studies limped along until 1938, when affiliation with Fordham ceased. For one more academic year Campbell ran the school independently, with lectures held at the American Irish Historical Society. In summer, 1939, with the school twice failed and Campbell in desperate circumstances, the poet, now sixty, returned to Ireland, a few weeks before the Nazis invaded Poland.

Campbell's legacy did not vanish, however. His friends Padraic (1881-1972) and Mary (1887-1957) Colum initiated courses in Irish literature at Columbia University after World War II and continued

with interruptions for many years. Before their emigration to the United States in 1913, both Colums were well-connected with Dublin's leading literary lights, as they remembered in *Our Friend James Joyce* (1958). From surviving anecdotal information, it appears that Mary was the more dynamic lecturer, but as a literary jack of all trades, poetry, drama, long and short fiction, biography, folklore, juvenile literature, Padraic enjoyed immense credibility. Nonetheless, Columbia did not see fit to award credit toward a baccalaureate degree for the Colums' effort. Such was the fate of perhaps one hundred courses of instruction, such as those given at the Éire Society of Boston (founded 1937) and others whose records are fugitive, from the late forties to the beginning of the sixties. Padraic Colum aided this effort by producing commercial trade books that were, in effect, informal texts for in or out of a classroom, like the *Anthology of Irish Verse* (1922 and constantly reprinted) and the *Treasury of Irish Folklore* (1935). The Devin-Adair company had quite a list of useful titles, such as Kathleen Hoagland's *1000 Years of Irish Poetry* (1947) and Devin Garrity's *44 Irish Short Stories* (1955). Prodded in part by Campbell and the Colums' examples, David H. Greene, one of the founding officers of the ACIS, began to offer credit courses in Irish literature in English in the early Fifties. Greene's efforts were coeval with pioneers in other prestige universities like Northwestern, Princeton and Harvard, which anticipate the founding of the ACIS.

JOHN V. KELLEHER

Predating Greene's course by one year was the one offered by John V. Kelleher of Harvard. Unique in at least a dozen ways, Kelleher held an endowed chair, where he enjoyed *carte blanche* to offer the instruction he felt was needed. Kelleher was not an organization man and even while an officer of the fledgling ACIS, he played a lesser official role than McCaffrey and Larkin in moving the apparatus. Through his long career at Harvard, and also through presentations at ACIS forums, however, Kelleher more than anyone else defined what Irish studies could be. The excellence of his scholarship and the

brilliance of his insights validated the premise that Irish studies would attract top of the line performers and not just the amateurs and buffs who often gravitate to new fields emerging from the margins.

Few lives cry out more loudly for biography than that of John V. Kelleher (1916-2004). If a Boswell missed his chance, there is still time for another Brenda Maddox. He is dead now only eight years, but younger scholars must find it incomprehensible that Kelleher was the most formidable figure in the field when he held only a B.A from Dartmouth, and he published only one scholarly book, a 290-page collection of his essays, when he was eighty-six. Further, many of those essays, belying their gem-like precision, were written to satisfy specific, demanding invitations, several of those from the ACIS.

Kelleher's name entered ACIS lore early. In the same summer of 1957 when R. Dudley Edwards recommended that there be a North American branch of Irish Historical Studies, Lawrence McCaffrey also visited the home of short story writer and critic Seán O'Faoláin (1900-91). O'Faoláin told McCaffrey to enlist Kelleher, then only forty-one, to get the effort moving. O'Faoláin would later declare, "No one *in* Ireland knows more *about* Ireland." In Kelleher's lifetime that claim was not gainsaid or second-guessed.

Although he was born in the industrial melting-pot of Lawrence, Massachusetts, a city where 51 nationalities spoke 45 different languages, Kelleher knew Irish from the cradle, instructed by his Cork-born grandmother, who died when he was six, and later by an Augustinian priest named Daniel J. O'Mahony. By gaining scholarships and working as a carpenter and roofer, he put himself through Dartmouth, where he immediately demonstrated academic distinction, often by knowing more than his instructors. A year after graduation he went to Harvard as a junior fellow in the Society of Fellows, where he studied Old Irish under Kenneth Jackson in the newly established Celtic Languages Department. Success at Harvard came straightaway, and at age twenty-six he was asked to give the Lowell Lectures in fall, 1942; his chosen topic, Modern Irish Literature. That led to his election to the

Society of Fellows, established by president A. Lawrence Lowell as an alternative to a Ph. D. program. Twenty-four of "the most brilliant young men that could be found" were encouraged to follow studies where there was no pre-existing field and, presumably, there was no one under whom to study. About this time Kelleher also became fast friends with Harvard College treasurer, Henry Lee Shattuck, the same man who had funded the Celtic Languages Department a few years earlier. Shattuck would be Kelleher's constant benefactor, supporting him in new directions he was to chart, but the two men were also the closest of friends, so much so that Kelleher is a principal source for the older man's biography (J. T. Galvin, *The Gentlemen Mr. Shattuck*, 1996).

World War II was raging and Kelleher was called to serve in military intelligence at the Pentagon, assigned to the Korea desk. The time was by no means a detour from his career path. Kelleher often remarked on how impressed he was in seeing that the concentrated, sustained efforts of many scholars, especially linguists, working nearby, had broken the German and Japanese codes. A comparable effort focused on the puzzling documents of early Ireland could yield wondrous results.

After the War and before settling in at Harvard, Kelleher and his friend biographer Richard Ellmann toured Ireland, mostly by bicycle, in a kind of personalized post-graduate seminar. The country, still poor and quiet, left many doors open. They met Georgie Yeats, Maud Gonne, Jack B. Yeats, Patrick Kavanagh, Brian O'Nolan, C. P. Curran, Samuel Beckett, as well as two writers who would become lifelong associates, Michael O'Donovan (Frank O'Connor) and Seán O"Faoláin.

Commencing his forty-year career at Harvard in 1947, Kelleher held rank in Irish Literature and History but initially voted with the departments of English and History. At first he taught courses from the English-language canon, his survey of eighteenth century poetry being especially popular with students. When Shattuck endowed his chair in 1960, Kelleher became Professor of Modern Irish Literature and History because Old Irish was the province of the Celtic Department. In 1967, his position

was retitled the Professorship of Irish Studies, reflecting Kelleher's use of that phrase over the previous fifteen to twenty years. His usual assignments entailed three courses that had little in common with one another. In the fall of 1975, for example, he lectured to about forty graduates and undergraduates on the major twentieth-century Irish literary figures, Yeats, Joyce, Synge, O'Casey and so on. In the evening Extension school, before as many as one hundred people from the community, he lectured on Irish political and social history since the Flight of the Earls, which included the flourishing butter trade in eighteenth century Cork. His position called for the guiding of master's theses and doctoral dissertations, such as one by a promising student named Helen Hennessy Vendler. And Kelleher was always approachable to inquiry from outside the university. While Emmet Larkin was at M.I.T. , 1960-63, he met with Kelleher for a weekly private seminar.

Left out of this account is the aspect of his person mostly likely to strike any listener on first hearing: his extraordinary stammer. One of his most admiring students, essayist Roger Rosenblatt, said it was "discouraging and, at times, heartbreaking to see him struggle with his tongue, as if it were a snake filling his mouth, merely to get it to lie still and allow him to speak his mind." Kelleher's uninterrupted speaking voice was a mellifluous baritone that was well-suited to song, during which he shed the stammer. A combination of a near operatic voice, his tall, athletic frame and dark Irish good looks made him a formidable figure at the lectern. Even allowing for the authority with which he spoke, his manner riveted the listener and created an implicit bond. Sensing what must have been a lifetime of frustration, from playground taunts and on, the listener was immediately drawn to Kelleher's side. To listen to him was to join irresistibly in his quest, if only until the end of his delivery. The stammer did not keep him from his duties in the classroom although he once contemplated leaving teaching and sought therapy. He never shirked faculty chores, and served many years on the usually fractious admissions committee. When one examines for comparison the career of Irish novelist Richard Power (1928-70), whose slight speech impediment prevented him from having an academic career, despite many honors

and a degree from the Iowa Writers' School, one realizes that if circumstances had been different, Kelleher would not have had a career as a professional scholar. Without having become a member of the Society of Fellows, John Kelleher could never have been Kelleher.

True to O'Faoláin's encomium, Kelleher embraced all things Irish, *omnia Hibernica*: Old Irish irregular verbs and Mr. Dooley, Edwin O'Connor's *The Last Hurrah* and the printed sources for *Finnegans Wake.* Unusual for academics of his time he was well-versed in popular culture and, unprompted, could call off from memory lines from *Le Puritain*, Jeff Musso's 1938 French language adaptation of Liam O'Flaherty's *The Puritan.* His lack of more extensive publication is explained in part by his devotion to a huge project he knew could not be completed in his lifetime. Inspired in part by his work at the Pentagon in World War II, it is a kind of unified field theory of early Ireland. He sought to verify and coordinate many documents from pre-Conquest Ireland, the several annals, genealogies, regnal lists and especially the great pseudo-history, the *Lebor Gabála Érenn,* the Book of Invasion or Conquests, what Patrick K. Ford called "a masterpiece of muddled medieval miscellany." The examination of each text might require years of exacting study, perhaps without immediate reward, with the progress of one worker building on the findings of a predecessor. Kelleher compared the labor to the erection of a coral reef. Making a contribution might exhaust a single small creature, but the totality would be hard and permanent.

Kelleher delivered what long-term ACIS members regard as the single most memorable presentation of the organization's history, "James Joyce's The Dead' and the Destruction of Dá Derga's Hostel," later retitled "Irish History and Mythology in James Joyce's 'The Dead.'" It was April 25, 1964, at the second national ACIS conference, in Urbana, Illinois. By popular demand, it was read again at the Lawrence, Kansas, meeting, April 25, 1966. Put most simply, he argued that just as Joyce had drawn on Homeric parallels in composing *Ulysses*, so he had earlier drawn from the Old Irish narrative *Togail*

Bruidhne Dá Derga,"The Destruction of Dá Derga's Hostel," in the writing of the concluding story of *Dubliners*, "The Dead." In copious detail at once breath-taking and common-sensical, Kelleher points out that the peremptory Gaelic enthusiast Miss Ivors functions symbolically as the not-to-be-put-off Cailb, and that when Gabriel Conroy goes to the Gresham Hotel he is entering a red-brick edifice with a single door and eight windows on the ground floor and nine windows on the two upper floors, making it a type for the hostel of Dá Derga, the red man. The historical elements of his analysis relied on his and Joyce's knowledge of ancient and modern local place names. The essay, later published in *The Journal of Politics* and as an ACIS reprint, reached a wide readership, demonstrating that it was impossible to know what James Joyce was about while separating him from his Irish context. Celtic scholars generally had little time for modern literature written in English, and until this time the swarming army of Joyce critics could get away with ignorance of things Irish. Kelleher had crossed disciplines to give us something unanticipated and new. It was the signal of what Irish studies could deliver.

CHAPTER 2

THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE

& RELATED ORGANIZATIONS

GROWTH

Scholarship that remains locked in a trunk might as well not exist. It must be heard. One of the first reasons the nascent American Committee for Irish Studies existed was to let the voices of its members speak. From early on that has meant providing forums where the scholar and the critic appear live and in person. The scholar/critic speaking implies an audience in a kind of theater. And the sharing of legwork and insightful interpretation, followed by give-and-take over resonances and implications, builds community. Well before the launch of the ACIS, founders Larry McCaffrey and Emmet Larkin had assumed that there were untold numbers of people working in isolation on Irish projects, mostly unaware of each other. If they could be brought together in the same venue, they would have much to say to each other. Conference fosters centripetal force. Face-to-face communication brings heat and intimacy not found by reading the printed page, hearing a voice on the phone, or, in latter days, by scanning a cold screen. Once the baby steps of single sessions at the two major professional organizations, the American Historical Association and the Modern Languages Association in 1961 and 1962, had proven that there were indeed hundreds of people eager to sign up, the Executive felt confident in a free-standing, all-on-our own meeting solely devoted to Irish studies. That was held at

Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana, April 26-27, 1963. The ACIS would take on many tasks in the following fifty years. One was giving members the means of establishing courses and later whole programs in their home institutions (see Chapter 3). Another was helping members fight their way into publishing houses and trying to establish a journal and later an annual (see Chapter 4). But year after year, the prime responsibility was to sponsor the annual conference, hosted by a college or university. Eventually, there would also be five regional conferences as well, sometimes nearly as large and well-appointed as the national. The conferences were the prime means of recruiting new members, and they were what the ACIS was "about."

To begin with, the ACIS had to build a community where none had existed before. To share an interest in some aspect of Irish culture, the 1916 Rising, prehistoric megaliths or the great modernists Yeats and Joyce, did not assure one speaker's inclination to become collegial or even chummy with another. Would people pay to travel to meet strangers, and could beginners be portrayed as bona fide? Before the ACIS developed its own identity and brand, the rooting in the AHA and MLA, as well as presence on campuses of major universities, Purdue, Illinois, New York University, etc., made it easier for department chairs and deans to smile upon requests for travel funds. Whereas most members were academics, they arrived from widely different institutions, humble community colleges and major research universities, and a few held endowed chairs while many were graduate students. At first things Irish were an avocation for an academic who had made his or her career something already accepted in the curriculum. The prospective Irish scholar usually earned promotion and tenure for work in an original field, such as American literature or European history, and might find Irish work treated as an indulgence or a digression. In the first three decades, also, there were large numbers of "lay" members, informed people attracted to the novelty of presentations on emigration or the crystal industry. Who such people might be was entirely unpredictable. One was English-born

singer-comedienne Anna Russell (1911-2006), and another was George Reedy (1917-1999), Lyndon B. Johnson's press secretary. Others joined for unfathomable, possibly malign motivations. A mysterious figure named Raymond James Raymond, as Kerby Miller revealed in a startling plenary at the 2011 Madison meeting, sought evidence about possible Irish Republican activity in our midst. The numbers of non-academic people declined with the increasing specialization of presentations, the cost of travel, and especially the abandonment of paper communication and the postal service to advertise meetings.

In the decades when the term "Irish studies" was still an unrecognized curiosity, it took explaining to the uninformed, such as taxi drivers in conference towns or hotel clerks, as well as colleagues in other departments, what kind of organization the ACIS was. It was commonly mistaken as a fraternal, ethnic society. As late as 1983 when Larry McCaffrey wrote the five-page "History of the American Committee for Irish Studies," he did so to contribute to Michael F. Funchion's volume, *Irish American Voluntary Organizations* (Westport, Ct: Greenwood Press). The placement implied that the ACIS was more easily classed with the Friendly Sons of St. Patrick than with such peers as the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies, founded in 1938, or the Conference on British Studies, founded in1950.

Within the ACIS the question of a scholar/critic's ethnicity seemed too boring to discuss. If Conrad Arensberg's landmark study, *The Irish Countryman* (1928) painted an unflattering portrait of rural life in the west of Ireland, his lack of an Irish surname would never be thought to have contributed to his view. Movers and shakers in the first years of the ACIS included many who did not bear Irish surnames, such as Arnold Schrier, author of *Ireland and the American Emigration* (1958); it is also true of presidents like Harold Orel (1971-73) and Dutch-born José Lanters (2007-09). The condescending question of "Why have you taken up Irish studies if you're

not Irish?" annoyed non-Hibernian members, such as the present author. No one expected that students of Homeric Greece should be Greeks themselves, that people studying Renaissance Florence should be Italian, or, for that matter, that anthropologists and linguists who give their lives to sub-Saharan Africa should be black. The implication of the question was that, Newgrange, *The Book of Kells,* the Famine and Joyce's *Ulysses* notwithstanding, Ireland's historical and cultural legacy did not merit study beyond those people seeking to champion it for their own self-flattery.

Despite the collective reluctance to address the question of "Why?" it is worth a few moments of consideration here. If Irish scholars, regardless of ethnicity, shunned the banner of romantic nationalism, what fueled the drive to give over a large slice of a professional life to pursuing knowledge of a small, impoverished island that for most of the last five hundred years had been a cultural laggard? For historians there were three attractions: 1) Ireland has a truly dramatic experience, with frequent armed rebellions and the worst non-bellicose human catastrophe in western culture. 2) In 1962 most of Irish history was unknown in North America. 3) Nearly all records are in English. In the first several decades of the ACIS one of the continuing questions was the nature of the national struggle for independence, 1916-26. Before that Ireland's cultural uniqueness was defined by its never having been conquered by the Romans, and it enjoyed a huge body of medieval heroic literature that could be spoken of side-by-side with Classical mythology. A late player in the industrial revolution, Ireland housed an immense reservoir of folk culture and literature that attracted Scandinavians and Germans before the founding of the ACIS. With the coming fashion for post-colonial theory in academia, prompted by Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* (1965) and Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978), Irish history acquired an unanticipated cachet by telling the story of the principal former European colony. At a time of rapidly increasing globalization in academia, Ireland's history might offer

illumination for the narratives of Algeria, Martinique and the Indian Subcontinent. Add to this an imponderable. The late Harry Reasoner of CBS News described Ireland as "the Gentiles' Israel."

The attraction to Irish literature is easier to explain. The two great modernists, William Butler Yeats and James Joyce, were not only Irish but both deeply immersed in Irish history and culture. To be able to comment on them, one had to become informed about Cúchulainn and Charles Stewart Parnell. To a lesser degree, this was also true of Samuel Beckett, even though many of his works were written in French. One task for ACIS literature people was to pry Yeats, Joyce and Beckett away from the English canon, where they had been claimed for decades. The success of lobbying by ACIS and others is that the annual Modern Language Association in the 1980s did indeed provide a separate listing for Irish scholarship and criticism. This meant that Yeats and Joyce would be cited appropriately adjacent to Lady Gregory and Flann O'Brien. Claimed also, now, were so many other writers whose Irishness was less conspicuous, like Jonathan Swift, George Bernard Shaw and Bram Stoker. Simultaneous with these proceedings, Irish writing experienced a general rise in acclaim. Irish plays, especially those of Brian Friel, were welcome on stages in London and New York, ahead of those from other English-speaking countries like Canada or Australia. Irish short story writers like Edna O'Brien, John McGahern and Roddy Doyle were seen in the pages of the trend setting *New Yorker,* and Irish-born William Trevor was declared by the same *New Yorker* to be the "greatest living writer of short stories in the English language." Poetry enjoyed even greater prestige. Seamus Heaney, a frequent guest at ACIS meetings and a chum to many members, came to be considered the most admired living poet in the English language by the mid-eighties. For ten years this son of a Co. Derry farmer and one-time Belfast high school teacher was dividing his time between concurrent appointments at Harvard and Oxford Universities. In 1995 he capped his reputation with the Nobel Prize for Literature. Heaney's fellow Ulsterman Paul Muldoon carried the poetry baton even further. A

Pulitzer Prize winner, he holds an endowed chair at Princeton. Through the esteem for his published work and his role as poetry editor of the *New Yorker, The New York Review of Books* anointed him the most influential poet in the United States in 2011.

Although the ACIS was not a fraternal organization, a definable camaraderie was palpable among members, even across disciplines. This was especially true in the earlier decades when the total membership was small and Irish studies were still marginalized or unknown and a bit defensive. At first condescending jokes from departmental colleagues persisted. Sample, "What's a seven-course Irish gourmet meal?" Answer, "A six-pack of beer and a potato." Professional condescension could cut much deeper. The admired Joycean Cheryl Herr has written that when she was up for tenure at Virginia Tech in 1983, she helpfully submitted a list of external evaluators to comment on work that included a book on James Joyce and popular culture. The response of her department chair was, "I don't think we need the word of a drunken Irishman in this case." When such episodes characterized the prevailing mood, it seemed that everyone met at a conference cocktail party or reception was swimming upstream and driven by labors of love. Anecdotally, at least, ACIS members could be portrayed as more forthcoming and generous than persons in comparable organizations. This despite occasional feuds among leading members. A speaker whose name has been lost to history put it this way at a reception in the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library during the Boston College conference, April, 1986. He contrasted the openness of ACIS members with what he had known in a previous calling as a Shakespeare scholar. If one has a shard of new information about a lesser play, such as *Timon of Athens* or *Henry VI, Part II,* he offered, it would be best to keep it to one's self until it could be exploited in a publication. Careerist competition with other Shakespeareans was deemed so strident that little could be shared. In contrast, the speaker continued, at the very meeting we were attending he had spoken of an interest in the poet, playwright, and fiction

writer Padraic Colum (1881-1972), who spent his mature years in the United States and taught one of the very first Irish literature classes at Columbia University. Within hours the speaker was told of caches of unpublished letters, names and phone numbers of people who had known Colum, even the location of his headstone in Howth. As the ACIS matured, however, there were fewer neglected writers or unexamined episodes in Irish history, and when two, three or more scholars were competing for the same turn, ACIS people could be as careerist as any other academics.

BECOMING PROFESSIONAL

It took nearly twenty-five years, from 1961-62 until 1985, for the name American *Committee* for Irish Studies, proposed by Thomas Hachey, to advance to American *Conference . . .* The difference could hardly be mere semantics. "Committee" might have suggested advocacy, but it also implied small numbers and informality. In the days of smelly, purple dittographs, splotchy mimeographs and minuscule dues many agreements could be made with a handshake or a nod of the head. The equivalent of executive decisions was made in modest hotel rooms at convention time. At the center were a group of mostly young academics, geographically diverse and not so tight as to form a coterie. These started with Emmet Larkin, Larry McCaffrey and Gilbert Cahill and included Thomas N. Brown (University of Massachusetts-Boston), Arnold Schrier (University of Cincinnati), and Helen Mulvey of Connecticut College, the first prominent woman before the phrase "gender equity" entered academic discourse. Within a year this core group was joined by the English-born Alan Ward, then a precocious graduate student, Thomas Hachey (Marquette University and later Boston College), Robert E. Rhodes (State University of New York at Cortland), David H. Green (New York University), Leo McNamara (University of Michigan), Harold Orel (University of Kansas) and the husband-and-wife team of Gareth and

Janet Egleson Dunleavy (University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee). Moving from one office in the Executive to another without rancor, these founding or near-founding members presented a kind of good-humored tonal consensus at convention receptions and banquets, ensuring a personal continuity in the first three decades. Meanwhile, the membership continued to grow, up to 300 by 1966 and 500 in 1972, reaching a level of 1600 in 1993. A taste for Irish studies once excited tended to persist. People joined the ACIS and did not quit when the next academic fancy came along.

From the beginning there had been six officers serving three year terms, President, three Vice Presidents, Secretary and Treasurer. In 1966 the Executive recommended streamlining with only three officers, changing the name of the first officer to Chairman linked with the Secretary and Treasurer. This left the growing membership unhappy with the leadership's capacity to accommodate change, Thus founding fathers Larry McCaffrey and Emmet Larkin were asked as a committee of two to come up with a constitution, which they submitted and was adopted in 1972. Under this plan the Executive would be greatly enlarged and all members would be elected for three-year terms: Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer as well as *two* representatives from three academic areas: history, literature and all others. Additionally, there would be one representative drawn from the growing membership in Ireland. Following the policy of parallel academic organizations, Presidents were not elected directly but rather they succeeded from the office of vice president, to which people would be elected. Retiring Presidents would continue to serve on the Executive *ex-officio.* One of the history representatives would be in charge of the ACIS at the annual meeting at the American Historical Society, and one of the literature representatives would have the comparable assignment at the Modern Language Association.

In the next decade the Executive heard increasing complaints about the 1972 constitution, to the effect that it was too conservative and unresponsive to changes in the organization. In 1979 Alan J. Ward was asked to chair a committee to write a new one. The Ward committee recommendations, with subtle changes rather than radical departures, would prove to be deeply influential on the way business was conducted for the next three decades. Why Ward should have played this role at the time (he was the incoming President, 1981-83) seemed entirely plausible at the moment but requires some elucidation now. A graduate of the London School of Economics, Ward was still a student at the founding of the ACIS in 1961-62. A political scientist, he was one of the first prominent members to have come from some other discipline than literature or history and was an authority on constitutional law; see *Irish Constitutional Tradition: Responsible Government and Modern Ireland, 1782-1992* (Washington, 1994). Ward had hosted the stylish and lively 1971 convention at College of William and Mary, where he would eventually hold an endowed chair. Although he was nearly the age (b. 1937) of the take-over generation of Maureen Murphy (b. 1940) and James S. Donnelly, Jr. (1943), he always seemed a part of the founders, ten years his senior. Further, Ward was a renowned wit whose come-to-the point quips were always welcome in lengthy meetings.

Ward's recommendations retained the provision of the election of a Vice President who succeeded to the Presidency. He did not, however, specify how many candidates there should be competing for the Vice Presidency. The elected members of the Executive would select the Secretary and Treasurer, although in practice the President would have whomever he or she wanted. These were the most demanding and time-consuming positions on the Executive, where competence, integrity and the confidence of the President were absolutes. Appointment by the President also meant that these two posts might be the routes to leadership for people who had otherwise not drawn attention to themselves, for whatever reason.

Ward also incorporated the ACIS in the Commonwealth of Virginia and registered the tax number there.

Other elected members of the Executive would be the discipline representatives, history, literature and "other disciplines" in the early years. These were expanded within a decade to include the social sciences, and the arts, not only fine arts and theater, but increasingly popular culture as members gave more attention to it. In these instances the representatives spoke for different academic constituencies and often as advocates for their placement on programs. The rationalization for the remaining two discipline representatives was just the opposite: to announce ACIS interest in them, Irish language and Celtic studies. Although Modern Irish is unquestionably a Celtic language, the Celtic studies representative was expected to speak for early Ireland, the Old and Classical Irish languages, heroic literature, and archaeology, while the Irish language representative would address matters of the past three centuries from the eighteenth century Munster "Hidden Ireland" poets to such contemporary figures as Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill. When there was a shortage of candidates to run for these posts, the Executive moved to combine them, only to be stoutly resisted by the constituents for both. With a few notable exceptions like Catherine McKenna (City University of New York, later Harvard), Maria Tymoczko (University of Massachusetts-Amherst), Colin Ireland (Arcadia College) and Thomas Ihde (City University of New York), highly visible ACIS members, the majority of people in Celtic Studies and Modern Irish went elsewhere, such as the Celtic Studies Association of North America (CSANA) to carry on scholarly discourse. Having a reading knowledge of Old or Modern Irish, requiring several years study, presents a high bar to entrance. More than one Irish language scholar spoke of the dismay of a attending a session on, for example, gender in Brian Mac Giolla Meidhre's *Cúirt an Mhaodhon Oidhche* (*The Midnight Court*) in which a speaker might rely entirely on a translated text and show no proficiency in

pronouncing Irish names or phrases. In 2011 the position of Celtic Studies representative was phased out.

Along with the discipline representatives, the Executive would also include the elected head of each regional chapter, eventually numbering five. The regional chapters formed spontaneously to accommodate the burgeoning scholarship as well as to provide activity in the "off season" of autumn. Further, as most were nearby they could be often reached by car, not requiring increasingly scarce travel funds. The first began independently from ACIS under the name of Northeast Association for Irish Studies, headed by Francis Phelan of Stonehill College, North Easton, Massachusetts. Phelan had hosted the national ACIS at Stonehill in April, 1975. That group affiliated as the New England-ACIS in November, 1978, but maintained a separate financial account until 1993, when the national began reporting to the Internal Revenue Service. Meanwhile, the Mid-West Regional formed in 1976 and the Mid-Atlantic in October, 1978. Other parts of the country were harder to organize. The Western Regional was launched in fall, 1985, after the national meeting in Tacoma. And the Southern Regional did not begin until January, 1990, following the Syracuse national meeting of April, 1989. Despite some minor turf battles, e.g. was Virginia Southern or Mid-Atlantic? all members felt they could attend any regional meeting, regardless of where they lived. This aided attendance at the Southern meeting, usually in January or February, where the Irish presence has often been less in evidence than elsewhere. The Ward constitution was amended to include, finally, a graduate student representative. Getting qualified, responsible people to fill all these positions might occasionally be a problem, but overall the plan allowed for the recruitment of a wide variety of academics whose work could be seen in action and examined before they advanced to greater responsibility. In a volunteer organization with dispersed membership, where persons might

meet face to face only a few hours a year, these procedures guaranteed both stability and democracy. There were many routes to the Presidency.

Perhaps the most influential innovation of the Ward constitution was limiting terms of Executive service to two years from three. The immediate effect was to make it easier to get people to serve in the more irksome posts, of Secretary and Treasurer, and even at that, it was not unknown for some one to bail out before the two years were completed. Others were exploited; Thomas Hachey and Janet Dunleavy were each treasurer and secretary for ten years, 1969-79. In the long run, the two-year term has meant an impediment to domination by cliques and factions. Putting personality aside, there has always been a bit of competition between disciplines: literature vs. history, geography: East vs. Middle West, and once French-derived post-modernism invaded the academy: "theorists" vs. "humanists." No group has had a lock on the Presidency to the exclusion of any other.

The two-year limit in office did come with some downsides. One was that each officer had to have a rapid learning curve. In the case of the Presidency, one of the prime responsibilities was to line up hosts for forthcoming annual conferences, which requires immense amounts of wheedling and cosseting. In some years the ACIS was saved by last-minute, barely satisfactory hosts, and in one year (1997) there was none (more on this below). Secondly, the shorter terms diminished institutional memory. Executive minutes were not kept in a single, easily accessible repository and were not assembled in the Boston College Archive in the Burns Library until the third decade of organization, usually several years after the term of service. Out-going officers were not obliged to turn over portfolios to the in-coming, and instructions to new officers were usually informal if not non-existent, with some conscientious exceptions. Eventually, technology would address this weakness. The first ACIS web site was established in

1996, and was magnificently improved over the years, primarily by Matthew Jockers (Stanford University). By early in the first decade of the twenty-first century the site had become a permanently accessible record of all officers and their addresses, the By-Laws, calendars for national meetings, and such matters as lists of recent winners of different ACIS competitions for books and dissertations.

The occasional abrasions over different elections did not arise from any flaw in the Ward constitution but rather from the decisions of different Nominating Committees. As with many organizations like the ACIS, the Vice President (i.e President-to-be) assembled a committee of experienced members to accept nominations or to recruit candidates for the slate of officers in the next administration. Unspecified criteria for office included the reputation of the candidate's scholarship and service to the organization. Although the names of committee members were published, deliberations were private, an invitation to suspicion from disappointed candidates.

Simultaneous with the writing of the Ward constitution, other Virginians worked to solidify ACIS identity with the drawing of the organizational logo. Martha Caldwell and James Hutton of James Madison University accepted a commission to design one in 1980. Drawing on motif from early Celtic art, especially from the LaTène period (200 B.C.), Caldwell and Hutton presented six designs, which were reduced to three in a run-off election, and finally selected as one. In the years following its adoption, the logo was made available on a black and white enamel lapel pin, seen at meetings on senior members as late as 2011. Delegates to the 1983 meeting in Columbus, Ohio, received a souvenir coffee cup emblazoned with the logo. Among those attending was the young Irish lawyer, Mary Robinson, who after being elected president of the Republic displayed the cup, much used, to ACIS visitors at Áras an Uachtaráin in Phoenix Park.

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LOGISTICS OF THE PROGRAM

The names of six presenters appear on the typed program for the first ACIS conference in Lafayette, Indiana, April 26-27, 1963. One of those was the plenary speaker, Vivian Mercier of City College of New York, who did not announce a title. Actually, more people spoke because every presentation, other than the plenary, called for a commentary, one by the then-president of ACIS, Gilbert Cahill. Later, undelivered essays had to be added to these to produce the first ACIS collection, *The Celtic Cross* in 1964 (see Chapter 4). Jumping ahead forty-eight years, the University of Wisconsin-hosted meeting of March 30-April 2, 2011, in Madison, boasted 308 presenters, including two panels of poets reading from their work, and four plenary, or "Keynote," presenters, one of whom was a musician. The week-long meeting held in 1995 Belfast, jointly with the Canadian Association for Irish Studies, hosted by Queen's University, is still the numbers champion with 321 presenters. We must say this for the annual conference, the centerpiece of the ACIS's efforts, it has never been the same old thing over and over. The size and shape of the event has been changing constantly over fifty years. With those changes come alterations in the function of the conference within the organization.

In the very first years the program featured luminaries who might attract travelers to share time at a fledgling, unknown outfit. The first plenary speaker, Vivian Mercier, had just published the ecstatically-reviewed *Irish Comic Tradition* (1962) with Oxford, a perfect expression of the critical and intellectual goals of the new ACIS. MacEdward Leach of the University of Pennsylvania could almost be called a celebrity folklorist. Edward Brandabur of the University of Illinois was one of the best-known Joyceans at that time. And so it followed that John V. Kelleher of Harvard delivered his landmark essay on "The Dead" the next year, in

Urbana, Illinois. Conor Cruise O'Brien, arguably the best-known Irish intellectual of his generation, then holder of the Schweitzer Chair at NYU, first appeared at the University of Kansas meeting in Lawrence, May 6, 1966. With no funds to offer honoraria, star academics became harder to attract. At the modest, ten-presenter conference at Hollins College, May 4-6, 1967, the main draws were artists who either performed, like harpist Gráinne Yeats (the poet's late daughter-in-law), or joined in free-form panels without presenting papers, like poet Thomas Kinsella (then at Southern Illinois), fiction-writer Benedict Kiely (Emory) and playwright Denis Johnston. True, there were a handful of papers (not titled) from such eminences as critic-novelist Thomas Flanagan (then of UC Berkeley), but such meager offerings were unlikely to spur the growth of the organization. New energy would come from throwing open the doors, allowing more members to speak, which followed next year, 1968, in Cortland, New York. It would be one of three meetings in the first twenty-five years, along with Blacksburg, 1974, and Tacoma, 1985, that reshaped how discourse would be conducted.

The hosts of the 1968 meeting were Gilbert A. Cahill, first ACIS President, and Robert E. Rhodes, a future President, both men devoted to the long-term health of the ACIS. State University College-Cortland, or "Cortland State," is a former teachers' college and a smaller unit in the State University of New York system, but it has played an outsized role in ACIS history. The campus lies in a thinly populated part of the state, an hour's drive from a major airport, increasing the need for allure in the program. This was also an occasion for more rigor. Although the total number of presenters rose only to seventeen, counting the toastmaster, David H. Greene of NYU, and banquet speaker, historian T. W. Moody from Trinity College, Dublin, the program included a host of new faces who would set the pace in coming years, such critics as Bernard Benstock and Kevin Sullivan, and historians L. Perry Curtis and Francis W. Carroll. Some were still in their twenties, like historians Thomas Hachey and David Miller, who became

prominent figures for the next four decades. One was a graduate student, Belfast-born critic John Wilson Foster, then of the University of Oregon, beginning a prolific and admired career. These and others, like critics Leo McNamara and Marilyn Gaddis Rose as well as art historian Martha Caldwell, were all strong performers. From this year forward, the annual meeting would be primarily a forum for members.

With more people speaking, presentations were divided into five sessions, with three speakers in each: two for history, one for literature, one for art history (two speakers only), and one "interdisciplinary." There was also one quasi-plenary, not so named, all Friday afternoon, which included the showing of Mary Ellen Bute's film, *Passages from James Joyce's Finnegans Wake*, with commentary by Bernard Benstock. The longer time slot seemed more accorded by the youthful Benstock's then-rising acclaim (see *Joyce's Again-wake,* 1966) than the 97-minute duration of the now-forgotten film.

Such a configuration may not have been revolutionary and was only an adaptation of what was done with programs by many learned bodies, but it now became the template, with occasional tinkering, until the present.

For the next six years programs grew stronger and more confident. For the April 30-May 2, 1970, meeting at the University of Southern Illinois, thematic titles, e.g. "Roots of Ulster," appeared for the first time and became an expected feature, partly as a way of selecting from an increasing number of submissions. There was no falling of interest without a thematic statement, and no sanction from the executive for the lack of one. Sometimes a theme was applied diligently and really shaped what delegates heard, as with the 1982 meeting at the University of Vermont, marking the twin centenaries of the births of James Joyce and Eamon de Valera. Taking advantage of the coincidence of birth, "The Ireland of Joyce and de Valera,"

juxtaposing two personages not usually discussed together, lead to talking about familiar subjects in novel ways. At other times the theme might be discussed only by a plenary and a few panels. After the huge 1995 meeting in Belfast (see below), when meetings with two hundred speakers became the rule, a uniting theme was difficult to honor.

A more significant innovation in programming occurred at the Virginia Tech (Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University) in Blacksburg, May 2-4, 1974. The conference convener, Johann Norstedt, brought innovation his predecessors neglected. He sought funding beyond what was offered from the ACIS and host university. His program cites five sources: 1) the Cultural Relations Committee of what was then titled the Department of Foreign Affairs. 2) the Guinness-Harp Corporation. 3) the English-Speaking Union (Southwest Virginia Branch). 4) the Irish Tourist Board. 5) Aer Lingus. Some of these sponsors would soon disappear, like Guinness-Harp and Aer Lingus, but the Department of Foreign Affairs would be a continuing and generous presence for the next few decades. The Cultural Relations Committee would sponsor selected speakers, in agreement with the host, and soon it was joined by its counterpart in the Six Counties, the Arts Council of Northern Ireland, sponsoring one speaker. Additionally, the Department of Foreign Affairs, through the embassy in Washington or the nearest consulate, began the welcome tradition of providing Irish spirits for one of the evening receptions, often the first.

While the Blacksburg meeting had fewer presenters (sixteen) than appeared the previous year in Ann Arbor (twenty-one), new speakers came with authority and fresh topics not heard before. Among these were archaeologist Michael Herity of University College, Dublin, "Townsman and Countryman in Stage Age Ireland," and Proinsias MacCana, also of UCD, "Mythology and Modern Ireland." MacCana's richly illustrated *Celtic Mythology* (1970) had

recently become a surprise excellent seller. Kevin Nowlan of UCD, the banquet speaker would become a familiar face at ACIS events in the next few years, as would Senator John A. Murphy of University College Cork, known for his mischievous wit, and late night renditions of "Carrickfergus." The keynote address, on the very timely topic of Ireland in the context of the European Economic Community, came from Michael O'Leary, Minister of Labour, the first member of the Dáil ever to appear. Topping off the weekend was a post-banquet entertainment by Abbey actor and storyteller Eamon Kelly, then at the peak of his powers. For uproarious hilarity, Kelly has rarely been matched, possibly by novelist Mervyn Wall in Newark, Delaware, April 26, 1980 and Senator and Joyce buff David Norris in Milwaukee, June 8, 2002. Dermot Foley's telling of his attempts to establish libraries in post-Treaty County Clare, in which would-be censors threatened death, Ann Arbor, April 4, 1973, is the only banquet address to be published: *Irish University Review,* 1974.

The wider resonances from Norstedt's innovations included a prestige for speakers from Ireland, especially in plenary addresses. Such a notion did not always produce happy results. The situation was not comparable to that of American-born teachers of foreign languages versus native speakers, intuitively expected to have a built in advantage. Here the medium was English, whether spoken with a Mid-West or Dublin 4 accent. Proinsias MacCana and Michael Herity were top performers and exemplary gentlemen, but in following years some of their successors were disappointing as well as gratingly patronizing. Some ACIS founders, notably Emmet Larkin, complained that the ACIS was the *American* Conference and recommended that we feature our own. By the time forty years had passed since the founding of the ACIS, with the proliferation of large Irish studies programs (see Chapter 3), abundant and illustrious talent was available.

It would be another eleven years before circumstances and personalities would alter the shape of the annual convention. That was the end of single sessions. The 1985 meeting in Tacoma, Washington, the first on the West Coast, was co-hosted by two cross-town institutions, Pacific Lutheran University through convener Audrey Eyler, and the University of Puget Sound and Robert F. Garratt. Having two parallel sessions, devoted to different disciplines, hardly seems extraordinary when looking back from a time when an ACIS meeting might have as many as ten, but that innovation marked how the now well-established field of Irish studies was enduring changes that could not be reversed. Sentiment from older members, especially the founding generation, strongly favored devoting to the interdisciplinary ideal that every member might gain from attending every session, no matter how far from a personal specialization. An authority on Old Irish texts could gain in learning about the nineteenth century labor unions in the dominantly Irish immigrant mining town of Butte, Montana. Eyler and Garratt were responding to the increasing number of people petitioning to speak. Tacoma, 1985, had seventy presenters, including the first appearance of soon-to-be major critics Edna Longley and Declan Kiberd, whereas the previous meeting, at Wake Forest University in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, had forty-three. Additionally, Eyler and Garratt had glamorous perks, like a cruise of Puget Sound leading to a landing at Seattle's historic Pike Place Market, which would take all Saturday afternoon. Underlying their plans was an unspoken fear that a meeting so far from the membership base in the upper Middle West and North East would limit attendance. This worry was not realized, however, when domestic airlines announced unprecedented fare sales in spring, 1985, assuring robust attendance. Tacoma, 1985, also upped the ante for evenings' entertainments, with the concerts. The most charming and memorable of these was Zack Bowen's arrangement, "An Evening of Joycean Music," employing some local, formally-dressed talent, and based on his *Musical Allusions in the works of James Joyce* (1974).

The founders' ideal of each member maintaining interdisciplinary interests could not have been maintained when the proliferation of new scholarship ballooned well beyond what anyone could have imagined in 1961-62. Staying abreast in one's own field, whether the Potato Famine, the Civil War, James Joyce or contemporary women poets, became a full-time obligation. The Tacoma meeting was a landmark in recognizing that reality. There was still informal exchange crossing disciplines because all members might arrive on the same airplane or schmooze at receptions and cocktail parties. Dynamic performers in plenary speeches could remind all members of exciting things happening in a single field.

Simultaneously, the growing cosmopolitanism of Irish studies, with speakers emerging from a wide range of non-English speaking countries, fostered a new kind of interdisciplinary study unanticipated by the founders. The advent of new academic theories, many originating in France, invited comparisons with nations and literatures not previously juxtaposed with Ireland. In both history and literature the popularity of post-colonial theory suggested comparisons with island nations in the Caribbean and the Algerian struggle for independence from France. Additionally, the popularity of Indian-born American critic Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (1994), and the presence of large number of students and teachers from the Asian subcontinent in academia meant that comparisons with India and Pakistan became commonplace.

Paralleling post-colonialism was the sequence of critical theories often grouped under the umbrella label "post-modernism." The ubiquity of theorists like Jacques Derrida, Roland Barthes and Julia Kristeva meant that the mere citing of their names would lead to the comparison of an Irish writer with one from another country, often France.

Additionally, the development of Irish studies courses and programs in American universities paralleled programs by other ethnic groups (see Chapter 3). Thus the Great Irish

Famine was conventionally compared with the Holocaust, and Irish-American history and culture were often seen side-by-side with that of other immigrants, Jewish, Italian and Polish as well as African-American and Hispanic.

Over the second twenty-five years of ACIS conferences, when the shape of the event was pretty well fixed by repetition, several attempts of the executive to dictate changes were ignored as unenforceable. Hosts of successful meetings circulated notes and guidelines recommending how to plan and pace a meeting; they were never formally adopted. In actual meetings there were two challenges to the rule of business as usual, in Albany, 1997, and Fort Lauderdale, 1998. Both attempted to address presumed deficiencies in the established model. They might be classed as theatricality (1997) and selectivity (1998), or, rather, the lack thereof.

Ever since the annual meeting became a forum for members in 1968, most of the conference was made up of panels or three or four people reading papers on related topics. Surviving from before 1968, there might be occasional roundtable discussion where informed persons spoke extemporaneously or from notes on a topic taking shape in the news at the moment, such as sectarian violence in Ulster or adapting Irish studies to the “new technology” (newer and more challenging every year). Some of the problems here are endemic to academe. It often happens that scholars who sound earth-shaking on the page turn out in person to be deficient in presentational skills. Others are so obsessed with some obscure corner of Irish history or literature that they ignore time limits, leaving hard-pressed session chairpersons in the uncomfortable position of stifling the speaker, often a friend. Sessions run over, blocking the beginning of subsequent sessions, ruining luncheon dates, buses to be caught, etc.

The 1997 meeting in Albany presented an opportunity for innovation. When three tentative invitations of venues were withdrawn, the executive decided that the ACIS itself would

host the meeting. It was buoyed in part by the largesse from a recent beneficial investment in a utility stock account, considerably larger than host universities usually provided. As a state capital, Albany had many logistical advantages, and the Omni Hotel was most generous with the legislature out of session. Additionally, Albany was the bailiwick of Pulitzer Prize-winning Irish American novelist William Kennedy, who was honored at a reception and quietly attended many sessions.

In the absence of a host institution, planning for the 1997 Albany meeting was managed by the vice-president, Lucy McDiarmid, and the discipline representatives, followed the method of former president Robert E. Rhodes, who had chaired such a committee in organizing the program for the 1987 meeting in Dublin. One innovation was the "living book review."

In this the focus was on a well-regarded new work by a major scholar. The best-attended, with an overflow crowd in one of the Omni Hotel's larger rooms, April 19, featured the just published *Apprentice Mage,* the first volume of Oxford historian R. F. Foster's two volume biography of William Butler Yeats. Speaking on *Apprentice Mage* was mild-mannered Larry McCaffrey of Loyola Chicago, a co-founder of the ACIS, and the highly telegenic, British-accented Elizabeth Butler Cullingford of the University of Texas. Commentary was devoid of facile praise. Oxford's Foster, a man of assured presence despite a slight stammer, was in the room, ready to take questions from the reviewers and from the floor.

The question of selectivity to get on a program, e.g. who should speak? began shortly after the annual meeting became a forum for members. Did an applicant have the authority to speak on a subject? Was his/her research flawed or outdated? Could the speaker pronounce "Drogheda" and "Cúchulainn"? Was the speaker a bore? From the earliest days questions of an applicant's qualifications were often directed to the discipline representatives, but this was not

a hard and fast rule. A conference convener might accept a late application because it rounded out a panel and not take the time to vet it. And some conveners simply ignored the discipline representatives and suffered no sanction.

Conveners and discipline representatives were usually open-minded, allowing time for unpopular opinions, like defenses of Unionism and the Orange Lodges. Similarly, they were welcoming to new ideas: popular culture, post-modernism, feminism and queer theory. The most common reason for rejecting a proposal, ninety-two for the Belfast meeting of 1995, was that it was too obscure, too parochial and/or could not be accommodated with two comparable works on a three-person panel. Nevertheless, quality –even if only in the mind of the beholder— had to be a concern. Conveners could not ask delegates to come long distances to listen to mediocrity. And there was always the specter of Gresham's Law: that a surfeit of base coinage would drive out the good. Slate too many losers, and we would drive away quality.

The issue of selectivity did not remain current as the overall membership shrank to 700-750, even as the number of speakers at each annual meeting grew. Conveners are understandably reluctant to talk about numbers, but Ryan Dye of St. Ambrose University, convener of the Davenport conference, April, 2008, and Mary Trotter of the University of Wisconsin, March-April, 2011, have told me that they accepted virtually every proposal. Without anyone suggesting it, the annual conference has come to mimic the world-wide web, where every scholar is in effect a blogger and given a chance to speak. Being assigned an unfavorable slot, such as opposite a recognized star, or unattractive time (some unfortunates at the 2005 meeting in South Bend reached the lectern on Sunday morning, after the banquet) can make it difficult to find an audience. Even with many other forums available, the scholar-critic

who seeks to reach peers actively working in the now many fields of Irish studies still prefers the ACIS.

RUNNING THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE:

IN THE U.S. AND IN IRELAND

Although the annual convention might have been the ACIS's core responsibility, the organization usually lacked the resources to sponsor the meeting itself. For this the ACIS has customarily had to rely on a hard-working host from a university or college prepared to undertake the financial and logistical burden. In the early years, the ACIS Executive could influence or actually shape the program. But as the number of speakers trended up, more steeply from the mid-1980's, decisions about who spoke and when on the program came more under the influence of the conference convener. Early on the Executive decided that spring was to be preferred to autumn, in part because many conveners resided in college towns, West Lafayette, Urbana, Lawrence, etc., where home football games guaranteed a shortage of accommodation. When the regionals came along, most of them would meet in October, in part because they tended not to gather in college towns. For the national conference, April was the preferred month, even though many professors were inundated with term and seminar papers, because of the assumption that May exam time would make attendance difficult. Additionally, many researchers depart for Ireland at the end of the spring term.

In a generic meeting, after 1966 when two-day conferences ended, sessions would begin on Thursday and run through Saturday morning. Until 1984, there was only one session in a time slot. As the number of submissions grew with more and more parallel sessions in a time slot, programming might run through late Saturday afternoon. There is no typical reason why a

host would want to undertake such an arduous burden, and some had to be coaxed. Officials at Ohio Dominican University in 1983 provided space at the 74-acre campus in Columbus but left all the other details to the Executive. Other institutions were more celebratory. After the April, 1973, meeting in Ann Arbor, the University of Michigan radio station, WUOM-FM, broadcast all the papers from the program repeatedly over the next six months.

The convener was not only taking on months of intense labor but also a risk. For as much as a year before the conference the convener must become an ad-hoc entrepreneur, gathering funds, writing promotion, making contracts with hotels and caterers. The ACIS customarily provided the first $1000, "walking around money," and the rest had to come from the host institution or friendly agencies in the community. Some income would derive from the registration fee. A handful of heroic conveners actually showed a profit, returned to the ACIS rather than the host institution. Some hapless planners exceeded budgets and had to plead with the executive for a bail out. The financial pressure on the convener meant he or she would resist demands that the conference program not include too many parallel sessions or be more selective. This latter question became more heated in the 1980's and 1990's. As the Executive was dependent on the generosity and energy of the convener, it lacked the mechanism and the will to compel. In the most recent decade of the ACIS, 2002-2012, with a lower total membership and a steadily large number of people who wish to present, the format of the annual conference has stabilized, perhaps from enforced custom.

Along with what could be learned from the presentations, members enjoyed the academic geography lessons in visiting renowned campuses like those at the College of William and Mary, the University of Wisconsin-Madison and Wake Forest University. As the programs grew to having more than a hundred presenters, host institutions were expected to have

convention facilities or capabilities on campus. Commercial hotels were generally discouraged unless the host institutions lacked the appropriate space, 1977 and 1989, or when there was no host, 1997. Virginia Tech hosted the meeting at its attractive on-campus convention facility in Blacksburg in 1974, but elected to convene at a University-related center in Roanoke, 1999, that was forty-two miles or nearly an hour's drive closer to the airport. At one time there was an attempt to follow an East Coast meeting with a Midwest venue, e.g. North Easton, Massachusetts, 1975; St. Louis, Missouri, 1976. With the increasing cost and labor required to host a meeting, the Executive felt just having a venue was more important than how it related to the previous year. The first meeting in the Rockies was Denver, 1977; the West Coast, Tacoma, 1985; and the Deep South, New Orleans, 2012.

The most intense geography lessons, of course, came from the six meetings abroad, five in Ireland, Dublin1987, Galway 1992, Belfast & Derry 1995, Limerick 2000, Galway 2009, and one in the most Irish of English cities, Liverpool 2004. The first of these was a response from a dual invitation Augustine ("Gus") Martin of University College Dublin and Sean J. White of the independent School for Irish Studies. Both of these men had been familiar faces at ACIS meetings with many friends at different levels of the membership. The dapper White recruited students for his School for Irish Studies, then in the manorial Thomas Prior House on Merrion Road, the one-time principal Masonic lodge in Dublin. His School's offerings, in turn, were models for classes in North American institutions, as discussed in the next Chapter. The year 1987 was the twenty-fifth anniversary of ACIS's incorporation. Membership had reached a floor of 1250. The change of the word "Committee" in the name of the organization to American *Conference* for Irish Studies signaled confidence and solidity. It was time for a big gesture.

American planning for this included salesmanship. Members carped about the expense of trans-Atlantic travel, and others doubted whether the ACIS had the scholarly troops to fill a week of programming, the longest attempted up to that point. Much of the work was handled by President Robert E. Rhodes and his Vice President and former student, Maureen Murphy. Most of the sessions, June 28-July 3, would take place at UCD's Belfield Campus, south of the metropolis, which resembled an American state university. With the blessings of a week of warm sunny weather, the entire venture greatly exceeded expectations. Registration was high and enthusiastic, and attendance at papers was substantial despite abundant distractions and lures of the city. In most time slots there were only two parallel sessions, with three at some of more popular times, like Friday morning. There were scheduled side trips to Newgrange and Knowth, receptions at tonyvenues like Kilmainhaim Hospital and Iveagh House on St. Stephen's Green. A former Guinness property, Iveagh House was a usual venue for State receptions. The host that evening, July 2, was Brian Lenihan, Minister for Foreign Affairs. ACIS co-founders Larry McCaffrey and Emmet Larkin, then in their early sixties, were granted honorary doctorates from the National University. The week was climaxed in the newly refurbished dining hall at Trinity College, preceded by a reception hosted by Provost William Watts. New President Maureen Murphy, the first female president, has described her banquet address delivered in Irish, in this shrine of Ascendancy patriarchy, as a supreme moment in her life.

The 1987 Dublin was far more than a good time. Much as Irish academics studied the nation's history, language and culture, the concept of interdisciplinary Irish studies appeared to be imported; many thought it was an American invention, a notion sure to be challenged by A. Norman Jeffares of IASAIL/IASIL (see below). The next year Gill & Macmillan published *Irish Studies: A General Introduction,* ed. Thomas Bartlett, Gearóid Ó Tuathaigh, *et al.*, which appeared to be energized by on-going Irish dialogues with the ACIS. Secondly, the attendance of

many Irish persons, UCD students and others, at presentations boosted internal morale and confidence. While non-standard pronunciations of important Irish words and names might still be heard, such as the ubiquitous "Drogheda," presenting in Ireland was an unmistakable validation, and further invitations would follow.

It took five years. Gearóid Ó Tuathaigh, a frequent visitor to ACIS meetings in the US, as well as one of the editors of *Irish Studies* (1988), and Nicholas Canny, a leading historian, extended an invitation for 1992. The occasion was a commemoration of Columbus's voyage to the New World, which in Irish historiography included a stop in Galway en route. The assertion, little talked about during the week in session, prompted the conference title, "An Island Between Two Worlds: Ireland, Europe and America." Long a citation in story and song, the gateway to the Aran Islands and the home of Nora Barnacle Joyce, Galway had recently experienced an economic boom and had unexpectedly become a chic tourist destination. In part to share the good fortune of the invitation, and also to assure hearty participation, the Executive invited the Canadian Association for Irish Studies to meet jointly. They quickly accepted but upon arrival were unhappy to find their members integrated into the whole program according to topic instead of maintaining a discrete national identity.

The number of submissions for the program exceeded that of Dublin, and the program included thirty-five more presenters, 225 up from 190, counting literary stars and plenary speakers. Far and away the most prominent guest was the new President/Uachtarán na hÉirenn Mary Robinson, then enjoying excellent world press. This was not her first ACIS appearance, however, as Robinson had earlier spoken at the 1983 meeting in Columbus, Ohio, where she had been introduced, presciently, as "likely to be the first female Taoiseach. Also attending, schmoozing with delegates and participating in talk-backs, was a former actual Taoiseach,

Garret FitzGerald. Putting his listeners at ease, FitzGerald spoke of having been an academic and journalist before entering politics.

The exhilaration of the two Irish meetings did come at some cost. Some of it was financial; the outlay for foreign travel in high tourist season depleted personal travel budgets, cutting into attendance at the fall regional meetings. Additionally, the mass expression of scholarship on the Irish forums was thought, perhaps wrongly, to deplete what was available for the following year's meetings, as well as for the regionals. With this in mind the Executive voted that Irish meetings should be spaced five years apart. This was completely forgotten when the invitation came from Brian Walker and Sophia Hillan King at the Institute for Irish Studies at Queen's University Belfast. Walker and King were warmly endorsed by Queen's best-known alumnus, Seamus Heaney, who would appear without fee. Heaney had been a frequent ACIS guest and was chummy with many members, but his eminence had skyrocketed in recent years. He was to receive the Nobel Prize for Literature in the autumn following the ACIS, 1995. Raising anticipation even more was the cooling of sectarian violence in the Six Counties remaining in the United Kingdom. Negotiations for Walker and King began while the city was still dangerous but many had hopes that a breakthrough was in the offing. That hope was delivered on August 31, 1994, when elements of the Provisional Irish Republication Army declared a cease fire, and the Unionist paramilitaries unofficially followed suit.

Accepting the Queen's University invitation brought some controversy, not unexpected. The first furious denunciations of the ACIS's implicit endorsement of a discredited regime and a University that in the past had discriminated against Roman Catholics (the faith of co-convener Sophia Hillan King) came from Fr. Seán McManus. The Fermanagh-born Redemptorist priest was the brother of an Irish Republican Army operative killed by gunfire, who himself had become the

self-appointed lobbyist for northern nationalists under the aegis of his Irish National Caucus (founded 1972). McManus, who had never previously demonstrated any knowledge of the ACIS, was joined by a handful of American academics, like anthropologist Seamus Metress of the University of Toledo, as well as some voices in Northern Ireland. Not a one had been active in the ACIS. Coming as they did before the explosion of the Internet, their protests were limited to mass mailing to members and print media outlets accepting letters, such as the weeklies *Irish Echo* and *Irish Voice,* neither much read by members. Over the fifty-year history of the organization this little dust-up ranks as the loudest controversy with forces outside the ranks. This may be impossible to prove, but McManus and Metress's efforts appear to have been counter-productive, advertising the audacity as well as the novelty of going to Belfast.

Measured solely by numbers, the 1995 Belfast meeting was the greatest success of the half-century ACIS history. Queen's University recorded 572 registrants of all nationalities. With the absence of any sergeant-at-arms, uncountable gatecrashers attended the more popular sessions and receptions at will. That total is not subject to challenge because other hosts and conveners have been chary about making attendance numbers public, but speaking anecdotally Belfast certainly felt like the biggest crowd, until the New Orleans meeting, 2012, with thirteen parallel sessions. The number on hand is less arguable as the program cites 321 presenters, including star literary figures like Jennifer Johnston and Seamus Heaney, who delivered both a reading and a lecture on criticism. Another number not usually made public is the ratio of acceptance to submission, which is available here because the present author worked on the program committee. My records show ninety-four rejected proposals of which a few were multiples submitted by a single author. Such a number, ninety-four, is greater than those presenting at any ACIS conference before Dublin, 1987. In perhaps ten instances the disappointed applicant was accepted for the program with a different proposal.

For many delegates simply being in Belfast and surroundings was nothing short of levitating, seeing sights imagined but presumed forbidden to visit. More than one commentator compared it to the surreality of Richard Nixon in China. Members had followed news reports of the sectarian violence that began in late summer, 1969, and dozens of Ulster images were familiar from news reports. True, a few hardy souls did venture into the Six Counties before 1994, but for most the entire province was a no-go. Visually embracing Belfast City Hall, scene of the last night's banquet, hosted by Lord Mayor Eric Smith, the Crown Bar, the Lyric Theatre, the Unionist and nationalist murals, not to mention the day in Derry, walking the walled city, and the Bogside, overpowered much of what was said in sessions.

Perhaps the most memorable presentation was the most enervating: Conor Cruise O'Brien's poorly delivered denunciation of Thomas Jefferson. O'Brien (1917-2008) interacted often with the ACIS beginning in 1966 and was known to sing the organization's praises to third parties. Anathema to romantic nationalists for one of the seminal works of revisionism, *Parnell and His Party* (1957), the "Cruiser" (usually not a term of affection) had often been perceived in the United States as left wing because of his anti-Viet-Nam War activity while holding an endowed Schweitzer Chair at NYU in the 1960's. The older man, however, was moving to the right, driven in part by his disdain for nationalism. As it happened, the ACIS had been a favorite forum for his changing views. In 1989 the meeting in Syracuse having been decided on six months' notice when an earlier option evaporated, Cruise O'Brien immediately volunteered, charging no fee, encouraging his then-prestige to be used in the call for papers. As with other ACIS appearances, he paid for his own transportation and accommodations. His well-received plenary address, "The Irishness of Edmund Burke," proclaiming his embrace of the father of conservatism, signaled his political trajectory. By the mid-1990's he had become a champion of Unionism and a spokesperson for the splinter UK Unionist Party. The Belfast appearance

followed his own invitation, not to be refused in light of past generosity. Despite the perception of pettiness and banality from most members, Cruise O'Brien's diatribe against Jefferson was published the next year in *The Long Affair* (1996) by the University of Chicago Press.

The remaining two meetings in Ireland came at respectful intervals of five, Limerick (2000), and nine years, Galway (2009), and ran fewer days, five and three. The Limerick invitation was a legacy of the much-loved Sean J. White, who had co-hosted the 1987 Dublin meeting, but with the failure of the School for Irish Studies had moved on to the University of Limerick. When White died in 1996, the ACIS executive approached the University and received a warm response from founder and president Edward M. ("Ed") Walsh, who assigned the invitation to Liam Ó Dochartaigh, an Irish language professor. An unexpected literary event of 1996 made the Limerick meeting timely. Frank McCourt's misery memoir, *Angela's Ashes,* had become a huge best-seller and won the Pulitzer Prize, although it was disdained by many ACIS members. McCourt's inebriated banquet address in New York, 2007, prompted a mass walk-out, led by founders Larry McCaffrey and Emmet Larkin. The city's foul depiction in three McCourt memoirs, augmented by unkind remarks in many travel guides, appeared linked to the curious status of the University, founded in only 1972 as the National Institute for Higher Education, and a "University" only since 1989.

What the University and Ó Dochartaigh knew a great deal about was the hospitality to 380 registrants. Given its newness and proximity to Shannon International Airport, the University proved to be a skilled agent in accommodating conference guests. Kilmurray Village, the student housing complex of linked small apartments, turned out to be the most comfortable on-campus residences any host institution had yet provided. University buildings themselves, far from being soulless, modernist edifices, as rumor had it, were clustered around the 200-year old

Raj-inspired Plassey House, facing the Shannon, built by Clive of India. The climax of the days in Limerick came with the visit of President Mary McAleese, with much praise for the ACIS. Side trips were routed to the Cliffs of Moher, the Burren and the Burren College of Art.

On the urging of certain elders like Emmet Larkin, the Limerick meeting reasserted the Americanness of the ACIS. Instead of bowing before the superior status of Irish-born scholars and critics, two of the plenary speakers were some of the organization's most admired current voices: James S. Donnelly, Jr. on "The Troubled Contemporary Irish Church" and David Lloyd of the University of Southern California, "Connolly and the Turning of Times: National Marxism and the Turning Back of History." The two Irish plenary speakers were notable personalities but not top-ranked academics: Limerick sociologist Ms. Pat O'Connor, "Changing Places: Power and Position in Contemporary Ireland," and peace activist Monica McWilliams, "The Role of Women in Contemporary Northern Irish Politics."

Nine years passed before the next return to Ireland, Galway II, June 10-13, 2009, for a meeting titled, "Old Ireland. New Irish: the Same People Living in the Same Place." By this time the former University College Galway had been semantically reshaped into the National University of Ireland at Galway. The invitation came from the Centre for Irish Studies, where Riana O'Dwyer, former ACIS European treasurer and co-editor of Thomas Bartlett's ground-breaking *Irish Studies* (1988), was a key player. Unlike the practice in U.S. meetings as well as previous Irish meetings, there were no plenary speakers at all but rather interviews, on the stage of the O'Flaherty Theatre, with active players on the Irish scene, like Cardinal Cahal B. Daly and former Member of Parliament Bernadette (née Devlin) McAliskey. Although the shortest of the meetings in Ireland, at four days Galway II had more presenters, 242, than had Galway I, with 225. This was accomplished with seven concurrent sessions. Some familiar faces still

appeared, like former president Mary Helen Thuente, as well as frequent, long-term presenters like Mary Trotter of the University of Wisconsin, Daniel Tobin of Emerson College, and Catherine Shannon of Westfield State College. Increased air fare in high season seems to have diminished fuller United States participation at a time when the membership had fallen to between 700 and 750. The program instead lists scores of new names from Irish and UK institutions, many with junior rankings, and concerned with new topics, like East European and Brazilian migration to Ireland. Also distinguishing the Galway 2009 program was the presence of Irish scholars from more cosmopolitan or exotic institutions than ever seen before. Among them were: the University of Gdansk in Poland, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev in Israel; National Sun Yat-sen University in Taiwan, the Chinese University of Hong King, and the University of Asmara in Eritrea.

The fifth non-U.S. ACIS meeting came in 2004 at the invitation of the highly regarded Ulster-born historian, Marianne Elliott, of the Institute of Irish Studies at the University of Liverpool. Despite many unexpected rewards for delegates, it was the most poorly-attended of the six. In her plenary address, critic Edna Longley of Queen's University explained how Belfast-Liverpool-Dublin had long participated in a triad of cultural and political exchange at different levels, including a startling photograph of a college-age Seamus Heaney in Beatles-like long hair and duds. Narration on the bus tour of the city reminded attendees frequently of the Irish roots shared by each of the Beatles. More emphasis was given to the hardship suffered by nineteenth century immigrants to Liverpool, many of them seeking transit to North America. For those who stayed in Merseyside, the city was a haven for Irish political intrigue, as well as a refuge from one-time anti-Irish animus by the native English. The modernist Roman Catholic cathedral, Christ the King, designed by Sir Frederick Gibberd (1967), is locally known as "Paddy's Wigwam," a not entirely good-natured jibe.

The five-day program included two hundred presenters, poets as well as scholars, of whom seventy-eight had ACIS affiliation. The six plenary speakers, Nicholas Canny, Edna Longley, Paul Arthur, Séamás Ó Catháin, T. M. Devine and Joe Lee were all Irish or British, although Lee had and has an affiliation with New York University. The ACIS Presidents' luncheon seated three persons. And the total ACIS attendance, while not published, appeared to be under one hundred, the lowest for any conference in thirty years.

ALLIED AND RIVAL ORGANIZATIONS

The ACIS was never alone in its promotion of Irish learning and culture. The several fraternal organizations, beginning with the Charitable Irish Society (1737) and mostly prominently the Ancient Order of Hibernians (1836) often donated to arts and academic work. The AOH funded the first chair of the Irish Language, or Gaelic, at Catholic University of America in 1896. The two forerunners of the ACIS were the American Irish Historical Society (founded 1897), which eventually settled in New York, and the Éire Society of Boston (founded 1937), both composed mostly of non-academics. Many New England ACIS members speak warmly of Éire Society's wide cultural offerings and the essays in the monthly *Bulletin.* The annual Gold Medal given to worthies who had advanced the Society's ideals was awarded to the likes of Seamus Heaney and Brian Friel but also to Maureen O'Hara and American popular novelist Leon Uris. Through common memberships, the American Irish Historical Society, established to fight anti-bigotry by such eminences as Theodore Roosevelt and sculptor Augustus Saint Gaudens, had many more links to the ACIS. The AIHS's headquarters in an elegant 1901 townhouse at 991 5th Avenue played host to Mid-Atlantic regional conferences, and a large number of ACIS members were invited to speak there. The AIHS annual Gold Medal was awarded such ACIS

activists as Thomas Flanagan, as well as three Irish-American cardinals, Cooke, Cushing and O'Connor.

Founded concurrently with the ACIS was a national organization whose acronym, IACI, caused the two sometimes to be confused. The Irish American Cultural Institute in its first thirty-three years was a projection of the energies, ambitions, interests and tastes of a single man, Dr. Eoin McKiernan (1915-2004), long a professor of English at the College of Saint Thomas (later University) in St. Paul, Minnesota. As was not always perceptible from the east coast, St. Paul (hometown of F. Scott Fitzgerald) was not only one of the most Irish cities in the United States, but it has contained some of the most affluent Irish-Americans retaining a sense of their of their ethnic identity. McKiernan (born John McKiernan), never isolated in the ivory tower, was skilled in both enlisting support and in marketing. In the early 1960's he created a 53-episode series entitled *Irish Diary,* which was broadcast on the ancestor of Public Television. Chief among the IACI's supporters was philanthropist Patrick Butler, but scores of others would follow. In the IACI's best years McKiernan hosted a fund-raising gala at the Hotel Pierre in Manhattan; one was attended by Princess Grace of Monaco, the IACI's honorary chair, on a rare late-in-life visit to her native land. In 1981 the National Endowment for the Humanities awarded the IACI a $375,000 Challenge Grant to extend its educational work, which was successfully matched three to one. The IACI built a substantial endowment, many times larger than the amount of funds the ACIS might have in hand at any moment, and for most of their first fifty years the IACI enjoyed a much larger membership.

The IACI and the ACIS have been such different organizations pursuing different goals that there were few opportunities for them to compete or collide. IACI is a popular association seeking to establish an Irish cultural presence in many communities across the United States. In

different chapters, ACIS members might take active roles. The ACIS is primarily an academic group that sponsors forums where members can share scholarly research and critical analyses and form a community among themselves. A prime IACI offering has been the Chautauqua-like Irish Fortnight, in which more than two hundred authorities on a wide range of subjects would tour the hinterlands to speak in public libraries and church basements. ACIS and other American scholars are never invited, ostensibly because all transportation arrangements and costs have been assumed by sponsors in Ireland. In contrast, the ACIS has sought to influence academic offerings, helping members to argue for courses before deans and curriculum committees (see Chapter 3) and also finding ways for members to publish their work in journals and books (see Chapter 4). IACI members have wanted to enjoy the riches of Ireland, often presented in a flattering light. Eoin McKiernan was an unabashed romantic nationalist and Gaelic enthusiast, views not always given prominence at ACIS meetings. IACI members have reported finding ACIS conferences to be narrow, specialist, elitist and thus off-putting.

Officially, the IACI and ACIS have always been on friendly terms. Eoin McKiernan was always greeted warmly at ACIS receptions, and it was intermittently official policy that McKiernan or successor be given a place on ACIS programs, perhaps in chairing a session, so that the IACI colors would be shown. Additionally, academia was also one of the communities where McKiernan and his successors desired to establish an Irish presence. The well-designed journal *Éire-Ireland* (founded 1966) became the first publishing venue in North America exclusively devoted to Irish studies and has a complicated history with the ACIS (see Chapter 4). During the 1988 ACIS convention in St. Paul, sponsored by Saint Thomas University, delegates included a visit to IACI headquarters as a highlight of the weekend. Putting aside the Irish Way, launched 1976, a summer acculturation program for American high school students, and Trees for Ireland plan, 1984-93, in which individuals might take a role in the reforestation of the Emerald

Isle, two enterprises have been especially attractive to ACIS members. First are the competitive grants from the Irish Research Fund to support scholarship on the Irish in America. The steady increase in attention to Irish America on ACIS forums can be traced, in part, to these grants. Secondly, beginning in 1992 the IACI offered an annual Visiting Fellowship to the National University of Ireland at Galway. The Fellow would lecture on his/her specialty in Galway but still have time for on-the-ground research in all parts of the island. ACIS members were given no preferences, but many leading lights applied and succeeded in holding the post.

Arising later in the 1960's was a second organization whose mission, promoting the teaching and study of Irish literature at the university level, came much closer to that of the ACIS. Only this was an international organization that attracted North Americans rather than one based on this continent. The International Association for the Study of Anglo-Irish Literature was founded in 1968-9 by the Dublin-born Protestant A. Norman "Derry" Jeffares (1920-2005), a Yeats scholar and *bon vivant.* Having taught in Commonwealth countries before settling into his long tenure at the University of Leeds, Jeffares became an early champion of post-colonial theory, well before it became popular. The "Anglo-" in the first version of his group's name might have initially implied writing in the English language, as opposed to the Irish language, but its usage grew more burdensome over the years. So many Irish writers, e.g. James Joyce, Brendan Behan, were not of that stratum of Irish society. In 1998 it became the International Association for the Study of Irish literature, simultaneously changing the pronunciation and accented syllable of its acronym, from "eye-SAIL" to "EYE-sil." As the years unfolded, "Irish literature" would include not only writing in both languages of the island but also works from the diaspora, in Britain, the United States and elsewhere. Founded with a policy of having a meeting every three years in Ireland, starting with Trinity College, Dublin, 1970, IASAIL was initially no competitor of ACIS. After 1977 IASAIL began to held sessions in the intervening two

years in far-flung outposts of Irish scholarship, not only France, Germany and Sweden but Sao Paulo, Brazil; Debrecen, Hungary; and Kyoto, Japan. Only one meeting has been in the United States, at Hofstra University in 1996, hosted by ACIS stalwart, Maureen Murphy. Perhaps because of the greater cost associated with longer travel routes, IASAIL/IASIL has enjoyed a reputation for high creature comforts as well as distinguished scholarship. By 2012 IASIL could boast nearly 1000 members, some who were also ACIS members, but higher than the total for ACIS at that time. The web page for IASIL currently describes its relationship with ACIS as "fraternal."

A closer sibling of ACIS shares the North American continent, the Canadian Association for Irish Studies, officially founded in 1973. Canadian academics began to attend ACIS meetings from the earliest years, and it did not take long before they felt they should have an organization of their own. By and large, relations between ACIS and CAIS are friendly, and there have been three joint conferences, 1983, 1993 and 1995. Several Canadians have been ACIS executives, and the number of U.S. members in CAIS usually ranks second after Ontario, but ahead of all other provinces. Nonetheless, the CAIS and ACIS have far from parallel histories, arising from the profound but little-studied differences between U.S. and Canadian academics. The two most important are that public funding for scholarly enterprises is intermittently higher in Canada. The second is that in the smaller country the malign effects from a single volatile personality can be greater than in the larger.

The first Irish studies conference in Canada began with panache. Before the founding of CAIS Robert O'Driscoll (1938-96) launched a series of five well-financed galas, 1968-72, at Saint Michael's College, University of Toronto, Canada's leading institution of higher learning. As academic conferences, they flourished without precedent at a time when "Irish studies" was still

an unexamined novelty for most academics. O'Driscoll issued no call for papers but instead featured invited speakers and performers, snaring such celebrities as Senator Michael Yeats, son of the poet, and wife Gráinne Yeats, a skilled harper. Through his own tenaciousness and untold financial resources, he was able to attract big-name Irish intellectuals and scholars, often on the same forums, with more assembled star power than the ACIS could muster. These included Roger McHugh, Kevin Nowlan, Eric Domville, Thomas Pakenham, Tom MacIntyre and Jack MacGowran, as well as people from beyond Irish studies, like W. H. Auden, Buckminster Fuller and Marshall McLuhan (a Toronto resident).The general public was also invited, so that the enterprises fused the missions of the ACIS and IACI.

These meetings inspired a group of thirty-one people, including O'Driscoll, from universities all over Canada, to form a working committee that established the CAIS in 1973. The first president, Joseph Ronsley, a prominent Joycean from McGill University in Montreal, convened the first conference. In the first five years the conference convener was also the CEO; elected presidents would come later. From the beginning CAIS meetings were usually posher affairs than their ACIS counterparts, which may or may not derive from O'Driscoll's precedents. For the first decades (this would change) controllers of public funds in Canada were more generous to scholarship, and there was widespread acceptance of the notion that academics with common interests should be encouraged to form communities in a thinly-populated nation. A professor in Newfoundland, east of Maine, could expect travel funds to attend a meeting in Vancouver, British Columbia, west of Seattle. Additionally, hosts of CAIS conferences, especially if they were in major cities, were expected to engage in fund-raising in the private sector. Irish Mist liqueur, which ignored ACIS requests, was a frequent benefactor. Montreal's Michael Kenneally, then of Marianopolis College, a two-year college, raised more than $100,000 for the March, 1988, meeting, an unheard of figure in ACIS enterprises.

For sheer elephantiasis, however, nothing in either CAIS and ACIS history can match what the indefatigable O'Driscoll constructed the previous February (1978) in Toronto, the week-long "Celtic Consciousness" conference. Robert O'Driscoll tapped the flush coffers of the provincial lottery, Wintario, but never revealed this to the CAIS executive. Forty paid presenters and performers appeared. French anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss was advertised as appearing, but did not show. In his absence there was plenty of other star power, mythographer Joseph Campbell, historian Owen Dudley Edwards, Old Irish authority Proinsias MacCana, publisher Liam Miller of Dolmen Press, as well as poets Thomas Kinsella and John Montague. Much was expended on speakers with only local impact, such as Irish-Canadian broadcaster Kildare Dobbs, who required air fare back from Yugoslavia. Given that the name of the conference was "Celtic Consciousness," and the week was designed to launch O'Driscoll's Celtic Arts Centre, many of the speakers had nothing to do with Ireland, like the legendary Scottish poets Hugh MacDiarmid and Sorley MacLean, archaeologists Anne Ross and Peter Reynolds, as well as Breton authority Derek de Kerckhove speaking on the political implications of *Astérix* comics. Four years later O'Driscoll published many of the presentations in a single 642-page volume. *The Celtic Consciousness* (1981-82), with both Canadian and U.S. publishers. Although the book was passingly well reviewed, one rarely sees it cited thirty years later. As Irish studies flourished, followed by lesser enterprises among the Scots and Welsh, comparative Celtic studies were found to be less fruitful, except in the languages themselves. O'Driscoll's views were not prescient. Worse in the short run, CAIS leaders were unhappy that the organization's presence was almost invisible either at the conference or the resultant tome.

Newfoundland-born O'Driscoll, who began his career virtually as a prodigy, with his first monographs published at thirty, became an increasingly troubling and troubled personality. His volatile temper meant sharp and ugly confrontations with colleagues. Even before reaching his

prime, he had to be extricated from an embarrassing fist-fight at the 1974 ACIS meeting in Blacksburg, Virginia. Joseph Ronsley's chatty first person history of the CAIS describes successive executive meetings where motions were taken to reduce and finally to remove O'Driscoll from any organization ventures. Simultaneously, he began a gradual slide into public madness, with loud, paranoid, anti-Semitic and racist ravings including, perhaps appropriately, fulsome praise for the older Ezra Pound. A characteristic publication was *The New World Order: A Mechanism in Place for a Police State* (Toronto, 1993). Still in his fifties, O'Driscoll was removed from his tenured position. When he died suddenly from a heart attack, February 29, 1996, the headline on his Toronto *Globe and Mail* obituary read, "Disgraced Former UT Professor."

Such was the backdrop of the first joint CAIS-ACIS meeting in April, 1982. The man bringing about this introduction was the convener, Sidney Poger of the University of Vermont (a short drive south of Montreal) who had been a CAIS member well before he learned of the existence of ACIS. Poger strove mightily to combine the traditions of both groups, beginning with the compromise dates of April 1-3, a month later than was then usual for CAIS but early for ACIS. Following the CAIS policy, morning papers would be solicited from eminences, in his case Hugh Kenner, Seamus Deane, David Harkness of Queen's Belfast and George Dangerfield of UC Santa Barbara. But as CAIS people were unused to calls-for-papers, only one, from Dominic Manganiello of the University of Ottawa appeared on the program. Other CAIS people were chairs and responders or spoke informally, most memorably Finn Gallagher of Trent University, who sang his commentary. Despite the dominance of Yankees on U.S. soil, spirits ran high, and many people from different sides of the border were happy to meet scholars with aligned interests, previously known only from print.

Despite repeated talk about further shared meetings in attractive Canadian cities near northeastern U.S. population centers, it took ten years for a second joint CAIS-ACIS meeting, the week-long event in Galway, July, 1992, and then a second week's celebration in Belfast, June-July, 1995, culminating on Canada Day, July 1. In both of them many Canadians felt they were reliving the former prime minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau's metaphor about co-operating with the Americans, " . . .like being in bed with an elephant." CAIS wanted their presentations in discreet sessions, not dispersed through the full program, where most panels were focused on a topic, not the national residence of the participants.

As Canadian travel allowances shrank in the 1990's, and usually would not allow attendance in the U.S., and further, when it was clear there was going to be no ACIS reciprocation of the CAIS's having come to Burlington, there would be no further shared meetings.

Funding shrank so severely in the later 1990's that the CAIS was in danger of losing its identity. When stand-alone meetings were deemed too expensive, it became one of many small academic organizations to meet in a ten-day bazaar of academia known colloquially as the "Learneds," short for the Congress of Learned Societies, later renamed the Congress of Social Sciences and Humanities. Meeting usually in May or June, the CAIS at the Learneds might be giving presentations down the hall from the Canadian Byzantine History Association or the Canadian Society for the Urdu Language. This lasted four years, 1998-2001, at which time the stand-alone meeting was revived, much smaller than in the O'Driscoll era, and more like the ACIS model, with most presentations coming from members responding to the convener's call for papers, along with a handful of academic and artistic stars.

Secure through all of this was the CAIS's serial publication, *The Canadian Journal of Irish Studies.* Founded by Andrew Parkin of the University of British Columbia in 1975, *CJIS* has moved from institution to institution across the land in thirty-seven years, changing editors and formats along the way. Editorial policy has always allowed for contributions from ACIS members and other non-Canadians. Several special issues, such as Ron Marken's on John McGahern, vol. 17, no. 1 (July, 1991), became collector's items on both sides of the border.

CAIS, IASIL, IACI and ACIS are sturdy institutions that have endured now up to a half century nourishing Irish scholarship and criticism, which once appeared to be hot-house plants in need of protection. As we trend into the second decade of the twenty-first century the number of academic workers has expanded so greatly as to fill the forums of a dozen organizations, nationally and internationally. Two associations provide forums for people working the Irish language, the older more attuned to graduate study, the latter undergraduate. The Celtic Studies Association of North America, CSANA, was founded in 1976 and now boasts two hundred members. It sponsors a three-day meeting each spring, incorporating people working with Welsh, Scottish Gaelic, and occasionally Breton and Cornish as well as Irish. Participants at CSANA meetings are expected to follow passages in Irish or Welsh without having them translated. In the 1980's CSANA began to provide an annual bibliography of work in fields, now available on line. In 2001 the organization followed with an annual yearbook, published by Four Courts Press of Dublin. Although the CSANA website cites a fraternal relationship with ACIS, and there are dozens of scholars who are members of both associations, the existence of the CSANA conference, also in the spring, has made it more difficult for the ACIS to attract papers on Old and Classical Irish. The smaller North American Association of Celtic Language Teachers, NAACLT, was founded in 1994, and does not provide numbers on membership. NAACLT members might be teaching Modern Irish, Welsh, Scottish Gaelic, Breton, Cornish and even

Manx, or a combination of the above. Its publication is titled *The Journal of Celtic Language Learning,* first appearing in 1995. There have been no new issues since Volume 8 in 2003. Members of NAACLT more readily find themselves on ACIS forums, and one of them, Thomas Ihde/Tomás hÍde of City University of New York, convened the annual conference in 2007.

The rising fascination with things Irish experienced in the U.S. from the 1970's and 1980's was paralleled as well in Europe outside Ireland. As cited in Chapter 1, the term "Irish studies" was coined first in Scandinavia well before its separate creation in North America without a nod of acknowledgement. Professors in virtually every European country, even ones with negligible historical ties to Ireland, like Russia, Hungary and Portugal, wanted to speak about things Irish, and they founded forums to share their work. As in Canada, public support for higher education is more generous than in the United States, and so each of these associations could run conferences with more perquisites than was usual with the ACIS, and three of them had their own journals. France led the way. Courses in Irish literature and history began to appear about 1970 at the Universities of Lille, which maintains a center for Irish studies, Caen, Reims and Rennes, the last being the cultural capital of Brittany, a region with a passionate Celtic identity. Sharing editorial responsibility, these four began to publish *Études irlandaises* in 1972, a widely circulated journal with a distinctive logo taken from Louis le Brocquy's illustrations for Thomas Kinsella's *The Tain* (1969). Uniting these four campuses, together with more isolated Irish scholars, is the national organization, SOFEIR, Société Française d'Études Irlandaises in 1981. It currently has about two hundred members and holds an annual conference. Many French academics also belong to EFACIS, European Federation of Associations and Centres of Irish Studies, founded in Paris, 1998, whose 2004 conference in Liverpool was shared with the ACIS. In the United Kingdom the British Association for Irish Studies (BAIS) was founded in 1985, and its lively journal *Irish Studies Review* was launched in

1992. BAIS met jointly with ACIS at the Liverpool conference in July, 2004, as well as EFACIS. Finally, to the north, where the words "Irish studies" were first uttered, the Nordic Irish Studies Network (the name is always given in English) or NISN sponsored its inaugural symposium at the University of Aarhus, Denmark, October, 1998, and has since met in all four Scandinavian nations. The *Nordic Irish Studies Journal* was launched in 2002.

How much the leadership of the ACIS can be credited in the stirrings of the different European associations is impossible to say. Earlier treasurers report that ACIS membership rosters always included British and European members. ACIS members have published in *Irish Studies Review* and *Études irlandaises,* where the present author once contributed the "Letter from North America." Putting aside the joint ACIS-BAIS meeting of 2004, no more than twenty ACIS members have ever attended, much less participated, in European conferences.

The stream that appeared to be little more than a trickle in 1961-62, and marginal at that, in fifty years became a torrent. The proliferating programs in Irish studies, subject of the next chapter, mean that there are now dozens of American academics who are focusing their professional lives on Irish history, literature and language. With the widespread acceptance of Irish subjects and an astonishing fashion for Irish poetry and drama, speakers on those subjects find access to forums everywhere.

Chapter 3

THE CURRICULUM:

IRISH STUDIES AS A DAY JOB

FORCED ENTRY FOLLOWED BY WELCOME

Scholars and critics like to define themselves by their "work," meaning their research and publications. From its founding, the ACIS was adept at helping members achieve those goals. The organization's role in assisting and promoting publication is the subject of Chapter 4. Most members, however, excluding a handful of journalists, bureaucrats and persons of independent wealth, earned their daily bread in the classroom, lecturing, leading seminars, reading term papers and grading exams. Such "work" was not always related to Irish scholarship. For the first fifteen years of the ACIS, the vast majority of academic members spent the year teaching something other than Irish materials. Excepted were the people dealing with the high modernists William Butler Yeats and James Joyce, both of whom were securely ensconced in academia before 1960. At best, the ACIS scholar-academic might deal with Irish topics in other contexts, such as the Famine in nineteenth century British history, or nativism or "Rum, Romanism and Rebellion" in nineteenth century American history. The vast proliferation of courses and programs we see in the second decade of the twenty-first century was hardly anticipated, much less planned for. Members had first to experience the phenomenal growth of undergraduate and graduate population 1955-1970, and then the unprecedented social and

intellectual turmoil of 1970-1995, to realize what places could be found for Irish studies in university offerings. Members benefited from the semantic implications of the group's original name, American *Committee . . .* which implied advocacy.

Determined or well-placed individuals might occasionally arrange special sections for themselves, but it took the coordinated efforts of an organization for there to be many courses in Irish history or literature. A single section, or even a dozen, has difficulties in ordering texts. A few isolated courses are frowned upon by accreditation agencies. In public higher education a course has to pass muster with a state agency to be offered for credit. As we considered in Chapter 1, most early Irish studies courses, like those of Joseph Campbell at Fordham or Padraic and Mary Colum at Columbia, were non-credit. Although we cannot be sure which American university Irish studies courses were the first to be offered for credit, despite countless hours of fruitless research, oral tradition suggests two nominees. One is David H. Greene of New York University, a private institution, and co-editor with his colleague Vivian Mercier of *1000 Years of Irish Prose* (1952), who had been English department chair. Approached by mail in 2006-07, shortly before he died, he could not remember in which year his non-credit course was awarded credit. The other likely candidate is the Yeats scholar Russell K. Alspach, co-editor of *The Variorum Edition of the Poetry* (1957). Alspach was also a Brigadier General in the United States Army and on the faculty of the United States Military Academy at West Point, serving many years as department chair. During the frenzied years of World War II, Alspach apparently taught the first Irish literature survey, which would have been concurrent with his groundbreaking study *Irish Poetry from the Invasion to 1798* (1943). From reports of former students, this offering continued through the 1950's. Alspach took no role in the shaping of the ACIS but began delivering papers in the mid-1960's and attended frequently.

As related in Chapter 1, John V. Kelleher began to teach Irish literature at Harvard University in 1960. Federally funded-West Point and well-endowed Harvard are not often cited together, but they are both free of the constraints governing most other institutions of higher learning. Because of his presence in the early ACIS as well as the unique authority of his person, Kelleher's course offerings became the most deeply influential, for history as well as literature, on what other universities would attempt. And, as hardly needs to be said, the professor in proposing Irish studies courses gained rhetorical advantage in arguing that they already existed at Harvard.

For 178 years after cutting ties with Great Britain, American academia remained substantially Anglocentric in 1960. It had not always been so. In the early years of the Republic, the tiny percentage who received a university education were grounded in the Classics, both in language and literature. An educated person would have read Shakespeare and Milton and would know key moments in English history, like the rise of Oliver Cromwell or the Glorious Revolution, but Latin language and Roman history were prime.

That changed in the decade after the Civil War when the new bourgeoisie flooding into American colleges refused to follow the older curriculum, sidelining the Classics. A parallel shift was taking place in British and other European universities at the mid- to late nineteenth century. The study of the national culture lagged behind. American historiography really began with Henry Adams's nine-volume *History of the United States During the Adminstrations of Thomas Jefferson and John Adams,* 1889-91. As for letters, the first chair of American literature was not established until 1917, and then at a Midwestern public university, Wisconsin.

At the founding of the ACIS the displacement of the Classics by "English" was only ninety years old, as was the secondary rank for American history that had been established about forty

years previous, but the arrangement appeared that it had been in place forever and was engraved in granite. In coming decades it would be called “hegemony.” In the 1960 History Department of the University of Chicago, recalled Emmet Larkin in 2006, there were five chairs of English history, each for successive periods. The person charged with the nineteenth century might have occasion to deal with the Great Irish Famine and the rise of regional nationalist movements in the United Kingdom. By the beginning of the twenty-first century these were giving way to chairs of European history, in which industrialization, for example, might be examined in Manchester juxtaposed with that of the Ruhr.

Despite the ACIS’s having been founded by two historians, the numbers of literature people came to dominate the membership in part because more courses in Irish literature came to be offered in colleges and universities. Literature departments were usually larger than those of history or the social sciences in most institutions for the simple reason that most students were required to take such courses as electives, and there were, until recently, more students majoring in literature. The pioneers trying to get Irish courses into literature departments, which were called “English,” of course, were up against what we now refer to as “the canon.”

Professors now in their eighties, and thus teaching 1960-65, said the term “canon” was not commonly used until it was under assault. The “canon” was rarely made specific or nailed to the wall. Whether an instructor chose to include Ben Jonson or Beaumont and Fletcher as the preferred contemporary playwrights of William Shakespeare, was an individual decision. Generally, departments did not order a menu and relied on decisions made by leading textbook firms, of which in 1960 the W. W. Norton Company ranked number one. It was unusual for a department to define a canon, but some did in the late fifties and early sixties when the classics appeared to be under threat from what critic Dwight Macdonald had called “midcult,” lesser

writers of passing interest. From 1960 to 1964 the English Department of Wayne State University nominated the "Ten Major Authors," and to receive a master's degree, students would have to have studied five of them: Geoffrey Chaucer, Edmund Spenser, William Shakespeare, John Milton, Alexander Pope, William Wordsworth, Alfred Lord Tennyson, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Nathaniel Hawthorne, and William Butler Yeats. Wayne State was then a commuter institution serving largely a working-class population, with a faculty noted for left-wing politics, numbering many graduates of City College of New York. The petitioning Irish literature instructor might take heart from the presence of Yeats's name, the only twentieth century figure, but this was a time when Yeats's Irish roots had not been plumbed. The *Norton Anthology* of the time glossed the monarch in Yeats's "Madness of King Goll" unhelpfully as an eighth century Ulster ruler, whereas he is seen today as akin to Suibne Geilt, "Mad Sweeney," a creature of early Irish literature.

The widespread efforts to forge Irish course offerings, not all by ACIS members, rode on three waves of change that washed over the academy. They overlapped and were not coordinated. First came the vast expansion in enrollment and staff hirings that followed the opening of higher education to previously excluded but mostly white groups, from 1950 through 1975. The entry into freshman classes of the first baby boom students in 1964 drove those numbers steeply higher. The courses that began in this impulse were responding to student demand and appear to add to the canon rather than to challenge it.

Such pioneers did not see themselves as history-makers, but, as an example, Robert E. Rhodes began to offer Irish literature at SUNY's Cortland State in 1963. The ACIS offered the only means of coordinating such efforts. From 1965 the *Newsletter* carried an offer to send a

mimeographed bibliography of materials John Messenger was assembling for a course on Irish folk life at Indiana University's Folklore Institute.

There were, however, limits to growth considered by itself. The steady post-war expansion of student numbers, construction of facilities and burgeoning of graduates underwent a brutal adjustment at the end of the 1960's. It was known at the time as the "job crash of 1970." Young scholars seeking employment opportunities at the 1970 meetings of the Modern Language Association were massively disappointed. From 1947 until that time humanities graduates, even from less than distinguished institutions, could expect a host of offers. People at the time might have spoken with blithe cynicism about the Ph. D. as a "union card," but most people shrugged off that the training of graduate students in complexities that had little value in the commercial world, would be subject to the same laws of economics as were other activities. Not until 2009 did Louis Menand study the pertinent data to conclude that the parallel expansion of undergraduate and graduate programs in the 1950's and 1960's was a huge and cruel mistake. Graduate programs were oversupplying the staffing needs of undergraduate programs. The vertiginous expectations of history and literature graduate occurred only between 1947 and 1970, and would not be repeated. Among determined speakers at ACIS meetings, this meant an increase in the number of persons describing themselves as "Independent Scholar," or unaffiliated with even the humblest institution.

The second wave, c. 1968-1985, was driven by sociological and political grievance, highlighted by the angry take-over of academic buildings in the late sixties and the demand for black and Latino studies departments. This came to be known as "identity politics" and would eventually include women and homosexuals. A handful of courses on Afro-American literature had appeared piecemeal before this time, just as some had for Irish literature. There were, from

the beginning, ironic links to Irish tradition; the man teaching Afro-American literature at Harvard in 1969 was Roger Rosenblatt, who had done his dissertation on J. M. Synge's friend Stephen MacKenna, and whose flattering comments on his teacher John V. Kelleher are quoted in Chapter 1. Although the movement to form study centers for minority ethnic groups, paralleled by action for women's studies developing concurrently, assaulted the dominance of culture deriving from "dead white males," it was not a frontal attack on the canon, or, not just yet. Instead, minority ethnic studies sought separation from "English" and white history and asked implicitly to be regarded as equivalent in training an educated, humane person.

The result of these actions had a surprisingly favorable influence on the advancement of Irish studies. Had not the Irish also been excluded, derided and defamed? Despised equally with blacks and Jews by nativists and Ku Kluxers? Federal funding for research in minority ethnic history and literature often favored Irish proposals. The granting of recognition for a wide selection of related ethnic courses made the argument for Irish all that easier. Programs at private universities, especially Catholic-related ones with large numbers of Irish-American students, such as Boston College and the University of Notre Dame, hardly needed blacks and Hispanics to lead the way. But some of the largest early Irish programs were in secular, public-funded institutions such as the University of Massachusetts-Amherst, Queens College of the City University of New York and the University of Delaware. In each instance programs were led by local faculty members, who were also ACIS members, such as Maria Tymoczko (Massachusetts), Kevin Sullivan and Maureen Waters (Queens), and Robert Hogan and Zack Bowen (Delaware), and could appear by the mid-1970's, something unthinkable in 1955 or even 1965.

Cynical and unfriendly colleagues sometimes charged that Irish studies piggybacked on black and Hispanic studies, building on the demand generated by students from those groups,

unaware that ACIS had been twelve and fifteen years a-growing. In contrast, scholarly organizations for the minority ethnic groups, counterparts of ACIS, did not get rolling for twenty years after the courses were initiated. For some reason the National Associations of African-American Studies (NAAAS), Native American Studies (NANAS), Hispanic and Latino Studies (NAHALS), and the Puerto Rican Studies Association (PRSA) were all launched in 1992.

Two and a half decades later the political perception of Irish historical trauma led to the states of New York and New Jersey commissioning the Great Irish Famine Curriculum. Former ACIS president Maureen O'Rourke Murphy undertook the writing of this 1080-page document through which high school students would be instructed in the horrors of what would be titled the Great Irish Famine, 1845-52. These would be seen as comparable to the Holocaust of European Jewry in World War II and the trans-Atlantic slave trade. Rather than complain merely of ethnic grievance, Murphy wrote the curriculum to see the catastrophe as a study model for hunger and homelessness. The explication of larger themes led to the Curriculum's winning the National Council of the Social Studies Prize.

The notion that Irish studies represented an escape or alternative from British imperium or American cultural hegemony generated some scoffing, even from within our own ranks. Spurgeon Thompson, then a student of Seamus Deane's at Notre Dame, penned a scathing diatribe titled "Scrambling for the Genuine: Irish Studies in America" in the non-traditional UK journal *Irish Studies Review,* which was widely distributed during the high spirits of the ACIS Belfast meeting in June, 1995. In it he lambasted the new American courses and the ACIS in particular as "last refuge for white males." Less inflammatory, Diane Negra, the American scholar of popular culture now at University College Dublin, wrote in 2006: "Irishness now operates as a reassuring, benign form of whiteness, offering white subjects the opportunity to

lay claim to a history of colonial and racial oppression, while retaining the privileges of whiteness."

The third wave originated in the French academy and meshed philosophy with politics to promote literary theory. Intimations of the new thinking emerged in the 1960's, rose to prominence in the 1970's, peaked in the early 1990's and, given the protection of tenure, are still with us. The movement goes under many names and will be familiar to anyone in American academia of the last three decades: structuralism, post-structuralism and deconstruction, all of which can be grouped under the umbrella term post-modernism (or "pomo' to detractors). There were perhaps five hundred theorists and at least one hundred influential books, mostly by French authors with some by

Americans and others. Often cited titles would include Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology* (1967); Michel Foucault, *This is not a Pipe* (1968) and *The Order of Things* (1970); Roland Barthes, the essay "The Death of an Author" (1968) and *S/Z* (1974); Ihab Hassan, *The Dismemberment of Orpheus* (1971); Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition* (1979); and Julia Kristeva, *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art* (1981). The postmodernists were often faulted for their dense rhetoric, and their fondness for jargon was easily derided. Nonetheless, their effect was electric and revolutionary, offering the critic the opportunity to find expressions the casual reader had not seen and that the author might well disclaim. Some of their language has become standard, such as "discourse," "text," "valorize," and "privilege" as a verb. The Arnoldian definitions of "classic" or "masterpiece" were banished, and those terms were replaced by the less laudatory "privileged text." Pierre Bourdieu argued in *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste* (1984) that what had traditionally been described by society as beautiful, exquisite or even charming represented the views mostly of

the privileged and exploiting groups. Jacques Derrida believed that it was both philosophically wrong and politically retrogressive to attempt to determine the meaning of a text, or any semiotic system, to particular ends. In such a mindset there is no agreement about what is worth believing or even knowing anymore.

To such minds the canon, or what remained of it, was a Bastille to be breached. The very term "canon" was semantically loaded, drawing as it does on Biblical history. The original canon was what ecclesiastical authorities felt was bona fide, like the Four Gospels, and the non-canonical was the apocrypha or the Gnostic *Gospel of Thomas.* And it was true that although W. B. Yeats, James Joyce and Samuel Beckett had written what became privileged texts, and a few others like Thomas Moore and George Darley were listed with the Romantic poets, most other Irish writers in English were completely neglected. Writers in the Irish language, such as a major figure like novelist Máirtín Ó Cadhain of *Cré na Cille* (1948), might as well as have written in Latvian or Estonian by the standards of most educated Americans.

The result was a great boon for courses in Irish studies, especially Irish literature. If students were no longer required to deal with demanding texts like *The Faerie Queen, Paradise Lost* and *The Prelude,* a department's schedule was open for what might attract enrollees. Some literature departments became in effect free markets, somewhat paradoxical when one consider the Marxist roots of many postmodernists and the persistence of some Marxist language, like "commodification." Thus we find the greatest proliferation of courses with the prefix "Irish" comes after 1985 and continues, despite an overall decline in the numbers of students enrolled in humanities courses. Why this should have happened, that the Irish in America had gone from being an excluded and derived group to a celebrated and fashionable, is too complex to be discussed in this space. This unanticipated shift in attitude was taking place in

the wide culture as well as in academia. Consider some sequences in Nora Ephron's film *You've Got Mail* (1998), itself a distant adaptation of the Hungarian play *Parfumerie* by Nikolaus Laszlo. When the rival bookstore owners Tom Hanks and Meg Ryan meet at a fashionable literary party, the camera illustrates the chic of the hosts by focusing on a framed eighteenth century map of Ireland.

MODELS AND TEMPLATES

As Irish studies began to appear, first a trickle, later a flood, there was some question about what should be included and emphasized. Instructors' choices were limited by what texts were available. Import dealers, such as Irish Books and Media of the Twin Cities, run by Ethna McKiernan, daughter of Irish American Cultural Institute, founder Eoin McKiernan, were extremely helpful. Her work, as with all such dealers, was often made harrowing by fluctuating currency rates and irregular publishing schedules in Ireland, not to mention unpredictable deliveries. Within both literature and history courses, there was not a decades-old tradition to be inherited, and, other than W. B. Yeats and James Joyce, no nascent canon. Networking among ACIS members was invaluable. Robert E. Rhodes of Cortland State recalls Adele Dalsimer writing him to ask for his course outline at the launch of the Boston College program. Needs like these made ACIS cocktail parties and coffee klatsches often more valuable than the presentations heard.

The model for what could be accomplished came from Ireland, but not initially the twin citadels of Hibernian learning, Trinity College Dublin and University College Dublin. It is widely thought in Ireland that "Irish studies" is an American invention, a question discussed in Chapters 1 and 2. When offerings about Ireland were meager in American institutions, the Yanks felt they had to go to Ireland to pursuer Irish interests. Thus we have the summer schools, which have

numbered more than a dozen, designed for foreign students, most of them from North America. The oldest and most prestigious, the Yeats Summer School in Sligo, was founded in 1959, predating the launch of ACIS. The Merriman Summer School (Cumann Merriman) of County Clare was established in 1967. Named for eighteenth century Irish-language poet Brian Merriman (Brian Mac Giolla Meidhre), summer study here tended to subjects never raised in Sligo. The Synge Summer School in County Wicklow, founded 1991, had the advantages of dynamic critic Nicholas Grene as well as proximity to Dublin.

More influential than any of these was the School for Irish Studies established in the late 1960's and running more than two decades. Like the summer schools, the School for Irish Studies was designed for foreigners and accredited so that completed coursework could be transferred to institutions, filed through the University of Maine. On the Advisory Committee were many Americans, some of whom also taught there, including ACIS founders Lawrence McCaffrey, John Kelleher and David H. Greene. Leeds-based A. Norman Jeffares of IASAIL also advised, as well as did several leading Irish academics, David Greene (the "other David Greene") of the Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, literature professors Roger McHugh and Maurice Harmon (a frequent guest at ACIS meetings) of University College Dublin, and historian Kevin B. Nowlan of University College Dublin. The founding dean was Australian-born architect Michael Scott, husband of novelist and short-story writer Mary Lavin. There was nothing upstart about the place. It enjoyed the equivalent of an imprimatur from the leading names in their fields.

For most ACIS members Sean J. White was the public face of the School for Irish Studies, as he often appeared at national meetings, a goodwill ambassador and recruiter. Well-connected around Dublin, he had once been Eamon de Valera's personal assistant. He became a familiar and popular figure with the reputation of often being a man ready to buy the first

round. White became dean in the late 1970's and was instrumental in having the first ACIS meeting in Ireland, Dublin, 1987. He co-hosted at the ornate and stylish Thomas Prior House, a former Masonic Lodge, in Ballsbridge, in Dublin 4.

The School for Irish Studies was an astonishing bargain. A seven-week summer session, complete with air fare from New York, all tuition and field trips with accommodation in a family residence was $960 in 1970 and 1971. Fall and spring semesters were $1575 each.

Summer offerings were wider than those of fall and winter, with courses in literature, still called "English," outnumbering those in history, as was becoming the pattern at ACIS meetings. In 1971 the literature was all modern and in the English language, a survey from 1890 to 1960, a focused study of major author, James Joyce alternating with W. B. Yeats. That summer Thomas Flanagan of the University of California at Berkeley offered two more independent studies, a 200-level exploration of themes in modern Irish literature, and a 300 level tutorial focus in a single subject. As for history, there was only one course on modern Ireland, titled "Revolutionary Ireland, 1798 to the Present" with another on Celtic Ireland and Early Christian Civilization, team taught by archaeologist Michael Herity and historian Deirdre Flanagan. The third history course was a tutorial. The final course went under an anthropology listing, Seán Ó Súilleabháin's Irish Folk Studies, dealing with both the Cúchulainn and Fionn cycles.

Added during the full year were a sequence of two courses in the Irish language, Introductory (fall) and Intermediate (spring), and a course of the two Irelands of the eighteenth century.

Seen from forty years later, some subjects are conspicuous by their absence. Nothing on the difficulties in Ulster; the Potato Famine; any history between 1170 and 1700; attention to

genres in which the Irish show special strength, such as the short story or drama; any art other than literature; social questions such as poverty; political science and the roles of leading political parties; immigration; the overseas Irish; the Roman Catholic Church; popular culture; Ireland's international role; and, perhaps impossible to ask for in 1971, women. Nonetheless, because the School for Irish Studies preceded all the American academic programs, and because of the high esteem enjoyed by its faculty members, the curriculum choices made there became a kind of canon for what would follow. Additionally, many of the people who would argue for Irish programs in the United States had studied there.

Concurrent with the first flourishing of the School for Irish Studies, an alternative approach was developing in one of the most unlikely American states, Kansas. The first issue of the new series, numbered *Newsletter,* Vol., no. 1 (October, 1970), carried an announcement for a team-taught upper-division, undergraduate course, "Irish History and Culture," to commence in fall, 1971. Nine professors would lecture in two-hour sessions to run fifteen weeks. Kansas, needless to say, has a barely perceptible Irish-descended population, and so we cannot assume this course resulted from student demand. As was often the case, "Irish History and Culture" came about from the assertiveness of a single, determined individual. Harold Orel was widely-published in many areas, with three books on Thomas Hardy, and also on W. B. Yeats. He was a past president of ACIS and had hosted the annual meeting in Lawrence in 1966. The University library enjoyed three large Irish collections, on W. B. Yeats, James Joyce and 25,000 items from nationalist historian P. S. O'Hegarty (1879-1955).

The faculty members Orel assembled were not Irish specialists nor ACIS members. They included: Kenneth Kammeyer (Sociology), Marilyn Stokstad (Art History), Henry Snyder (History), Norman Yetman (American Studies), Robert J. Smith (Anthropology), and Orel himself. We

cannot know what all was said in class, but their cumulative efforts led to a sixteen-essay volume titled *Irish History and Culture* in 1976. Their approach seemed to answer questions a neophyte American might ask of any nation's culture. Significantly, one of the contributors, Prof. Yetman, came from American studies which had flourished since World War II and embraced an inter-disciplinary approach.

Only five of the essays in *Irish History and Culture* concur with the offerings of the School for Irish Studies: a) "Irish History from the Beginning to the End of the Middle Ages"; b) "From the Act of Union to the Fall of Parnell"; c) "From the Fall of Parnell to Modern Ireland"; d) "The Irishry of William Butler Yeats"; and e) "Two Attitudes of James Joyce." In striking contrast, the Orel volume offers three essays on the visual arts, no doubt prompted by the presence of art historian Marilyn Stokstad on the team. The two sequential essays, "The Art of Prehistoric and Early Christian Ireland" and "Medieval Art" presciently anticipate what would be a boom of interest inaugurated in 1978 when *The Book of Kells* was displayed prominently in leading art museums of Boston, New York and other cities. Popular opinion led the academic. Whereas early ecclesiastical art such the *Book of Kells* and *Durrow* were unknown to educated Americans in 1962, motifs became not only common but demotic, favored in jewelry, tattoos and skateboards. A third essay, "The Arts in Twentieth Century Ireland," giving most attention to the father and son painters, John Butler Yeats and Jack B. Yeats, failed to blaze a trail others would follow. Despite occasional admiring papers at ACIS forums on Sir John Lavery, Sir William Orpen, Paul Henry, stained-glass artist Evie Hone, etc., the visual arts have not been looked upon as some of modern Ireland's striking assets, and courses in recent Irish art history have never numbered more than ten.

The first essay in Orel's collection, "Irish Mythology," taps into what would become a growing fascination among American students. Although championed by the Irish Renaissance generation, Lady Gregory, W.B. Yeats, J. M. Synge and James Joyce, especially in *Finnegans Wake,* heroic narratives from early Irish literature enjoyed a literary prestige but were not usually classed as "mythology" until after 1960. Quite apart from mysteries of early Irish tradition, how much was pagan survival, how much came from the modifications of Christian ecclesiastical scribes, the narratives could be studied side-by-side with the Classical. Diarmait, lover of Gráinne, bears a striking resemblance to Adonis; Cúchulainn's parallels with Heracles are accessible to an undergraduate. Non-academic obsessions of students, like New Age religion, neo-druidism and gaming such as Dungeons and Dragons, as most instructors would be loath to admit, made many names familiar before instruction began.

Orel's author of the "Irish Mythology," Robert Jerome Smith, also contributed one on "Festivals and Calendar Customs." The subject is not deep enough to sustain fifteen weeks of study in a college course. Once again, however, Orel and company anticipate American interest. In 1962 few educated Americans knew anything of Halloween's origins in pre-Christian Ireland, but by 2012 a high percentage would recognize the term *samhain*, regardless of their ability to pronounce it.

Early Irish art is sometimes called "Celtic," blurring the distinction between it and related artifacts found at Continental sites like Hallstatt in Austria and La Tène in Francophone Switzerland. Similarly, an examination of the narratives of what is called "Celtic Mythology" reveals that as much as 70% is from Irish language sources. Part of that may derive from the habit of calling pre-1170 Ireland "Celtic Ireland." The word "Celtic" unquestionably has an unearned glamour that "Irish" does not quite match. When the Irish language is discussed, it is

quite readily considered with its fellow Celtic languages Scottish Gaelic and Welsh. Those languages were occasionally taught in large Irish studies programs in 2012. In the early decades of the rise of Irish studies, there was a kind of ecumenical sentiment to embrace all Celtic traditions along with Irish, as in the giant "Celtic Consciousness" conference in Toronto, February, 1978, led by the ill-fated Robert O'Driscoll (see Chapter 2). It persists at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee which supports a "Center for Celtic Studies" in 2012. Perhaps because the social and political histories of Ireland, Wales, Scotland, Brittany, Cornwall and the Isle of Man were so different, that vision faded over the decades. The North American Association for the Study of Welsh Culture and History was established in 1995, with a journal to follow in 2001.

In two more essays, Orel anticipated accurately what American students wanted to learn from an Irish studies program. One was Orel's own essay on Irish theater, "A Drama for the Nation." At the time of the Kansas program in 1971, drama from the Irish Renaissance already enjoyed much canon-like prestige. J. M. Synge's *Riders to the Sea* was "the only one-act tragedy in the language," and *Playboy of the Western World* was commonly included in freshman drama anthologies. With the acclaimed arrival of Brian Friel's *Philadelphia, Here I Come!* in 1966, American audiences would see new Irish stage plays every season, often many more, two of which won Tony Awards. Courses in Irish drama soon had lives of their own, often independent of other literature courses, sustaining the sales of two text anthologies, Cóilín Owens and Joan Radnor's *Irish Drama, 1900-1980* (1990) and John P. Harrington's *Modern Irish Drama* (1991), from the canon-fostering W. W. Norton & Company. Later in 2013, Eileen Kearney and Charlotte Headrick will follow with a text anthology of Irish women dramatists.

For the final essay in the *Irish History and Culture* collection Orel asked his American studies man, Norman R. Yetman, to deliver "The Irish Experience in America." As we shall see in

Chapter 5, the ACIS would take a leading role in uncovering both the history and literature of Irish-Americans.

Four other essays pointed to directions largely ignored by American programs. Two were history surveys, “From the Accession of the Tudors to the Treaty of Limerick,” i.e. sixteenth and seventeenth century Ireland, and “From the Treaty of Limerick to the Act of Union with Great Britain,” i.e. eighteenth century Ireland. Although those centuries deal with some of the most resonant names in Irish history, the Great Hugh O’Neill and Patrick Sarsfield, such men have not been of substantial interest to American students. So also the essay, “Antiquarianism and Architecture in Eighteenth Century Ireland.” Georgian Dublin fascinated W. E. H. Lecky and many sophisticated contemporary Irish people, but it has been a hard sell in American colleges. Finally, Orel also commissioned an essay on “The Dynamics of Population,” recognizing that Ireland is unique among nations in having a smaller number of citizens today than it did in 1840. Demographics, however, would not find a place in the curriculum,

Irish History and Culture was widely circulated and well-reviewed, but its influence is impossible to measure. Instead, Harold Orel, an ACIS president, was addressing the questions of what American students wanted to seek out. A course at Kansas titled “Study of a Culture: Ireland, HWC 530,” is still listed in the catalogue. One of Orel’s most important students was Mary Helen Thuente, ACIS president 1991-93, and a highly visible member over four decades. Irish offerings at the University of Kansas remain vigorous. The current Irish specialist there is Kathryn (“Katie”) Conrad, known for her *Locked in the Family Cell* (2004), a study of gender and sexuality in contemporary Ireland, subjects not dreamed of in 1976.

IRISH COURSE OFFERINGS, USA

Despite our living in the Google.com age, when we expect to summon up any item of arcana instantly, we can not be sure we know of every single course that might fit under the aegis of Irish studies. It has been the charge of the ACIS to give us the best information that can be assembled. Maureen O'Rourke Murphy compiled the first *Guide to Irish Studies* in 1978, a 48-page booklet that required six supplemental updates in the *Newsletter.* Successive editions were in 1982, 1987, and in 1995, by which time she had reached 85 pages. Adapting to the electronic age, James E. Doan of Nova Southeastern University began attaching the *Guide* to the organization's web site, www.acisweb.com in the year 2000. Kathryn Conrad of Kansas and Matthew Jockers of Stanford have updated it. In addition, eleven institutions have separately attached information to the site. They are: Boston College, Bucknell University, University of California-Berkeley, Glucksman Ireland House of New York University, University of Massachusetts-Boston, Northern Illinois University, University of Notre Dame, University of St. Thomas of Houston, St. Thomas University of St. Paul, Southern Illinois University, and University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. Information about Irish studies at Catholic University of America is also attached, although that program collapsed late in the first decade of the twenty-first century.

By 1995 Irish studies courses could be found in forty-six states, including ones with nearly invisible Hibernian populations, like Hawaii and Wyoming, as well as the District of Columbia. The greatest concentration, as might be expected, is in Massachusetts followed by New York. Murphy then estimated the total number of institutions with Irish presence at more than 450. Colleges and universities of every status participate. The early lead of Harvard in offering both Celtic languages and Irish cultural instruction has encouraged others of the most renowned schools to follow: Yale, Brown, Columbia, Princeton, Pennsylvania, Chicago, and Stanford. Yet one of the first multi-course offerings, 1975, including two semesters of the Irish language, came from Rockland Community College in Suffern, New York. Where interest in

things Irish might become manifest often defied the conventional wisdom. Brandeis University of Waltham, Massachusetts, one of the few dominantly Jewish institutions in the United States, offers a course in Modern Irish Literature.

From the beginnings in the 1970's, literature classes were offered more often than those in all other disciplines combined. In her 1978 survey Maureen Murphy counted Irish literature being offered at 228 schools, of which 78 were courses devoted to James Joyce. History ranked second with 104, or less than half of those offering literature. After that social sciences courses dealing with Ireland 16; Irish folklore 14. Instruction in the Irish language was offered by 28, although not always through formal course work. Fifty colleges and universities sponsored study tours to Ireland. This meant that more than half the U.S. students studying Irish literature had to rely on their own resources to see it in an historical and cultural context. Further, fewer than 10% had the opportunity to hear the cadences of spoken Irish against poetry and prose written in English by Irish writers. With some variations, plus the addition of new courses in gender studies, music and popular culture, something like this would remain the picture until the present. The anomaly caused Irish journalist and critic Desmond Fennell to remark in 1995 that what was called "Irish studies" in the United States and at ACIS conferences in particular, was the scrutiny of contemporary literature written in English by Irish writers, but not markedly different from what the student would undertake in an English or American literature class. Perhaps a reading of "Ivy Day in the Committee Room" might invite a student to inquire how Charles Stewart Parnell could use the Irish Parliamentary Party to wield such power in Westminster.

There was no single narrative on how an Irish studies program might be initiated. The special case of Harvard University was already considered in Chapter 1: first the study of Old

Irish among highly select graduate students; second the generosity of an enlightened benefactor, Henry Lee Shattuck; and third the strong advocacy of an Irish scholar on the scene, John V. Kelleher. Bequests from benefactors would be few: the Ancient Order of Hibernians in endowing a chair in the Irish language at Catholic University in 1896, and the special cases of Loretta Brennan Glucksman at New York University and Donald Keough at Notre Dame. Irish studies at the University of Saint Thomas in Minnesota began in tandem with the Irish American Cultural Institute (see Chapter 2), supported by the Butler family, among many; when the IACI decamped for New Jersey in 1995, the O'Shaughnessy Foundation stepped in to help fund the Center for Irish Studies, which publishes the quarterly *New Hibernia Review.* Even with an endowment, a program can be jeopardized by the lack of a local advocate. The dual departures of the husband and wife team of Robert Mahony and Christina Hunt Mahony from Catholic University after 2006 meant the virtual collapse of offerings, temporarily extended by adjunct instructors. Many more universities followed the examples of Robert Rhodes and Gilbert Cahill at Cortland State, John Messenger at Indiana, and Harold Orel at Kansas: personal initiative. Nearly all that initiative was supplied by ACIS members, with student demand, unlike the case of black and Puerto Rican studies, playing a lesser role. Of course, personal initiative can be more successful where there is a substantial number of Irish-American students, as at Boston College and Notre Dame, or Queens College of the City University of New York.

In her first *Guide to Irish Studies* (1978), Maureen Murphy counted seventeen multi-course programs. At this early time a "program" did not necessarily have sufficient concentration to support a minor for a liberal arts baccalaureate or an actual degree; that would come later. Instead, "program" at that time meant an association of courses from different discplines. The richest offerings by far came from the University of Massachusetts, linked with four other colleges in Amherst: Amherst, Hampshire. Mount Holyoke and Smith. Maria

Tymoczko, an Old Irish specialist and active ACIS member, was the key faculty member. While there was no formal undergraduate degree in Irish studies, students could chose to elect the BDIC, Bachelor's Degree with Individual Concentration, selecting their courses. Along with the core of modern history and literature, emphasis on W. B. Yeats and James Joyce, early Irish history, Irish language and Irish folklore that the School for Irish Studies had recommended, students had some exotic choices. They included: Old Irish Language, Supernatural Phenomena and Adventures in the Otherworld in Early Irish Literature, Medieval Iconography, The Celtic Basis for Medieval Romance, Arthurian Literature, Jonathan Swift, The Art of Lying (Wilde and Beckett), The Matter of Britain (1979-80), The Patriot Game (Irish Drama and Politics), plus two other courses on Irish drama, and the Scottish Literary Tradition. Given the abundant human resources, private instruction was also available on: Hiberno-Northumbrian art, Irish calligraphy, Irish geography, Irish bibliography, William Congreve & Oliver Goldsmith, Thomas Moore, George Bernard Shaw, Sean O'Casey, the oral history of Northern Ireland, Irish-American culture, and the Manx language. Additionally, the Five-College program maintained an exchange plan with University College Cork.

After Harvard, Kansas and Massachusetts, Maureen Murphy in 1978 cited fourteen other programs, all but two led by ACIS members of different degrees of affiliation: University of Delaware (Zack Bowen, Robert Hogan, Bonnie Kime Scott), DePaul University (William Feeney), Loyola University of Chicago (Lawrence McCaffrey), University of Notre Dame (Sean V. Golden), Boston College (Adele Dalsimer), Stonehill College (Frank Phelan), University of Michigan (Leo McNamara), College of St Thomas in St. Paul (Thomas Dillon Redshaw). City University of New York: Queens College (Kevin Sullivan), State University of New York at Oneonta (Daniel J. Casey), Rockland Community College (William Leyden), University of Tulsa (Thomas J. Staley), University

of Vermont (Sidney Poger, Anthony Bradley), and the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (Gareth W. Dunleavy, Janet E. Dunleavy and Florence Walzl.

Although there was nearly a four-fold increase in course offerings in the seventeen years from the first edition of Murphy's *Guide* to the fourth (1995), there was some backsliding. The program at SUNY-Oneonta disappeared when Daniel J. Casey left, and those at DePaul and Rockland Community College shrank drastically with the departures of Professors Feeney and Leyden. Not only did the programs need advocates, but department chairs learned trained professionals could be in limited supply. Almost any English literature professor could teach the Victorian novel, just as almost any American literature specialist could handle the Transcendentalists, but few colleagues could take up the slack if the Irish specialist left. It was the same with history. Few British history professors could take over a course on 1798, the Famine, or 1916 on short notice, regardless of student demand.

Even considering the popularity of the modern literature in English survey and James Joyce, there is no such thing as a generic Irish program. Just as assertive individuals argue new courses through curriculum committees, deans, and sometimes state evaluators, so too those same individuals shape the direction of the program.

At the two most prominent branches of the University of California, Berkeley and UCLA, the Celtic languages predominate. At UCLA an M.A. or Ph. D. student in Folklore and Mythology may concentrate on Celtic as an area interest. Among the six courses listed are Old Irish, and Topics in Medieval Celtic Literature. Courses for undergraduates include Celtic Mythology, Celtic Folklore and Celtic Literature in translation. At Berkeley Celtic Studies stands independently in the College of Letters and Science. All six course offerings are for graduate credit, but

undergraduates may also enroll in Old & Middle Irish Literature in Translation and the W. B. Yeats Seminar.

Contrasting with these are the offerings at the main campus of Southern Illinois University at Carbondale. Although remote from Irish populations of the Chicago area, SIU was an early citadel of Irish studies, established by the presence of poet Thomas Kinsella on the faculty, who hosted the 1970 ACIS convention. More recently the dominant Irish presence was Charles Fanning, the man who invented Irish-American literature (see Chapter 5). Under Fanning's leadership the program assumed the name, "Irish and Irish Immigration Studies." Among the seventeen courses are many of those familiar from the School for Irish Studies model: early Irish culture, the Yeats seminar, Irish Renaissance figures, etc. More distinctive is the undergraduate survey, Literature of Immigration, and two graduate selections, Studies in Irish Immigration and Topics in Irish Diaspora Literature. And while the study of the works of Seamus Heaney was widespread by the year 2000, at Southern Illinois the graduate seminar on Heaney is coupled with the poetry of Derek Walcott, the West Indian Nobel Laureate.

As Irish studies offerings expanded to include music, dance, popular culture, women's issues, gender and sexuality issues, one surprising lack has been the instruction of religion and faith at the center of Irish identity. The great work of ACIS co-founder Emmet Larkin was his history of the Catholic Church in Ireland, and his co-founder Lawrence McCaffrey always argued for the importance of Catholicism in Irish immigration. Most church-related Irish studies programs, like Boston College and Notre Dame, ignore the issue, as did the program at Catholic University of America. Fordham offers a seminar on the American Catholic writers Thomas Merton and Flannery O'Connor, but they are not so identified in the course's title. One of the

few exceptions is the fairly new program at the University of Saint Thomas in Houston. Course offerings there include Celtic Spirituality and American Catholic Heritage.

The other surprising trend has been the increasing popularity of Irish language instruction. Required proficiency in Irish for civil service jobs, even those not requiring use of the language, engendered a resentment that dissipated when the rule was rescinded in 1974. The Irish language requirement in elementary and high schools, however, remains popular. Anyone with as much as an hour's instruction knows how much more formidable a task learning Irish is over the standard undergraduate electives: French, Spanish, German, Italian, and even Latin. For starters the student faces inflection of the beginnings of words, broad and slender consonants, and "unpronounceables" like the fricatives *ch* and *gh.* This says nothing about the language's marginal commercial utility. The School for Irish Studies offered Irish language instruction only for students spending the year, and Kansas's Harold Orel did not discuss the subject. In the early decades of the ACIS a handful of heroic Modern Irish language teachers reached hundreds of students, often at different venues. The two best known were James Blake/Séamus de Bláca, with a home base at Nassau Community College and Fordham University's WRFU-FM, and the late Ken Nilsen, based at Harvard University, but found all over Massachusetts in colleges large and small before his departure for Nova Scotia in 1984. Cóilín Owens taught Irish at many locations in the Washington, DC, such as Catholic University, while holding a full-time position in the English Department at George Mason University. He also produced recordings to aid self-instruction, 1975, 1989, 1994.

Attitudes began to change both in Ireland and in North America in the 1990s, at a time when enrollment in major national European languages was in decline. Commentators in Ireland credit Irish-language television, *Teilifís na Gaeilge* (TnaG), founded in 1996 and rebranded as

TG4 (pronounced “Tee-Gee Ceathair) in 1999, and more influence might be due the stage show *Riverdance* (1995) than instructors would care to admit. The rise in popularity, however, predates both those events. When former Coca Cola president Donald Keough helped to establish the Keough Institute for Irish Studies in 1993, greatly increasing the offerings of the previous twenty years, the bequest encouraged students to examine everything Irish, not just history but also dance and the Irish language. Kerry-born Brian Ó Conchubhair proved to be such a winning instructor that he and his colleagues enrolled 419 students in 2006, a five-fold increase from 2003. Ó Conchubhair has reported that 40% of his students do not claim Irish ancestry. The language study has also flourished in regions where Irish influence is scarce, such as Greenville Technical College in South Carolina, and the Haskell Indian Nations University in Kansas. Ó Conchubhair’s counterpart on the east coast, Thomas Ihde began ambitious and successful instruction in Irish from a base at City University’s Lehman College. Ihde also hosted the ACIS annual conference in April, 2007. At CUNY more than half the students are of Latin-American background, with Rivera the most common surname, and a substantial number are African American. Ihde’s work, which has included non-credit instruction for children, plus the presence of Old Irish specialist Catherine McKenna at the Graduate Center, moved the focus of Irish studies in City University of New York from Queens to Manhattan. McKenna later became chair of Celtic Studies at Harvard.

An even more visible presence in Manhattan is Glucksman Ireland House of New York University, founded in 1993. Lewis L. Glucksman (1925-2006) was a prominent financier and graduate of New York University, where one of the first Irish literature classes may have been offered by David H. Greene before 1960. Glucksman married the former Loretta Brennan, once a nurse from Allentown, Pennsylvania, who persuaded her husband to share her passion for things Irish. He became a major benefactor for the University of Limerick. Ireland House

sponsors weekly events for the general public, often with name presenters, but recreating some of the Chautauqua-like sessions envisioned by Eoin McKiernan of the Irish American Cultural Institute (see Chapter 2), only held in the one place. Among the thirty credit course offerings from Glucksman Ireland House are four semesters of Irish Language, Celtic Music, Oral History of Irish America, Cinematic Expressions of Irish Americans, and such exotica undreamed of in 1975 as Magical Realism: Ireland and the Postcolonial World, which links novelist Colum McCann with Colombian Nobelist Gabriel García Márquez.

Course offerings from some of the biggest programs, such as at Boston College, imply that Irish studies is in no danger of being constricted by the straightjacket of canonical dogma as English was before 1960. Course offerings now include Ireland and the French Revolution, Irish Women Emigrants, Cailleach Bhéarra and Her Manifestations, Introduction to Irish Folk Music, Traditional Irish Fiddle, Irish Dancing and Tin Whistle.

Across town at the University of Massachusetts-Boston students may undertake study in Aliens and Anglo-Saxons: the Immigrant in American Society, 1880-1924; the History of Boston; Charlestown: the Historical Study of an Old Neighborhood; and the Kennedys of Boston.

By the 1990's Irish studies strode on very sturdy legs. The national ACIS meeting could expect to be flooded with scholars clamoring to speak, as could each of the five regional meetings. The success of Irish studies programs, large and small, means that people prepared to write and talk about the historical Fenians, the Fianna Fáil party or the legendary Fianna, were now widespread in the land, well-connected by the Internet. Additionally, as courses in Irish studies have been proven to be attractive electives, and from other forces difficult to measure, the stage plays of Brian Friel and Martin McDonagh, the films of Neil Jordan, rockers U2 and Sinéad O'Connor, the Chieftains, or Seamus Heaney's winning the Nobel Prize, things Irish were

especially appealing to undergraduates. An academic or cultural event prefixed "Irish" could enjoy a luster Larry McCaffrey and Emmet Larkin never anticipated in 1961-62. Touring Irish literary or political stars, like Roddy Doyle, Gerry Adams, Colm Tóibín, Paul Muldoon, Evan Boland, Declan Kiberd, or the late Nuala O'Faolain, could draw numbers anywhere, not just on campuses with large Irish studies programs. Other agencies became interested in celebrating Irish culture, people with very tenuous or no ties at all to the ACIS. In May, 1996, the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities sponsored a well-funded, week-long celebration of Irish Cinema in Charlottesville. Twenty Irish film directors, minus Neil Jordan, attended, along with culture minister, now president of Ireland, Michael D. Higgins. Sponsors sought out the ACIS mailing list and invited the then-president, your present author, to participate. The high attendance numbers in Charlottesville negatively affected the annual ACIS meeting in Carbondale, Illinois, three weeks previously. Seven years later the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities sponsored an even bigger meeting titled *Reimagining Ireland,* with more than forty leaders of Irish political and intellectual life, topped by President Mary McAleese. No ACIS participation was invited, but many members attended.

In the first decade of the new century, it was clear that the advocacy implied in the ACIS's first title, American *Committee . . .*, had been fulfilled. Not only was there no longer any need to be defensive about pursuits, but flourishing programs are assets for their host institutions. Indeed, some would argue that the big degree-granting programs "owned" Irish studies, and that the ACIS, staffed by volunteers, underfunded, and egalitarian, was moving to a secondary position. Such a view was apparently current at the international Future of Irish Studies conference held in Fiesole, Italy, in 2005. This upmarket resort, fast by Florence, is the same venue in which Boccaccio set the *Decameron.* Sponsors included the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs and Irish Diaspora Studies. Among the many invitees were representatives of the

big U.S. and Canadian Irish studies programs, as well as from Ireland, and the many Irish studies centers found in Britain, France, Germany, Scandinavia and elsewhere in Europe (see Chapter 2). The only ACIS representative invited was the then-president, John P. Harrington, an authority on Irish theater, then a dean at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute.

Within three years, however, one of the organizers of the Fiesole meeting, Christina Hunt Mahony, had left her appointment at Catholic University of America, effectively ending the Irish studies program there. As a forum for all voices in the field, the ACIS remains unsurpassed. Attendance at ACIS meetings since 2005 has continued to rise. The numbers for the March, 2012, in New Orleans, sponsored by Tulane University, exceeded 600, the largest ever.

Chapter 4

PUBLICATIONS: HOW THE ACIS

HELPED GET IRISH STUDIES INTO PRINT

LIMITED WELCOMES

Publish or perish! The weary old imperative to assistant professors has been repeated so often, some may be lulled into thinking it is a cliché to be dismissed. Behind so many clichés, however, lies a truth being caricatured. If Irish studies were going to thrive and take its rightful place in the academy, forming a fellowship, it would not suffice only to hear our best work presented aloud or to assert our presence at the American Historical Association and the Modern Languages Association. The word had to get out, and until the arrival of the Internet and hypertexts, that word would be on paper. A volunteer organization with no endowment and minuscule dues appeared to have little muscle to flex with scholarly journals or publishing houses. In the earliest years, just keeping the organization afloat with an appropriate sponsor for the annual convention was already a demanding task. What the ACIS lacked in financial resources would be made up by human ingenuity, networking with influential persons and sheer doggedness. Energetic newcomers to the organization arrived with ambitious plans. The benefits of some of their efforts are still with us, while, alas, other projects ended unhappily.

Despite the patronizing tones suffered at the departmental coffee urn by some early ACIS members, Irish scholarship could, with difficulty, break into print. The stream might have been a mere trickle before 1961, but it was generally easier for a scholar to get his/her work into

a journal or the pages of a book than it was to deliver the same material in a classroom. There were publications in Ireland but carried in major North American libraries, such as *Studia Hibernica, Hermathena* or even *Irish Historical Studies,* the intellectual antecedent of the ACIS itself, but an author's American point of view would not be prominent. A few journals were friendly to Irish scholarship if not devoted to it , such as *The Review of Politics,* from the University of Notre Dame, and *The Colby Library* [later *College*] *Quarterly.* Ground-breaking works like Thomas N. Brown's "Nationalism and the Irish Peasant, 1800-1848" appeared in *Review of Politics* as early as 1953, and rarities such as John R. McKenna's bibliographical analysis of the then unknown Standish James O'Grady came forth from *Colby Library* in 1958. Brown would become an active ACIS member in the first decades. Literary stars, five people or fewer, could break into a wide circulation journal like *The Atlantic Monthly,* where John V. Kelleher's first published essay appeared in 1945, and where Mississippi fiction writer Eudora Welty scrutinized Sean O'Faolain in 1949. All of these scattered publications meant that there was no one journal where a budding Irish scholar could expect to follow what was new in the field, none that helped to establish a coterie or a community.

It was much the same with one-volume monographs. A scholar with strong material, or personal connections, could be published with a university press lacking any commitment to things Irish. Such was the case with two authors with later strong ACIS associations, Arnold Schrier's *Ireland and the American Emigration, 1850-1900* for the University of Minnesota Press (1958) and Thomas Flanagan's *The Irish Novelists, 1800-1850* for Columbia University Press (1959). Flanagan (1923-2002) was himself a novelist, first anonymously as a source of income while in college, and later with well-researched, popular historical fiction such as *The Year of the French* (1979). Both the Schrier and Flanagan studies were enormously influential and would be cited constantly as Irish studies began its slow advance in the academy. A notable wit, Flanagan

was a familiar figure at ACIS meetings for decades, and his presentations were always well attended. The sales of Flanagan's fiction are a reminder that the doors to commercial publishers might be pushed open. ACIS member William V. Shannon (1927-1988) gained the imprint of Macmillan for his *The American Irish: A Political and Social History* in 1964, the first work of Irish scholarship to become a robust best-seller. At the time Macmillan was able to negotiate a tie-in with the mass-market *Life Magazine,* then a conduit to millions of American homes, barber shops and doctors' offices. *American Irish* is still in print. As a nationally known journalist and a member of the *New York Times* Editorial Board, Shannon is a reminder that not all ACIS members are academics or had any intention of becoming part of tenured faculties. His example benefited colleagues deeply, however, a reminder that there was a market outside the classroom for what many members had to say. William V. Shannon, not incidentally, is the only ACIS member to be appointed United States Ambassador to Ireland (1977-1981).

The one New York publishing house most devoted to Irish matters, the family-owned Devin-Adair Co., would be of mixed value to ACIS members. For nearly a century the imprint had been willing to take risks for Irish causes, such as with the publication of James K. McGuire's pro-Imperial German *The King, the Kaiser and Irish Freedom* (1914), one of the most controversial pieces of Irish-Americana ever seen. In the first two decades of the ACIS, members were grateful to Devin-Adair for putting works by leading Irish writers in American libraries, such as Sean O'Faolain, Patrick Kavanagh, Michael McLaverty, Oliver St. John Gogarty, Padraic Colum, P. W. Joyce's *Old Celtic Romances* and Eric Cross's *The Tailor and Ansty.* The two most valuable titles for the first literature classes before 1980 were Kathleen Hoagland's *1000 Years of Irish Poetry* (1947) and Vivian Mercier & David H. Greene's *1000 Years of Irish Prose* (1952). Hoagland is known for nothing else, but Mercier (1919-1989) and Greene (1913-2008) of New York University were academic celebrities. As a performer on CBS-TV's venture in broadcast higher

education, *Sunrise Semester* (1957-1982), Greene became one of the most famous professors in the nation. He was the second ACIS president, 1965-67, and as a tall man with a sonorous voice, an imposing presence at meetings.

Under the guidance of family heir Devin A[dair] Garrity (1909-1981), the company embraced the romantic nationalist view of Ireland. It published Seumus MacManus's *Story of the Irish Race* (1921), a cornucopia of misinformation through four editions. On the American scene Garrity moved steadily toward the most strident Irish-American voices on the far right, with titles like John T. Flynn's diatribe *The Roosevelt Myth* (1948) and the two major works of Sen. Joseph McCarthy of Wisconsin, *America's Retreat from Victory: The Story of George Catlett Marshall* (1951) and *McCarthyism: The Fight for America* (1952). In a 1978 meeting with two ACIS representatives, Garrity's conversation, marked with unashamed race-baiting, alluded to his discomfort with the then-current generation in the professoriate. Other than Vivian Mercier and David H. Greene in 1952, ACIS members did not publish with Devin Adair.

Two family owned publishers gave good service to Irish literature, if not history, as Devin-Adair withdrew. The Proscenium Press of Dixon, California, founded in 1966 by Robert Hogan (1930-1999), issued seventy-five titles, many of them as his brand implied, connected with the theatre, such as the three small volumes of *Joseph Holloway's Irish Theatre* (1968-70). Hogan's Press would later publish the *Journal of Irish Literature* (see below). Dufour Editions of Philadelphia, and after the mid-sixties in Chester Springs, Pennsylvania, began a policy of co-publication with Irish publishers and Irish-oriented houses in the U.K. that might occasionally carry work by ACIS members, like James Kilroy's edition of James Clarence Mangan's *Fragments of an Autobiography* (1968). But original works in Irish studies by American authors were not in the Dufour charge.

A later-arriving Irish-oriented publisher had strong ties to the ACIS. Distinguished critic Dillon Johnston (*Irish Poetry After Joyce,* 1985) launched the Irish poetry series with Wake Forest University Press, of Winston-Salem, North Carolina) in 1975. The first title, *The Selected Poetry of Austin Clarke* (1975), was co-published with Dolmen Press of Dublin and Oxford University Press in England. In coming years Wake Forest would have close relations with Peter Fallon's Gallery Press in Ireland. By the first decade of the twenty-first century, Wake Forest became the go-to source for dozens of leading contemporary Irish poets and was adroit and reliable in providing texts for countless literature classes. While head of the National Endowment for the Humanities, Dana Gioia proclaimed that Wake Forest was " . . . really the best press in the western hemisphere for Irish literature."

THE ACIS'S OWN

With modest resources and no endowment the ACIS was not in a position to produce very much under its own imprint, but the leadership did offer useful services to members in two vehicles, the *Newsletter* and the reprint series. Larry McCaffrey had issued the *Information Bulletin* (c. 1963-65), a bulletin board of announcements. This morphed into the much larger *ACIS Newsletter,* edited by Frank O'Brien of Hollins College, mimeographed and issued irregularly without numbering. O'Brien began to include short essays on pertinent topics, such as Larry McCaffrey on inter-disciplinary approaches to Irish studies, and Robert Rhodes on Irish nationalism and literature. These did not continue. John Messenger contributed a course description and bibliography for Irish Folk Culture, which he was offering at Indiana University in fall, 1965. From 1965 to 1986, Jim Ford of the Boston Public Library compiled a much appreciated bibliography of new work. Another feature beginning in the O'Brien newsletter was book reviews, not only of new scholarship, but initially also of noteworthy new works of

literature, such as Harold Orel on John McGahern's novel *The Dark.* During the seventies, before the advent of the *Irish Literary Supplement,* book reviews filled most of the space in the *Newsletter.*

In October, 1970, Frank O'Brien began a new, numbered series, with Volume 1, Number 1, without significant changes in the format or contents, i.e., still mimeographed. In December, publication moved to the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, under the editorship of Janet Egleson Dunleavy, now printed in green on heavy bond with Celtic graphics. For the next forty years it continued on 8 ½ by 11" sheets under different formats and colors until it switched to electronic format in summer, 2010. Patrick A. McCarthy took the *Newsletter* to the University of Miami in October, and it has traveled in the last four decades. Later editors included Robert G. Lowery of the *Irish Literary Supplement,* Tom (Thomas Eugene) Hachey and Michael Patrick Gillespie of Marquette University, James S. Rogers of Saint Thomas University, James E. Doan of Nova Southeastern, William H. Mulligan of Murray State, Matthew Jockers of Stanford, Tyler Farrell of the University of Dubuque, and Jill Brady Hampton of the University of South Carolina-Aiken.

The second venture under the ACIS aegis, the reprint series, was much shorter-lived. This was a pet project of founding co-father Emmet Larkin, who conceived of the reprints as a way of putting seminal essays into the libraries of every ACIS member. He had access to low-cost printing at the University of Chicago (the total bill for 250 copies in 1966 was $57.00), so each could be mailed out as a premium for membership. Despite Larkin's well-known commitment to Church history and the nineteenth century, the first titles all dealt with matters from early Ireland. These included: 1) Fred Norris Robinson, "Satirists and Enchanters in Early Irish Literature." 2) E. C. Quiggin, "Prolegomena to the Study of the Later Irish Bards, 1200-

1500." 3) Osborn Bergin, "Bardic Poetry." 4) Osborn Bergin, "The Native Irish Grammarian." 5) Myles Dillon, "The Archaism of Irish Tradition." 6) J. H. Delargy, "The Gaelic Story-Teller." While some of these made more convenient items than might be found in many graduate research libraries, a few were from hard-to-find obscurities, like Osborn Bergin's "Bardic Poetry" from the *Journal of the Ivernian Society,* 1913.

Not only was the reprint series no opening for new work, but the first six titles included nothing from ACIS members. That lack was remedied in the early seventies, when Larkin divided the series into two tracks, one for history and the other for literature. In both there were familiar names. History: 1) Thomas N. Brown, "Nationalism and the Irish Peasant." 2) Maureen Wall & J. G. Simms, "A Glimpse of Town and Country in Eighteenth Century Ireland." 3) Raymond J. Crotty, "Irish Agricultural Production: The Historical Background." Literature: 1) John V. Kelleher, "Matthew Arnold and the Celtic Revival,"; 2) John V. Kelleher, "Irish History and Mythology in James Joyce's 'The Dead.'" This last was, of course, based on Kelleher's landmark presentation at the ACIS meeting in Urbana, Illinois, April 24, 1964.

The rising cost of printing added to more widely available Inter-Library Loan services at even the humblest libraries ended the series.

CONFERENCE PAPERS

The first ACIS-linked episode with an established university press came early, suddenly and unexpectedly. It did not originate with the leadership. The volume in question, titled *The Celtic Cross* (1964), boasts three editors for eight essays and two commentaries. ACIS founding fathers speak of *The Celtic Cross* today with dread. It arose from the first annual ACIS convention held at Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana, April 26-27, 1963, a venture emboldened by

attendance at sessions held during AHA and MLA meetings in 1961 and 1962. One paper would be read in a time slot, and with interdisciplinary convention, everyone attending was expected to hear each paper. Among those presenting were co-founder Emmet Larkin on the quarrel between the Irish hierarchy and the national system of education, 1838-41, admired NYU scholar-critic Vivian Mercier on the Irish short story and oral tradition, and Maurice Harmon of Dublin, later to be a familiar face on ACIS programs, with a study of Austin Clarke's later poetry.

The novelty of meeting at a major Midwest campus in the spring was sure to attract new faces who did not originate in the makeshift, pre-digital networking of the founders. Most assertive of the newcomers were two Purdue Faculty members, Ray B. Browne, an associate professor with seven published titles to his name, and William John Roscelli, an assistant professor with an interest in poet Austin Clarke. They saw their opportunities, and they took them. The understated Preface bespeaks the power struggle in getting the papers to print. ACIS co-founder Lawrence McCaffrey was allowed to edit the paper of his colleague Emmet Larkin, but Browne and Roscelli would handle all the others, under the pledge of only "minor alterations," with Richard Loftus, then of the University of Wisconsin, serving as liaison with the Executive. The tell-tale "Note on Contributors" cites two names not found in the collection. And returning to the Preface we read that two of the contributions to *The Celtic Cross* were not read at the ACIS meeting at all. The final product was a professional-looking 155-page hardcover but did not receive the Purdue University Press imprint. Although only a Purdue University "Study," the volume, published the same year as Shannon's *American Irish,* achieved wide distribution and is still found in many university libraries. Co-editor Ray N. Browne (1922-2009) soon departed Purdue for Bowling Green State University in Ohio where he hitched his wagon to a brighter star. He founded the *Journal of Popular Culture* in 1967, which led to the Popular

Culture Association (1971), now a major academic organization whose annual conference draws 2000 participants.

A second collection of conference papers would not follow for another twelve years and enjoyed the blessings of the leadership. The eighteen essays of the 248-page *Varieties of Ireland, Varieties of Irish-American* comprise most of the papers read at the April 22-24, 1976, meeting at the University of Missouri-St. Louis. Taking the lead in publication was long-time ACIS officer and later president (1993-95), historian Blanche M. Touhill, known for her study of nineteenth century exiled Young Irelander, William Smith O'Brien (1981), who hosted the conference. Touhill has also been a prominent figure in her community as Chancellor of the University of Missouri-St. Louis and a *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* Citizen of the year in 1997. The Performing Arts Center at the University is named for her. The text was typed, double-spaced with a ragged right margin, reproduced through photo-offset and paperbound. There were six black-and-white photographs, one of which, a ragged nineteenth-century fiddler, came from librarian Alfred or Alf M. MacLochlainn.

Lacking the imprint of a major university press, having been issued by UMSL's Continuing Education-Extension, the *Varieties* volume did not reach a wide readership. Within its pages, however, is work that has aged well, including a study of Irish names in James Joyce by the major scholar-critic Bernard Benstock and his wife Shari. Young Charles Fanning, later to discover Irish-American literary tradition, wrote of Irish Chicago. Other names that would become familiar in future decades provide an attractive snapshot of ACIS scholarship in the organization's second decade: Thomas Hachey on Irish America at the 1919 Paris Peace Conference, Mayann Valiulis on the Irish Army mutiny of 1924, William H. A. Williams on the

role of the midwife in traditional Irish society, and Cóilín Owens, then still a graduate student, on the stage Irishman in early twentieth-century drama.

For star power, neither of the first two volumes can match the scholar-celebrities assembled by Audrey S. Eyler and Robert F. Garratt for *The Uses of the Past: Essays on Irish Culture* (1988), twelve papers drawn from the Tacoma conference, hosted jointly by Pacific Lutheran University and the University of Puget Sound, April 24-27, 1985. Present were UCD's Declan Kiberd upending the conventional wisdom about William Butler Yeats' role in the Irish revival, Berkeley's David Lloyd with a preview of what would become his seminal book on James Clarence Mangan and minority literature, Thomas Flanagan talking about history and his own *Year of the French,* Irish poet Richard Murphy on his poem *The Battle of Aughrim.* Among the speakers who had become familiar by that time were some of the ACIS's strongest performers, James S. Donnelly, Jr., Philip O'Leary, Robert Tracy, Maryann Valiulis and Bonnie Kime Scott. Even the two scholars not usually seen on ACIS forums, Hazard Adams and Padraig O'Malley, enjoyed substantial national reputations.

The 195-page *Uses of the Past* was a professional-looking hardcover from the Irish-friendly University of Delaware Press and distributed worldwide by Associated University Presses of London and Toronto.

The 1985 Tacoma conference, the first on the West Coast, came almost twenty-five years after the launch of ACIS, when membership had swollen to about 1500. Astute organizers like Audrey Eyler, an authority on novelist Anthony C. West, and Robert F. Garratt, known for the study *Modern Irish Poetry* (1986), could afford to be selective with submitted papers while running three parallel sessions over three days. Erudite analysis by top scholars also appearing in Tacoma did not make the pages of *The Uses of History.* Until this time Irish scholarship had

not been looked upon as a commodity, but by the mid-eighties, plenty of product was coming to market.

Taken as a whole, the three volumes of conference papers offered discouraging prospects. Editors of the three volumes never intended to co-ordinate their efforts and thus libraries that hold all three make no attempts to shelve them together. The flawed Browne and Roscelli collection (1964) is still shelved in 671 libraries, according to WorldCat. Blanche Touhill's paperback-offset collection (1976) is in only twenty-eight. But the strongest, Eyler and Garratt (1988), is found in 348, a discouraging trend. The emergence of the failed attempt at a journal, 1986-88, and the ill-fated Annual, 1995-2003, precluded any further collections of conference papers.

FRIENDLY UNIVERSITY PRESSES

Making Irish studies attractive to publishers, however, had been the unexpected consequence of Maureen O'Rourke Murphy's census of courses featured in different American colleges and universities. By the mid-seventies it was clear that offerings were proliferating, but there was no official roster. Murphy began by polling ACIS members and sending letters. At that long ago time, everything was on paper and mail was the postal service. As she was dean of students at Hofstra, she set work-students to comb the extensive collection of catalogues, uncovering scores of people who had been working without the collegiality of the ACIS. The result was the 47-page *Guide to Irish Studies in the United States* (1978), 3.5" wide and 9" high, small enough to fit in a business envelope. Although the *Guide* seems modest compared to what was to follow, its reception was ecstatic. More than any other project the ACIS sponsored, Murphy's *Guide* proved that Irish studies were more than a fringe curiosity but were instead a

market. The *Guide* quickly ran through four editions, the last appearing in 1995, 85 pages, 5 1/4" by 8 ½".

In the following year, 1978, came a breakthrough that brought even greater effects, the establishment of the first Irish list with an American university press. Richard Fallis, a Yeats authority at Syracuse University, had been strongly impressed by the quality of papers and numbers attending the ACIS meeting at Stonehill College, North Easton, Massachusetts, April 24-26, 1975. The Press had already issued a handful of relevant titles, John Zneimer's study of Liam O'Flaherty (1970) and Peig Sayers' Blasket autobiography, *Peig* (1974), a constant seller; it also enjoyed good relations with Fergal Tobin of Gill & Macmillan in Dublin. As Fallis was preparing his literary history, *The Irish Renaissance* (1977), he was in constant negotiation with the head of the Press, Arpena Mesrobian, who had earlier created the Middle Eastern list. The idea for the Irish list, February, 1978, was mutual, even though the circumstances seemed a bit anomalous. Syracuse was founded as a Methodist university, did not offer either Irish literature or history at the time, and did not have a significant number of Irish-American students. Richard Fallis is Welsh-American and Arpena Mesrobian Armenian. The University's sports teams are called the Orangemen. Within the first year, nonetheless, Fallis received twelve proposals.

In the thirty-three years since the list began, it has launched 154 titles, or about 4.5 a year. Some of those titles have led the entire Press in sales, most surprisingly, David Stifter's *Sengoidelc: Old Irish for Beginners* (2006). At present Irish is the second-best performing list at Syracuse, after Middle Eastern, but beating out, for example, such areas as Radio and Television. In calendar year 2010, the series editor received forty-three proposals.

Within a few years Irish titles began to cluster at Catholic University Press, the University of Kentucky Press, University Press of Florida, Yale University Press, Cambridge University Press

and Notre Dame University Press. The short-lived series at the University of Wisconsin Press was established by a one-time director from Syracuse. By 1985 a book proposal on Irish scholarship could expect a respectful reading at almost any American university press as well an encouraging number of commercial houses. This battle was won.

THE *ILS*

Then again, in the seventies a rising tide for things Irish was lifting all boats. The Republic of Ireland joined the European Economic Union, and a new generation of distinguished Irish writers, Seamus Heaney, Derek Mahon, Brian Friel, Tom Murphy, John McGahern and John Banville, commanded attention across the English-speaking world. So many new books were coming to the fore that the Irish publishing industry launched *Books Ireland* in 1975. Dedicated to giving notice to every new Irish title, no matter how parochial or limited in potential readership, *Books Ireland* was a bibliographical benefit for ACIS members. American-produced works would be given consideration, often generously, but usually an ACIS member could not use *Books Ireland* as a means of staying abreast of what was happening in one's field. More useful was the once-a-year Irish issue of *Times Literary Supplement* from London. This would become the model for the ACIS-related American-based review of burgeoning Irish scholarship.

By 1980 Robert Lowery of Long Island, who did not hold an academic appointment, was a familiar figure wherever ACIS people met. A train and Harley-Davidson buff committed to progressive politics, Lowery is also an indefatigable generalist with interest in all things Irish. He then edited three Irish-related publications, the twice-yearly *Sean O'Casey Review,* the hardcover *Sean O'Casey Annual* issued by Macmillan (UK), and *Ais-Eri,* a magazine of popular culture in America for the Irish Arts Center in New York. He was also about to take over the *ACIS*

Newsletter, so that running a fifth serial would be a bit of a challenge. Pushing him forward to run *The Irish Literary Supplement* were three ACIS people, Maureen Murphy of Hofstra University, Joycean Bernard Benstock, then of the University of Illinois, and Augustine ("Gus") Martin of University College Dublin, who would later co-host the first ACIS meeting in Dublin, 1987. Lowery launched the *Supplement* or *ILS,* fashioned to evoke the look of the *Times Literary Supplement,* in 1981 with the assistance of Alison Armstrong, a former student of Richard Ellmann's at Oxford who previously had been associated with the *James Joyce Broadside* and the distinguished literary quarterly, *The Kenyon Review.* Within a year the *ILS* gained the sponsorship of Boston College though the good offices of historian Kevin O'Neill and the late critic Adele Dalsimer.

In its first year of publication of the *ILS,* the review became an ACIS membership benefit at a time when dues were just rising to $14.00 a year. Of the thirty or so items covered in a typical issue, fewer than half might be by Americans or ACIS members, but the majority of the reviewers have been American, often recruited by Lowery at the coffee urn during intermissions of ACIS meetings. Back issues are commonly preserved by ACIS members, in boxes or cabinets to keep the newsprint from yellowing, as resources to be consulted again. Especially admired have been the *ILS* interviews with leading literary figures, published in book form as *Writing Irish* (1999), edited by James P. Myers, Jr. The *ILS* does not, however, appear under the ACIS aegis.

Five years after the appearance of the *ILS,* Lowery a launched a sister publication, the *James Joyce Literary Supplement.* If the two looked alike on the coffee table, it was because they were produced on the same computer.

A JOURNAL?

Anxiety about the ACIS's lack of its own publication was not a matter of mere vanity: if the Conference on British Studies has its own journal, *Albion,* and the Committee on Slavic Studies had its own journal, why didn't the ACIS with a then much larger membership? More bothersome was the ACIS's status as viewed by the American Council of Learned Societies, ACLS. Recognition by the ACLS was not just admission to an exclusive club. Instead, ACLS was the route to grant money. True, over the years ACIS members had received Fulbright and National Endowment for the Arts/Humanities awards, and had even won Guggenheims. Nevertheless, ACLS's shunning of the ACIS was nettlesome, and while not at the forefront of the failed motion for a journal in the Eigthies that annoyance certainly lent impetus for the short-lived Annual of the Nineties.

In the first decade and a half after the founding of the ACIS, three North American-based learned journals of Irish studies had begun to appear. In their pages the voices of ACIS members might or might not be welcome. Far and away the most visible is *Éire-Ireland,* established in 1966 by Eoin McKiernan (1915-2004) of the University of Saint Thomas in St. Paul, Minnesota. A fuller examination of the complex relations between the ACIS and McKiernan's *Irish American Cultural Institute* (IACI, founded 1962) is found elsewhere in Chapter 2. For the moment, two distinctions made it a very different organization from the ACIS. It was a popular association that sought to remind wide audiences of Ireland's grand contributions to life and letters. A key expression of McKiernan's goals was the Chatauqua-like Perception Series, which brought speakers on all subjects from Ireland, who toured the heartland. Many ACIS people happily joined IACI and helped to establish different chapters, but relatively few IACI members are academics. Secondly, McKiernan was a skilled fund-raiser; he secured the person of Princess Grace of Monaco as honorary chair, and held gala balls at posh venues like the Hotel Pierre in

Manhattan. The resultant endowment ensured that *Éire-Ireland* was a professional-looking quarterly with a tradition of attractive art work from different epochs of Irish history.

A contributor's affiliation with ACIS appeared to be of utter indifference to his/her placement in the pages of the quarterly. This was true when ACIS activist and later president Robert E. Rhodes guest edited two volumes in autumns 1967 and 1968. When McKiernan retired as editor in 1986, active ACIS member and sometime officer James J. Blake/Seamus de Blaca took over for two years, again showing no bias in favor of his colleagues. He was replaced by Thomas Dillon Redshaw, long an assistant to McKiernan. Of all the people connected with the IACI in the first thirty years, Redshaw, a critic of much distinction, mixed well at ACIS forums, delivering papers himself, socializing at receptions, appearing to be casting a keen eye for possible contributors.

All this came to an end in 1995, when IACI board member John Walsh pulled the organization from St. Paul and resettled it in Morristown, New Jersey. This led to a complete revamping of *Éire-Ireland,* whose editors in the last sixteen years have been people with strong ACIS affiliations, two of them presidents, Nancy Curtin and James S. Donnelly, Jr. Nonetheless, the journal remains separate from the ACIS , and ACIS members are given no preference at submission time.

Back in St. Paul, the departure of the IACI was lamented, leading to the creation of the Center for Irish Studies, which became a part of the University of Saint Thomas, not merely housed nearby. Thomas Dillon Redshaw, a Saint Thomas faculty member, then launched *New Hibernia Review.* In getting the project rolling he approached the ACIS Executive about a possible affiliation. At the very least, ACIS members would gain a subscription through raised dues, and contributions from members would be given prime consideration. Redshaw, at the

Center for Irish Studies, would be editor, however. Attractive as the proposal seemed to many, it unfortunately arrived after the ACIS had resolved to pursue the short-lived Annual, about which more below. After lengthy unofficial deliberation (email had just become nearly universal), the proposal was voted down at the Belfast meeting in July, 1995. Redshaw launched *New Hibernia Review* in spring, 1997, and it remains close to ACIS. The current *NHR* editor is James Silas Rogers, who is also ACIS president.

As if to goad the ACIS leadership, two journals appeared in the 1970's that ran parallel to the trajectory the organization might have sought. The earlier of the two was the *Journal of Irish Literature* (1972-1993), an extension of Robert Hogan's Proscenium Press in Dixon, California, quickly relocating to Newark, Delaware. Hogan favored mini-casebooks on individual authors, often ones not in high favor among those teaching emerging courses at different universities. His first number dealt with early twentieth century playwright Paul Vincent Carroll, the second with Listowel writers John B. Keane, Bryan MacMahon, George Fitzmaurice, and Maurice Walsh, author of a short story titled "The Quiet Man." *JIL* was often ahead of the curve, devoting all of the May, 1977, issue to women, more than a decade before the brouhaha over the exclusion of women writers from the *Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing.* Every so often a byline from an ACIS member would appear.

The second publication was very similar to what the ACIS might have imagined for itself, except that it appeared north of the border. *The Canadian Journal of Irish Studies* began in 1975, two years after the establishment of the parent Canadian Association of Irish Studies. A fuller consideration of how the CAIS differs from and occasionally concurs with the ACIS is found in Chapter 2. For the moment we can say that there is some merit to the perception that Canadian academia lies one step closer to Europe. Put more candidly, public support for higher

education is more generous in Canada, especially if there is a promise of shoring up Canadian identity against the ten times more numerous Yankees. The first issues, appearing from the University of Victoria, are modest affairs, photo-offsets of typescripts. Over the years, however, *CJIS* has changed formats and page sizes radically, a librarian's conundrum, as the editorship has slipped from university to university. Given that as many as one hundred people have joint ACIS and CAIS membership, it is not surprising to see that ACIS contributions are often given a warm welcome in the pages of CJIS. That was far enough, however. During the joint ACIS and ACIS meeting at Galway in July, 1992, a rumor arose in the hallways that the ACIS might offer a joint sponsorship, greatly increasing CJIS's circulation. No such offer was ever made, but the CAIS reaction from perhaps a dozen members was a curt rejection.

While sentiment in favor of an ACIS journal might have been widespread, the impetus to stop talking and to act was led was by James S. Donnelly, Jr., one of the most influential members for more than four decades. As chairman of the history department at the University of Wisconsin, advisor to numerous Irish history dissertations, Donnelly's count of well-placed former students rivaled that of Emmet Larkin at the University of Chicago. Further, Donnelly (b. 1943) had arrived precociously when his first book, *The Land and People of Nineteenth Century Cork* (1975) won the highly competitive Herbert Baxter Adams Prize from the American Historical Association. Tall and assertive, Donnelly commanded the speaker's platform like a champion debater with the incisive intonations of his native New York City, unbleached by years in the Middle West. As ACIS Treasurer, 1985-87, Donnelly took an appointed post, often seen as an unrewarding obligation, and used it as a means to shape organizational policy as never before. He mounted a membership drive. Dues had been raised to $14 a person in 1982, about half that for comparable associations, a bargain that made membership an easy sell. In the days when the USPS was still the optimum choice, he sent out thousands of letters to as many as

twenty lists, including the subscribers of Niall O'Dowd's slick-paper *Irish America.* The effort worked. Membership boomed. What had been a floor of about five hundred members rose to some multiple of that. Anecdotally, the highest number is thought to have been 2600, but Donnelly, who was keeping count, thinks it was not more than 1600. Such a number could support a journal.

The polled membership responded overwhelmingly favorably for the creation of the new journal in summer, 1986, and a plan began to take shape. It was announced in the fall, 1987, *Newsletter* under the banner headline, "Finally! An ACIS Journal." At the center was an agreement with McGill-Queen's University Press, arranged by the prolific polymath Donald H. Akenson of Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario. Akenson, a member of both ACIS and CAIS, had published significant work on Ireland and sat on the Press's executive board. For a subvention of $20,000 a year over three years, the Press agreed to deliver a 140-page volume twice annually. It was to be an interdisciplinary enterprise edited by James Donnelly, Donald Akenson, and Anthony Bradley of the University of Vermont, a widely regarded authority on contemporary poetry. Costs would be modest, raising the dues only $4.00 to $18.00, with the expectation that new members (i.e. subscribers) would reduce the cost per person.

Rigorous discussion continued for the next several months rising to a climax at the annual business meeting, that year scheduled for St. Paul, Minnesota, Saturday, April 21, 1988. Donnelly was at that time ACIS Vice President, and his adversary was the then President, Maureen O'Rourke Murphy. Until that day the two had been good friends and frequent allies. She was hardly the only nay-sayer who felt the journal could not fly, but she became the spokesperson. Despite her contrasting styles, Murphy was an equally formidable debater. At issue were the nature of the new membership and the potential real costs of the journal, which

were promised to be $1.60 a copy with postage. More specifically, was the commitment of the more than 1000 new members recruited with low dues so slight that large numbers of them would simply not renew if the price went up? Parallel to this was the fear that $1.60 per copy could not be sustained over the three-year contract, forcing the Executive to go back to the membership for more dues, driving out even more marginal members.

Today Donnelly describes the vote against the journal as the bitterest disappointment of his professional career.

Whatever his disappointment, Donnelly did not withdraw from his commitment to the ACIS. Within two years after the defeat in St. Paul, he proposed the first of the ACIS book prizes: $500, to be named for his father and paid for from his own purse. Thus began the James S. Donnelly, Sr. Prize for History and the Social Sciences. It was followed by the Donald Murphy Prize for First Book, supported by Maureen Murphy for her late husband (1933-85), who had died suddenly from a heart attack. The next two prizes were also memorials. Lucy McDiarmid initiated the Michael J. Durkan Prize for Language Culture after the much-loved Irish-speaking librarian at Swarthmore College (1926-96), which has been supported by members' subscriptions. The Adele Dalsimer Prize for Dissertations is named for the founder (1939-2000) of the Irish Studies Program at Boston College, who is also commemorated in Seamus Heaney's poem, "A Brigid's Girdle." Robert E. Rhodes (b. 1927), however, was very much alive when Maureen Murphy established the prize for literature in his name. Most recent is the ACIS Book Prize for Books in the Irish Language, Duais Leabhar Taighde Bliana Fhodra na Gaeilge.

James Donnelly has said that his primary motivation in establishing the first of the prizes was the recognition of the prize winner, something he had enjoyed at the beginning of his career. Now that they have been with us for more than two decades we can see that the

recognition of excellence raises standards over the entire enterprise. Competition for the prizes now attracts the finest publishers where Irish scholarship was not welcome in the earliest days of the ACIS.

THREE ANNUALS

The defeat of the Donnelly-proposed journal left a charging aspiration unsatisfied. Sentiment for a publication bearing the ACIS logo grew. Happily, the new members Donnelly brought in, many without academic affiliation, stayed constant, and the membership remained above 1500 for the next seven years. Members grew more productive so that the organizer of the national meeting and the five regionals could all become more selective in filling programs. Most such papers, often limited to twenty minutes, did not live after the meetings where they were delivered. Conference papers may not have been the ideal source for a publication, but their growing numbers signaled how many people wished to write about countless matters in Irish studies. Similarly, the crowds now attending ACIS and CAIS meetings, 580 registered for the joint conference in Belfast, 1995, promised that the potential number of readers was rising concurrently.

Support for an ACIS annual was widespread and sustained over several years. The Executive of President Mary Helen Thuente authorized an exploratory committee at the Galway meeting in July, 1992, which reported to the Executive of Blanche M. Touhill in Villanova, April 15, 1993. Funds would be raised before publishers were approached by more than doubling the dues to $30 yearly. The annual was to be interdisciplinary with two editors, and each volume would have a new set of editors. In late summer, 1995, President James MacKillop appointed a committee of five to examine proposals from prospective editors. Past president Mary Helen Thuente as chair would meet with L. Perry Curtis of Brown University, James E. Doan of Nova

Southeastern, Lucy McDiarmid then of Villanova and Shaun O'Connell of the University of Massachusetts-Boston.

Two members of that committee would play leading roles. First was Shaun O'Connell, a Harvard Ph. D. and author of a much-admired history of literary Boston, *Imagining Boston* (1990), who provided the important link with the University of Massachusetts Press. Later, when editorial questions arose about how individual essays should be treated, O'Connell found himself in the middle, speaking both for the Press and the ACIS. Also influential was another Harvard Ph. D., the persuasive Lucy McDiarmid. She had been a champion of the annual from the get-go, and contributed much to the form it would take, an interdisciplinary volume with many contributions solicited from esteemed scholars. The idea for two editors originated elsewhere. McDiarmid spoke with a confidence born of gold-edged credentials: a Guggenheim Fellowship and the first entry by an ACIS member to *PMLA,* that citadel of American literary academia. In conversation McDiarmid championed excellence, arguing that with the abundance of new Irish scholarship, the ACIS would be best served by promoting only the finest work. She also argued attention should move beyond such well-worn dialogues as those between nationalists and revisionists, and embrace approaches current in American, British and world studies. Her opportunities to oversee the progress of the Annual grew when she was elected Vice President in 1995 and succeeded to the Presidency in 1997.

Quality and familiarity marked the first two editors to step forward, Belfast-born critic Anthony Bradley of Vermont, who had been part of the board for the failed 1988 journal, and historian Maryann Valiulis, whose work had appeared in the Touhill volume of 1976. During intervening years, Valiulis had added her family name to her signature, Maryann Gialanella Valiulis, and had migrated from Pennsylvania to Trinity College, Dublin, where she was

associated with the Centre for Women's Studies. The Annual, though appearing in only three volumes, was fortunate in its choice of editors, all much admired scholars and critics with flawless reputations. If the Annual had continued, however, the editorial might have proved difficult to follow. Each team had to begin from the ground up, unlike the continuing staffs of *Éire-Ireland* and *New Hibernia Review.* Worse, as each editor was a scholar or critic in mid-career, the substantial time required to gather contributors and edit their work, was not always well recognized by deans and promotion committees.

The paperback 325-page first Annual, *Gender and Sexuality in Modern Ireland,* appeared in 1997. In the Introduction the editors explained why they were beginning the series with gender instead of a "more traditionally accredited theme or area of Irish studies." One reason was that Ireland's reputation for severe sexual repression was rapidly dissipating, and another was the ferocious reaction against the three-volumed *Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing* (1991) that downplayed female writers. All contributions were written fresh for the Annual, and had not previously been delivered before learned bodies. Among the thirteen contributors were many ACIS stalwarts: Maureen Murphy on sibling emigration at the beginning of the twentieth century; the wife and husband team of Guinn Batten and Dillon Johnston on poets Eiléan Ní Chuilleanáin, Medbh McGuckian and Thomas Kinsella; Catherine B. Shannon on Irish women in politics of the 1960's; and Lucy McDiarmid on the posthumous life of homosexual patriot Roger Casement. The Irish academics with sterling reputations, Mary E. Daly and Margaret MacCurtain, had frequently been invited to ACIS forums, as had journalist Carol Coulter. Ireland-based linguist and fiction writer Angela Bourke was also an ACIS officer at that time. Thus far the Annual could be seen as an expression of the larger organization and was not merely a reissue of conference papers.

Two essays, however, caused much consternation and came to emblemize the first volume in particular and the effort for the Annual in general. One was by the noted George Moore scholar Adrian Frazier, then at Union College, and the second was by powerhouse Yeats authority from the University of Texas Elizabeth Butler Cullingford, who continues to enjoy a lustrous international reputation. Frazier's essay came first in the collection emblazoned with an eye-catching title, "Queering the Irish Renaissance; the Maculinities of Moore, Martyn and Yeats." Much of what Frazier had to say was not quite breaking news, but the semantics of his title unsettled many members. Study of homosexuality was new to the academy, prompted by Michel Foucault's *History of Sexuality,* as Frazier noted. But denoting the inquiry by the street term "queer" struck many as effrontery, even though the academic usage has become more common in intervening years. Others felt Frazier's analysis was speculative. Cullingford's essay traced themes from Dion Boucicault and George Bernard Shaw to Neil Jordan and Frank McGuinness, in which the colonial allegory is inscribed in homosocial/homoerotic relations between Irish and English characters.

In spite of its hostile reception from some ACIS members, the *Gender and Sexuality* Annual is now shelved by 796 libraries, substantially ahead of the collections of conference papers from 1964, 1976 and 1988, at a time when library budgets had been reduced. The *Gender* Annual is still widely cited in literature, and Terence Brown hailed it as a "pioneering collection of essays by various hands" in the 2004 edition of his *Ireland: A Social and Cultural History, 1922-2002* (p. 466).

The somewhat smaller (234 pages) second Annual appeared two years later, 1999, and contained only nine essays. The title *Politics and Performance in Contemporary Northern Ireland,* blending discussion of the great sectarian clash in Ulster (five essays) with forms of live theater

(four) there, united the specializations of the two editors. John P. Harrington, then dean at Cooper Union, is a leading author on Irish theater, known for *The Irish Beckett* (1991), and would later be an ACIS President (2001-2003). Elizabeth J. Mitchell, earlier an ACIS Executive Officer, held a doctorate in sociology and was then an independent scholar. Only three submissions came from familiar names from ACIS forums, Marilyn Richtarik on playwright Stewart Parker, Helen Lojek on the Charabanc Theater Company, and Maureen S. G. Hawkins on playwrights Howard Brenton and David Rudkin. More contributors appeared from across the Atlantic with perspectives rarely heard on ACIS forums, such as James White McAuley of the University of Huddersfield, UK, on the new Loyalism and the peace process, and Bill Rolson of the University of Ulster at Jordanstown on Loyalist music. The *Politics and Performance* Annual engendered no controversy and sold the best of the three. It is now shelved in 883 libraries.

Four years passed before the appearance of the third Annual, *Language and Tradition in Ireland* (2003), with the subtitle: *Continuities and Displacements.* The editors, Maria Tymoczko of the University of Massachusetts, known for her prize-winning study, *The Irish Ulysses* (1994), and Colin Ireland of the Dublin Center for Education Abroad of Pennsylvania's Arcadia University, had both been Celtic Representatives on the ACIS Executive. Among the eleven contributors are the lowest number of ACIS regulars, Cóilín Owens on Joyce's Stephen Dedalus as a *file* or traditional poet, Catherine McKenna of City University of New York on seventeenth century hagiography, and Thomas Dillon Redshaw on the *tête coupée* motif in John Montague's *The Rough Field.* Three essays examined Irish language texts, one Ulster-Scots, and another on traditional music. University College Dublin's Declan Kiberd delivered the Annual's star turn with an analysis of John McGahern's *Amongst Women. Language and Tradition* suffered the poorest sales of the three annuals. It is shelved by only 247 libraries.

John P. Harrington, editor of the second volume, was the ACIS President who faced the end of the contract for the Annual. He recollects that there was unhappiness on both sides of the dialogue. The U. of M. Press Editorial Board was uncomfortable approving publications without knowing their content. Many ACIS members were unhappy that the gender studies first volume had represented the organization. Others felt that the Annuals gave precedence to the publisher, the University of Massachusetts Press, rather than the organization. The link to the ACIS did not appear on the cover or spine and was reduced to smaller print on the title page. As the 1988 critics of the journal had predicted, the rise in dues—though modest—did indeed decrease membership. More distressing, filling three volumes with content turned out to be more than the organization could deliver with unpaid volunteers. Work on the three volumes actually stretched over nine years. The ACIS was not large enough to support that level of publication independently. Finally, the Annual really duplicated other avenues of book publications, book chapters, and edited collections, as well as existing journals such as *Éire-Ireland* and *New Hibernia Review,* not to mention a host of new journals, some well-funded, in Ireland and Britain. The ACIS had not so much filled a void as flooded a market, created conflicts, and diminished the selectivity of existing publications of scholarship in our area. In the end, both the ACIS and the University of Massachusetts Press fulfilled the contract, and neither seemed interested in renewing it.

In the eight years since the end of the Annual we have become engulfed in a technological revolution whose direction is uncertain. Scholarly quarterlies, like metropolitan daily newspapers, have many more readers on line than they do on the page, in a balance that is unlikely to remain where it is today. Collections of essays, like the three volumes of conference papers and the three Annuals, professionally known as “contributed volumes,” have become deeply unattractive to publishers. Contributed volumes are rarely assigned to classrooms.

Today, when select articles can be electronically "shared" with students via services like Angel or Blackboard without paying royalties to publishers or authors, effectively Napsterized, there is decreasing reward to have them professionally edited, bound, and marketed.

Steward Brand, founder of *The Whole Earth Catalogue,* famously pronounced, "Content wants to be free." Perhaps the ACIS efforts to get our words out have been sufficient.

Chapter 5

TOPICS WE TALKED ABOUT

AND HOW THEY CHANGED

WHAT TO EXPECT FROM HALF A CENTURY

The question is better suited for a cocktail party or a late-night bull session than something to sustain close scrutiny: did American academic life change more in the fifty years from 1912 to 1962, or from 1962 to 2012? The discussion calls for dozens of personal value judgments, and no one alive has the first-hand experience to speak authoritatively of those one hundred years. The first fifty were certainly filled with more traumas, two world wars and the severest economic depression in the nation's history, whereas the second fifty have seen continuous economic expansion and relative peace. A professor lecturing to a group of students in 1962 probably came from nearly as privileged a social class as the man in 1912, but his students were more numerous and far more socially diverse. The professor of 2012 is more than likely female, and if she is in the humanities, her class is more than 50% female. In 1912 and 1962 students read materials printed on paper. In 2012 students are most likely to be reading from an electronic screen.

Irish studies in America, having been launched only in 1961-62, could not escape the buffeting of a turbulent half-century. The ACIS, a non-exclusive organization with low dues, has constantly been giving voice to new people from widely different backgrounds, some of them with personal and intellectual agendas. Torpor and lassitude were states impossible to maintain. Ireland, no longer an impoverished backwater, became a prime generator of news stories:

sectarian violence in the North, entry into the European Union, unprecedented prosperity, and crash. In American academia, the professor of Irish studies faced the rise of feminism, identity politics, anti-elitism, growing acceptance of popular culture, French theory and digitalization. Given the tumultuous changes since the early 1960's, it is startling see how many of the same subjects still attract interest and how many names have not suffered a fall from grace. Signal early works like Vivian Mercier's *Irish Comic Tradition* (1962) and John V. Kelleher's landmark address, "Irish History and Mythology in James Joyce's 'The Dead'" (1964), are still widely admired and often cited. Similarly, although there is no Leavisian great tradition in Irish literature written in English, six or seven figures attracted attention from the beginning and they have never fallen out of favor: J. M. Synge, W. B. Yeats, Lady Gregory, Sean O'Casey, Oscar Wilde, Samuel Beckett, and Jonathan Swift. More recently Oscar Wilde and Bram Stoker have acquired a Hibernian patina less evident in the first half of the twentieth century. Interest in James Joyce, needless to say, continues to flourish, so much so that it invites cliché. The American researcher prowling around Dublin, often a clueless graduate student completing a dissertation, is now a stock comic figure in Irish popular fiction. As there are now many forums where Joycean criticism and scholarship may be aired, papers on the author of *Ulysses* are now less numerous at regional and national meetings than those for contemporary poets like Seamus Heaney and Eavan Boland. So that fictional unprepossessing dolt who does not realize that Dublin is no longer the city of 1904 is probably not based on an ACIS member.

The language of criticism changed profoundly, however. Young scholar-critics immersed in postmodern theory were described as "critically informed," where those who were not, older professors or those from very conservative institutions, came to be known as "humanists" or "old humanists." By 2011-2012 they might still find a place on an inclusive ACIS program, but might have difficulty passing peer review at selective quarterlies or university presses. The

postmodernist penchant for esoteric jargon tended to discourage interdisciplinary attendance. ACIS co-founder Emmet Larkin complained in 2008 that when he now attended a literature session, at least one speaker would utter the line, " There are tropes in the author's discourse."

In historiography the contrast between 1962 and 2012 is far starker. Just as the intellectual roots of ACIS founders Emmet Larkin and Lawrence MCaffrey were in T. W. Moody's revisionist *Irish Historical Studies,* so history papers presented at national and regional forums continually wore away at the romantic-nationalist assumptions of many Irish-Americans. If there is any book that suffered a precipitous fall among ACIS members it would be Cecil Woodham-Smith's *The Great Hunger* (1962). Ms. Woodham-Smith (1896-1977), was born Fitzgerald, a descendant of Lord Edward Fitzgerald of 1798 fame. She united a sense of Irish grievance with the British left's contempt for Victorian imperialism. Having begun her career writing potboiler novels (her own phrase), she brought a gift for vivid portrayal and racy narrative that few academic historians could match. The evidence to overturn her sweeping vision, the econometrics of poor-house records, landlords' ledgers and police reports lacked her flair, but by the time we reached the present, informed commentators—not all-- would unquestionably prefer to cite James S. Donnelly's even-handed and sober-sided *The Great Irish Potato Famine* (2001), a work by a highly active ACIS member and former president (1989-1991). Contemporary scholar Christine Kineally, however, sought to raise Woodham-Smith's flag again at the New Orleans conference in 2012.

Interest in key moments from Irish history tends to shift with anniversaries, with focus on the Great Irish Famine at the sesquicentennial 1995-97 and the United Irishmen rising bicentennial in 1998. Otherwise, subjects like the Land League, Charles Parnell and the Irish Parliamentary Party, Irish neutrality during World War II, the 1916 Rising, the 1921 Treaty and

subsequent Civil War remain inexhaustibly fascinating, although Eamon de Valera's stock has fallen as Michael Collins's has risen, just as they have among Irish historiographers. Such subjects still command time at national and regional meetings, even with explosive topics that have arisen since 1962: Ireland's role as a United Nations peacekeeper, sectarian violence in Ulster, the flourishing and death of the Celtic Tiger economy, and unanticipated migration into the country.

Over fifty years the annual national and regional meetings have been where members expected to recharge their scholarly and intellectual batteries. Just sharing passions, like the continuing "rediscovery" of Seumas O'Kelly's novella, *The Weaver's Grave,* freshens the mind. In such exchanges, cocktail party and reception chatter races ahead of what is said in formal presentation. Convention programs are prepared months in advance, sometimes as early as a year before the meeting. Such planning makes the announced presentations a weak venue to present late-breaking news. To take as an example, the most momentous decision of the Republic of Ireland in the second decade of the ACIS's existence was joining the European Union, then called the Common Market, in 1972. Not a single ACIS member gave a presentation addressing this issue for ten years. Very few members were journalists or professionally devoted to current events. The convener of the meeting had small leeway in asking members to take on subjects. And who was there to ask? More members studied literature, and historians had their own long-term projects, which were remote from concerns of the present day. To address this lack the convener of the precedent-setting 1974 meeting, Johann Norstedt of Virginia Tech, invited Michael O'Leary, a Labour Party cabinet member in the coalition government, to make members *au courant.* His memorable keynote address, "Ireland in the Context of the European Economic Community," May 2, foresaw profound change, but only modestly. Unimaginable

economic and social transformation was less than two decades away, and O'Leary pointed the way.

The ACIS's record in adapting to change is mixed. It would be slower in responding to forces outside the organization, either in Ireland or in American academia, but much more substantial when generating change from within. Consider the contrasts between a recognition of the "Troubles" in Northern Ireland and of the neglected study of the roles of women in Irish life and literature on one hand, and the discovery of Irish-American history and literature on the other.

The division of the thirty-two counties of Ireland in to two entities by the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921 had long been a source of grieving and regret. There was widespread assumption in the twenty-six county South that the nationalist minority suffered scabrous discrimination in the six-county North, but tensions had been largely dormant for nearly fifty years, despite ugly incidents in the 1920's and 1950's. U.S.-inspired civil rights marches from the mid-1960's lighted a spark that led to escalating violence in 1969, rampant in Derry, August 12, and spreading to Belfast. It was a continuing sordid news story through the 1970's and 1980's, quieting down with the cease fire in 1994 and the Good Friday Agreement in 1998. Using the term "the North" was to a degree a euphemism because hypersensitive nationalists (of whom there were very few in ACIS membership), objected to the term "Northern Ireland," as they felt it gave unwarranted recognition to an illegitimate regime. They preferred "the Six Counties." A compromise was the term "Ulster" for the historical province, even though three Ulster counties were in the Republic.

Given that the ACIS annual convention the next year in Carbondale, Illinois, was the first to proclaim a thematic title, "Roots of Ulster," this could be mistaken for a rapid response. The

host that year was distinguished Dublin-born poet Thomas Kinsella, then a faculty member at the University of Southern Illinois (he would later serve at Temple University in Philadelphia). In 1969 Kinsella had published his translation of the national epic, the *Táin Bó Cuailnge,* which would become the standard. The *Táin* is also the longest narrative in the Ulster Cycle of early Irish literature. From a poet's point of view, further, the larger story from the Six Counties was a kind of Ulster literary renaissance including Kinsella's contemporary, John Montague, and a cluster of three about ten years younger: Seamus Heaney, Michael Longley and Derek Mahon. They would be followed by three more, a few years younger, Ciarán Carson, Medbh McGuckian and Paul Muldoon. Not surprisingly then the first session with four speakers, "Ulster Now: A Symposium," included only one journalist, Tim Pat Coogan, then of the nationalist *Irish Press,* one theater director, Mary O'Malley of Belfast's Lyric Players, and two poets, John Montague and Seamus Heaney. Then thirty-one, this was Heaney's first appearance at an ACIS meeting, but many would follow. He was billed only as, " poet, Belfast, Ireland." From the prospect of forty-two years later, Heaney's presence looks like the event of the weekend, but the poet was never tempted by agit-prop. Even with historian J. C. Beckett of Queen's University chairing the session, we can hardly imagine a sustained discussion of contentious social and political questions, such as an analysis of the rising casualty rate. The discussion of Ulster literature juxtaposed with street violence would be characteristic of ACIS sessions for the next several years.

Of the other four sessions of the "Roots of Ulster" meeting, one focused on early Irish literature with John V. Kelleher's "Ulster Saga and Pseudo-History," and a second dealt mostly with nineteenth-century Ulster figures, Zack Bowen on William Carleton, and Toronto's Robert O'Driscoll on Sir Samuel Ferguson. A fourth delivered papers on historical backgrounds from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, but nothing later than 1914. Only the fifth approached the

twentieth century, and on that panel only two speakers addressed events of the previous fifteen months: Janet Egleson, "Ulster 1969—A View from the West" and Daniel E. Leon's "The Politics of Civil Rights in Northern Ireland—1969."

For the next two years the subject did not come up, but in the 1974 meeting one session was titled, "The Northern Crisis," with three speakers. Vincent E. Feeney answered his own rhetorical question: "The Civil Rights Movement in Northern Ireland—Stalking Horse of the I.R.A.?" Paul F. Power of the University of Cincinnati explained how the failed Sunningdale Agreement had affected Anglo-Irish relations. A political scientist and great admirer of Mohandas Gandhi, Power was the go-to man about Ulster when many members had difficulty summoning very much attention to sectarian violence in addition to their existing commitments. The session concluded with an analysis of "Poets in a Time of Crisis" by the much-admired critic Thomas Flanagan.

As someone who had become active in the ACIS in those years, I recall colleagues speaking of their frustration at being passive consumers of information about Ulster. Despite the region's distinctive culture—even accent—few members had elected to be such regional specialists. It had become dangerous to visit Belfast, and only a handful of members had. One was Mary Helen Thuente, but she was researching the Ulster-based United Irishmen of 1798. Another was Betty Messenger, researching the folklore of the linen industry. Perhaps the most frequent visitor to the north was historian Catherine B. Shannon, a founding patron of *History Ireland.* She had published on Unionist politics as early as 1973, and delivered a paper titled "The Hidden Heroine," on the North, at the Dublin meeting in 1987. She took a special interest in women's perspectives, publishing a series of important articles, beginning with "Catholics, Women and Northern Irish Troubles" (1989). Her invested research in the North led to her

becoming a Senior Research Fellow at Queen's University-Belfast (1991-92). Meanwhile, at ACIS conferences, semantically informed vocabulary choices became *de rigueur.* It was Unionists vs. Nationalists and Republicans, not "Protestants" vs. "Catholics," as the American press carelessly reported. Everyone knew the difference between the Officials and the Provisionals—"Provos"—in the split of the Irish Republican Army. And most people could distinguish between the more numerous UDA, Ulster Defence Association (the "Wombles"), and the smaller, deadlier UVF, Ulster Volunteer Force.

During the 1970's also members proposed a series of resolutions asking the ACIS to take a stand for the oppressed and for peace (phrased different ways each time). Among the most dramatic of these was led by sociologist Alfred McClung Lee of Brooklyn College, City University of New York, in Williamsburg, May, 1971. In a packed and unusually tense business meeting, David H. Greene of New York University, not coincidentally the best-known person in the room from his appearances on *Sunrise Semester*, rose to say that ACIS would give all its energy to scholarship, not politics, no matter how noble the cause.

Frustrated by the lack of attention given Ulster violence, Eileen Sullivan of the University of Florida organized a free-standing conference to focus on it in Gainesville, February, 1974. Sullivan, sometimes known by her husband's name, Ybarra, was a familiar figure for two decades, often giving herself passionately to causes. She was a great champion of nineteenth-century Tyrone-born novelist William Carleton (1794-1869), and established a short-lived newsletter devoted to his work. She attracted several ACIS stalwarts, such as Paul F. Power, first president Gilbert A. Cahill, and soon-to-be-presidents like Alan Ward, Blanche Touhill, Robert Rhodes, and Maureen Murphy. It was like an ACIS regional before they were created. Papers ranged back to the Battle of the Boyne in the seventeenth century down to early twentieth-

century questions on the role of Eamon de Valera in the partition of the country. Of the sixteen essays four dealt primarily with fiction, two with poetry. Only three dealt with issues of the previous five years, Maureen Murphy on patterns of Irish violent behavior, Grace Eckley on Bernadette Devlin, and Paul F. Power on civil protest as an alternative to violence. Sullivan and her colleague Harold A. Wilson published the essays as *Conflict in Ireland* (1976), which did not receive wide circulation.

Once we entered the 1980's more and more papers appeared on programs, often, as in Delaware, 1980, with Ulster poets and Ulster politics again discussed at the same panel. The University of Pittsburgh/Carnegie Mellon meeting, April 30-May 2, 1981, convened by David W. Miller and Hugh Kearney, was notably strong. Especially memorable was Catherine Shannon's presentation on "The Roots and Symptoms of Ulster Separatism," an update of a paper given at the American Historical Association the year before. Major historian F. S. L. Lyons spoke on "Yeats and the Anglo-Irish Twilight" in the closing lecture, but his presence guaranteed a continuing discussion of clashing culture, politics and religion at different sessions over the weekend. Speakers' sentiments generally assumed that listeners favored the beleaguered nationalists, but pro-Republican advocacy was rare, voiced from the audience when it appeared. Pro-unionist advocacy was given a polite hearing, including the mysterious Raymond James Raymond, subject of Kerby Miller's astonishing plenary address in Madison, 2011.

Robert St-Cyr took up the unionist cause in 1987 and appeared periodically in the next few years. He lacked an academic appointment but billed himself as the Coordinator for the North American Committee for Reconciliation in Ulster. At the Villanova meeting in April, 1993, a display of all Irish flags included the Union Jack, and the Red Hand of Ulster, along with the green-white-orange Tricolour.

Alan J. Ward brought academics from Ulster for a conference outside the ACIS aegis at the College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia, September, 1984.

As events unfolded, the United States under the Clinton administration would play an important role in winding down the violence in Ulster, 1994-98, but Ulster was primarily a regional conflict with resonance in Ireland and the United Kingdom and abroad. To visit a library of publications on the subject is to see mostly European work. Presentations on Ulster, often from Irish speakers, continued though the 1980's, 1990's and the first decade of the 2000's. The first ACIS monograph to address the subject, Thomas Hachey's *The Problem of Partition* (1972) took a perspective predating the crisis and put divided Ireland in a global context. Other early books came from people tangentially associated with the ACIS, like Albert J. Menendez's *The Bitter Harvest: Church and State in Northern Ireland* (1973) and Jack Holland's *Too Long a Sacrifice* (1981). *The Uncivil Wars: Ireland Today* (1983) by Irish-born Padraig O'Malley of the University of Massachusetts superseded Holland and became the most often read text on Northern Ireland by ACIS members and was widely assigned in classes. Two other well-regarded studies that touch on recent Northern Irish history are Andrew Wilson's *Irish-America and the Ulster Question, 1868-1995* (1995) and Lee Smithey's *Unionists, Loyalists and Conflict Transformation in Northern Ireland* (2011). As professors taking the long view, some of the most resonant contributions from ACIS members have deepened our historical understanding: David W. Miller, *Queen's Rebels: Ulster Loyalism in Historical Perspective* (1978); Sean Farrell, *Rituals and Riots: Sectarian Violence and Political Culture in Ulster, 1784-1886* (2000); Richard L. Jordan, *The Second Coming of Paisley* (2013); and Donald Harman Akenson, *Small Differences: Irish Catholics and Irish Protestants, 1815-1922* (1988).

WOMEN

Most readers, male and female, would notice in reading Chapter 1 that all the names cited among the founders were male. Our collective consciousness has been so deeply transformed that we reflexively notice the absence of women from a crowd of academics rather than ever raise our eyebrows that they are included. Such is the success of feminism on campus, as much a given of college life as competitive sports or Greek letter organizations. In truth, the early ACIS was not an exclusive old boys' club as Chapter 1 might have made it appear. Historian Helen Mulvey of Connecticut College was an active early officer, highly regarded by her colleagues. Irish-born Máire MacNeill Sweeney, author of *The Feast of Lughnasa* (1962), was the first woman to speak on an ACIS program, that at the Urbana meeting, April 24, 1963. Her paper was "Folklore as a Subject of Research," and was subsequently published in the first volume of *The Journal of the Folklore Institute.* Among other pre-1970 female ACIS speakers were Mary Bromage of the University of Michigan, Grace Eckley of Drake University, Marilyn Gaddis Rose of SUNY Binghamton, and Martha Caldwell of James Madison University, who also designed the ACIS logo. When Margaret MacCurtain gave the first plenary, speaking on women's issues at Delaware in 1980, she received a standing ovation from the females present, while many men remained seated. There was never any overt expression of discrimination, although it took twenty-five years to install the first female president. Before 1970 women faculty were still a minority, even in humanities departments. Among the notable early books by ACIS-related authors were two studies of Irish women by American women, Jacqueline Van Voris's *Constance de Markievicz in the Cause of Ireland* (1967) and Marilyn Butler's *Maria Edgeworth: A Literary Biography* (1972).

In the four years of academic sit-ins and protests, 1968-72, much of it addressing curriculum, 1970 was critical for feminism with the publications of two massively influential books, Kate Millett's *Sexual Politics* and Germaine Greer's *The Female Eunuch* (1970 in the UK; 1971 in the US). Both women held doctoral degrees in literature; Millett is Irish-American, Greer Australian. Both raged against "patriarchy," leading to the word's wide currency in critical discourse. Although *Female Eunuch* enjoyed greater sales world-wide, *Sexual Politics* (originally a Columbia University dissertation) had a deeper impact on American curriculum. A geyser of new courses, in literature, history, the social sciences, as well as art and music, led to the creation of more than 1000 women's studies departments in American universities by 1980.

Not walking in lockstep with the rest of the professoriate, the ACIS was slow to respond to the feminist clarion. Delay, however, was followed by persistence that delivered new insights. Historical revisionism, emphasizing analysis of certified data over colorful narrative and anecdote, revealed that emigration from Ireland to North America was vastly different for women than for men, a pattern without counterpart from other countries. Further, more than a dozen significant writers of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, previously neglected, would find admiring re-evaluation in coming decades.

The first session devoted solely to Irish women appeared on the program for the Denver meeting, April, 1977, and followed the ACIS interdisciplinary ideal. Curiously, the panel came without a title or anything to indicate it was female-centered. Janet Egleson Dunleavy took an overview with "The Many Faces of Irish Womanhood," while Maureen Murphy dealt only with the women of the United Irishmen Rebellion of 1798. Bonnie Kime Scott also fused life with letters in her paper on the women in political activism and the literary revival of the early twentieth century. Barbara Brothers gave the first ever ACIS presentation on the Cork-born

twentieth-century novelist in "The Continuing Myth: Colleens and Matriarchs in the Works of Elizabeth Bowen." Previously perceived to be British and spoken of in the same voice with Virginia Woolf, Bowen (1899-1973) was the child of a privileged Anglo-Irish family that had been in County Cork since the seventeenth century. In coming decades with new perceptions of Bowen's Irishness, not least the ill-suppressed story of her affair with Catholic fiction writer and critic Seán O'Faolain, she became an increasingly popular subject of discussion.

Six years later at the Columbus meeting, April, 1983, the ad-hoc women's caucus still consisted of Bonnie Kime Scott, soon to produce her *Joyce and Feminism* (1984), and Maureen Murphy, who had begun work on the Irish serving girl project (see below). They were joined on a panel titled, "Women in Contemporary Ireland," by a star performer, then-Senator Mary Robinson, whose address was given as Trinity College, Dublin. That year's meeting, at Ohio Dominican College, suffered some of the worst creature comforts of any convention, but it created at least as much oral tradition as any other meeting, much of it consisting of supposed salty remarks and sharp retorts from Robinson, who was introduced as the likely first female *Taoiseach.*

Meanwhile, a greater stimulus for women's studies in the ACIS came unexpectedly from our sisters and brothers in the north. The Canadian Association for Irish Studies at Trent University in Peterborough, Ontario, March, 1981, began its annual convention with the theme, "Woman [singular] in Irish Legend, Life and Literature." Following CAIS custom (see Chapter 2), most speakers were invited, including such admired Irish figures as Lorna Reynolds, Margaret MacCurtain and Máire Cruise O'Brien and the prominent American critic Hugh Kenner. Added to these were Canadians well known to American scholars: Ann Saddlemyer, Andrew Parkin and Ronald Ayling. They comprised a highly credible roster, but all from the older generation and

not one who might be called a feminist. The resulting volume, *Woman in Irish Legend, Life and Literature,* edited by convener S. F. Gallagher, was published by Colin Smythe in Britain (1983) and simultaneously in the U.S. Its bright cover, a color reproduction of the portrait of Lady Hazel Lavery that adorned Irish bank notes for five decades after 1923, identified it as one of the most-carried books at ACIS meetings for at least five years.

The growing interest in the close examination of immigration records (see next section) was delivering new insights on the status of Irish and Irish-American women. Most arresting was the discovery that Irish women had immigrated in much larger numbers than men had, often without family connections, seeking employment on their own. That many female household servants in affluent and not-so-affluent American homes spoke with Irish accents was not in itself news. Such a figure appeared often in novels and stage plays; see Maggie in Eugene O'Neill's *Long Day's Journey Into Night* (set in 1912). The social experience of many of those women not marrying had given us the American colloquialism "Biddy," from Bridget, a clichéd name for an Irish woman. That many immigrant Irish women did marry, and outside their ethnic group, accounts for why so many Americans of all ethnic groups claim some Irish ancestry, usually through a grandmother.

The agreed-upon name for this phenomenon became the Irish Serving Girl, first because most were very young, and "serving" to cover whatever domestic chore was required. Once records were sought out the implications of this migration were enormous, at many levels and in different directions. Serving girls wrote letters home; what effect did they have upon impoverished Irish villages? Serving girls from economically straitened backgrounds learned how the upper half lived; what effect did this have upon the aspirations of the wider immigrant

community? Many girls learned refined diction and manners; how did this prepare their own entry into the professional world?

Maureen O'Rourke Murphy, the busy author of *The Guide to Irish Studies* (Chapter 3), was one of the first to call attention to what could be learned about women's roles in an address at Westfield State College, October 23, 1981, titled, "Bound for Amerikay: the Irish Immigrant Girl at the Turn of the Century." The first important book on the subject came from a scholar previously known for the study of Jewish immigration, Hasia Diner, *Erin's Daughters in America: Irish Immigrant Women in the Nineteenth Century.* Subsequent exploration of this subject relied on the uncovering of personal documents, often caches of letters, the kinds of materials not usually saved in libraries and archives. These led to two important books, Maureen Murphy's *Your Fondest Annie: Letters from Annie O'Donnell to James P. Phelan, 1901-1904* (2005) and Margaret Lynch Brennan's *The Irish Bridget: Irish Immigrant Women in Domestic Service in America, 1840-1930* (2009).

Given that Ann Owens Weekes' very welcome *Irish Women Writers* (1990), subtitled appropriately, "an Uncharted Tradition," came twenty years after the Millett-Greer bomb bursts, it might seem that the ACIS was laggard. Her volume was coeval with the first Irish women's literature collections, both by editors from ACIS membership rolls: Louise A. DeSalvo and Kathleen Walsh D'Arcy's *Territories of the Voice* and Daniel J. & Linda M. Casey's *Stories by Contemporary Irish Women* (1990). Their efforts predate by one year the much-reviled, three-volume *Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing*, edited by the gentlemen Seamus Deane, Andrew Carpenter, etc. The resultant outcry over the exclusion of women writers raised consciousness as had no other event. Soon the number of presentations on women's issues at ACIS forums began a steady rise, as did the output of monographs: C. L. Innes, *Women and Nation in Irish*

Literature and Society, 1880-1935 (1993), Patricia Boyle Haberstroh, *Women Creating Women: Contemporary Irish Women Poets* (1996), Theresa O'Connor, *Comic Tradition of Irish Women Writers* (1997) and Susan Sailer, ed. *Representing Ireland: Gender, Class and Nationality* (1997). Key episodes of Irish history, Young Ireland of 1848, the Fenians of 1867, the movement toward independence, 1916-1922 and the Civil War, 1922-26, the teaching profession, were all revisited with attention given to the previously neglected roles of women in them. The most significant of these, by the Irish academic Margaret Kelleher *The Feminization of the Famine* (1997), was published in the U.S. Simultaneously, more than a dozen women writers from before Independence were called up for new reading, such as Eibhlín Ní Chonaill, Charlotte Brooke, Lady Morgan/Sydney Owenson, Edith Somerville & Violet Martin Ross, Ethna Carbery, Katharine Tynan Hinkson, Nora Hopper, Violet Russell, and Alice Milligan. In updating the critical bibliographies for the second edition of *Irish Literature: A Reader* (1987) after nineteen years, I noticed that commentary on Maria Edgeworth (1767-1849), author of *Castle Rackrent* (1800), grew three times faster than for any other pre-Literary Revival author. Additionally, many of Edgeworth's neglected works were now back in print.

Today, forty-two years after Miller and Greer, the complete integration of women's concerns into on-going discourse has become so commonplace as to barely merit attention. At the Madison ACIS meeting, March 30-April 2, 2011, there were 175 presentations, many of which, like the traditional music concert by Liz Carroll and Daíthí Sproule, without any gender significance. Of those forty-one (23.4%) were devoted to female personages, analysis of women's writers, or matters of gender or other women's issues. As for the slots to be filled on the program, speakers, session chairs, etc., there were 380, of which 191, including plenary speaker Julia M. Wright of Dalhousie University, were female, slightly more than 50%. Not an old boys' club anymore.

DISCOVERY OF AMERICA

As we considered toward the beginning of Chapter 2, not all ACIS members have claimed Irish heritage, and thus many had limited experience with Irish-America. Of those whose ancestors included Irish immigrants, many were culturally assimilated into the whole of North American society. Even for the certain number who had been raised in Irish enclaves, their fascination with things Irish, like Newgrange, *The Book of Kells,* Michael Collins or *Finnegans Wake,* did not always extend to Irish America, which often brought to mind populist big city mayors like Boston's James Michael Curley or Chicago's Richard J. Daley. Thus many members, including the founders, were a bit taken aback at the 1968 meeting when historian T. W. Moody said the ACIS should concern itself with Irish America. As we have cited often, Theodore William Moody, long at Trinity College Dublin, was an intellectual forebear of the organization. His championing of new methods of research in the journal *Irish Historical Studies* had motivated Larry McCaffrey and Emmet Larkin in the founding of the ACIS. No inference was taken that he thought Yankees should leave Ireland to the Irish and stay in their own backyard. Instead, his larger implication appeared to be that the length and depth of Irish America was largely unexplored, and that the ACIS should take it on. Moody's advice was heeded, and the response was immediate, far prompter than with the themes of Northern Ireland or feminism.

Some members, of course, had anticipated Moody. Founder Arnold Schrier had published *Ireland and the American Emigration, 1850-1900* (1958) before there was such a thing as the ACIS, and fellow-founder Thomas N. Brown followed with *Irish-American Nationalism, 1870-1890* (1966). And who could overlook the fact that the first big-seller in American Irish studies was William V. Shannon's *The American Irish* (1963)? What members would find was

that Irish America was indeed insufficiently explored and that the readiest clichés about it deserved to be demolished.

Next year at the Marquette University conference (May, 1969) there were three sessions running in tandem on the first full day, occupying about half the total program. Some papers emphasized nineteenth-century anti-Irish discrimination, a note to be struck again when higher education institutions began recognizing identity politics, in which Paddies and Micks might share space with Sambos and spics. Co-founder Lawrence J. McCaffrey spoke on "Pioneers of the American Ghetto" to be followed by Fr. Andrew Greeley with "The American Irish—First Emigrants from a Ghetto." Greeley, unusual for a clergyman, already had a national reputation as a sociologist, and would soon be a syndicated newspaper columnist as well as the author of popular novels. Although he may have spoken often and quotably of Ireland itself, he was deeply concerned with Irish America, which would lead to his best-selling popular history, *That Most Distressful Nation: The Taming of the American Irish* (1972). The pairing of McCaffrey and Greeley illustrates how beating the drum for Irish America could affect membership. Some scholars, like McCaffrey, were ambidextrous, nimbly balancing interests in the thirty-two counties and the fifty states. Greeley, on the other hand, showed that people primarily devoted to Irish America found a warm welcome at ACIS forums, with informed audiences not found elsewhere. Additionally among the six presenters, John Appel spoke of "From Shanties to Lace Curtains: Graphic Images of the Irish in American Magazines," one of the first to wrest historical insights from popular culture. And William V. Shannon of *The New York Times* addressed "Irish-America: the Literary Expression," which would become a major ACIS enterprise in the next twenty years.

In the next few years, some speakers, often newcomers, did spadework on complex questions that would call for sustained study. In Ann Arbor (May, 1973), David Doyle addressed members with "The Social Structure of Irish America: A Critique of the New England Model," and Michael Funchion moved to the Midwest with "Nationalism and Politics Among the Chicago Irish in the 1880's." Irish-America has been largely urban, even though we would learn that the two "most Irish" municipalities were small, Holyoke, Massachusetts, and Butte, Montana. In coming years industrial New England and Chicago would be prime foci of attention. Other researchers were delivering the unknown. Eileen Sullivan-Ybarra, a familiar figure in the 1970's and 1980's, spoke on the same panel about the Saint Patrick's Battalion in the 1846-8 war with Mexico. These were mostly Famine-era Irish recruits in the U.S. invading army in the Mexican War, who deserted and joined the defending Mexican Army. About 700 men, nearly all Catholic, formed the San Patricio Battalion under a green, harp-emblazoned flag. U.S. forces crushed them at the Battle of Churubusco, August 19-21, 1847, and dealt harshly with the survivors. Other details, such as the men's motivation, have been the subject of contentious commentary, and led to an empathetic Hollywood film, *One Man's Hero* (dir. Lance Hool, 1999). This was the first most ACIS members had heard of them, proof that Irish-American history is rich in serendipity. Truth be told, however, perhaps a dozen subsequent researchers, often graduate students, "discovered" the San Patricios and offered proposals for regional and national meetings.

In the next decades members would discover that certain unrelated enterprises, such as copper mining and early professional baseball, had been dominated by Irish Americans, and so were ecclesiastical offices and, yes, urban politics. Additionally, members examined unpleasant Irish-American demagogues like Fr. Charles Coughlin, the 1930's "radio priest," and Senator Joseph McCarthy, as well as diverse figures who wore their Irishness prominently and to different effect: labor organizer Mother Jones, song and dance man George M. Cohan,

presidential candidate Alfred E. Smith, film director John Ford, senator and poet Eugene McCarthy, reclusive billionaire Charles Feeney and all the Kennedys. Within a few decades there were five wide-ranging studies from members: Lawrence McCaffrey's *The Irish Diaspora in America* (1975), revised as *The Irish Catholic Diaspora in America* (1992); McCaffrey's *The Textures of Irish America* (also 1992); Kevin Kenny's *The American Irish* (2000); Joseph Lee & Marion Casey's *Making the Irish American* (2006); and Jack Morgan's *New World Irish: Notes on One Hundred Years of Lives and Letters in American Culture* (2011).

Always putting aside the boosterism favored by Irish fraternal organizations, ACIS members never attempted to construct a heroic narrative or weave a flattering ethnic myth in which goodness and tenacity triumphed. Instead, dispassionately, the scholar's eye sought out those experiences shared by the families of all Irish-Americans, regardless of social class and religious affiliation that helped to shape identity and distinguish them from other ethnic groups. In this pursuit much was revealed by examining the act of arrival, immigration itself. Not that the subject had never been raised. The much-admired American historian, Oscar Handlin, a specialist in minorities and the marginalized, had raised important issues in *Boston's Immigrants: A Study in Acculturation* (1959). Many researchers would enter the field, especially as many more nineteenth-century records became available, also helping us to understand the phenomenon of the Irish Serving Girl, discussed above. One man, however, Kerby A. Miller of the University of Missouri, stood above the others and commanded wide attention.

Although much in dialogue with other ACIS members, Miller was not a particularly frequent speaker on national or regional forums before the publication of his monumental *Emigrants and Exiles* in 1985. One paper was "Irish Immigration and the Popular Image of America in Ireland" at the Mid-West regional meeting, University of Wisconsin-Madison,

October 20, 1979. After 1985 Miller's appearances became more frequent and were always arresting. Blessed with a cadenced baritone, Miller is a gifted platform performer who never fails to compel listeners. Customarily severe or even somber, his excellent timing can draw responsive laughter without his cracking a smile. Those who have never heard Miller can hear evidence in Paul Wagner's documentary film, *Out of Ireland: The Story of Irish Emigration to America* (1994), much of it based on Miller's research. His is a voice one might have heard in the glory days of network radio.

Weighing in at 704 pages, the study's central insights are framed with context, including an insightful and relevant review of Irish history going back to the Flight of the Earls in 1607. He also drives away some cobwebs of cliché, such as the notion that pre-Famine emigration was dominated by the "Scotch-Irish" ("Ulster Presbyterians" in Ireland), a population often hostile to Gaelic, Catholic Irish emigrants.

The key to Miller's thesis could not have been made plainer, the second noun of his title "Emigrants and *Exiles.*" Although they may not have suffered as severe mistreatment as other European groups, the Irish believed themselves to have been compelled to leave home beyond individual control, particularly by British and landlord oppression. This perception was found regardless of the circumstances of emigration, often voluntary, occasionally politically motivated, along with the huge flux of Famine refugees. If mid-nineteenth-century Ireland was retrogressive compared with Britain, Continental and Scandinavian countries, it was also pre-modern, preserving medieval folkways and mores. Traditional Gaelic culture deemphasized and even condemned individualistic and innovative actions such as departure from the community. Irish-American homesickness, alienation and nationalism were rooted in a traditional Irish

Catholic worldview that predisposed Irish emigrants to perceive or at least justify themselves not as voluntary, ambitious emigrants but as involuntary, non-responsible "exiles."

Miller's was the first significant study of Irish emigration fully to integrate the social and cultural origins of the emigrants with their experience in America. The author established the once neglected dimension of cultural origins as one of the standards of modern scholarship on Irish America. Dealing with episodes from the plantation era down to the founding of the Free State in the 1920's, Miller drew on a large quantity and variety of sources, including a vast number of letters, diaries, memoirs and journals he had collected.

Emigrants and Exiles was immediately honored as a significant contribution to understanding America, and not just Irish studies. The book won a shelf full of prizes, such as the Merle Curti Award from the Organization of American Historians, and it was a finalist for the 1986 Pulitzer Prize, the only volume from an ACIS member so recognized. Twenty-seven years after publication it remains in print and is frequently cited. It is also one of perhaps a dozen books, along with Richard Ellmann's *James Joyce,* that most members are likely to own and will refer to, even if they have not read it. More than most of our influential books, further, *Emigrants and Exiles* feels like a product of ACIS-fostered discourse. It is a triumph in a field that did not exist in 1961-62.

Response from the organization was quick and reflected in programming for the next annual meeting, the gala session in Dublin (June-July, 1987), hosted by University College Dublin and the School for Irish Studies. Immediately after lunch on the first day, Miller led a panel expanding on ideas from *Emigrants and Exile.* The title of Miller's paper echoed the book: "Emigration as Exile: Cultural Hegemony in Post-Famine Ireland." The other two speakers emphasized culture over economics or politics. David Doyle, cited above for a 1973 paper, spoke

on the “Urbanization of Irish Values.” And Bruce Boling, soon to be a Miller collaborator, asked, “Was There a Linguistic-Cultural Matrix in Western Migration in the U.S.?”

The next year in St. Paul, Minnesota (April, 1988), hosted by the College of Saint Thomas, Miller chaired a session on “Class, Culture and Nationalism in Irish America, 1880-1920,” toward the end of the long, mass immigration period. Three speakers gave attention to specific cities, Timothy J. Meagher to Worcester, Massachusetts, David M. Emmons to Butte, Montana, and David Brundage to Denver, Colorado.

In coming years examination of Irish immigration issues would be just as much an expected portion of the conference program menu as James Joyce or the Civil War of the 1920’s. Some of the most admired member books dealt with the Irish populations in different cities and regions. Local history is not usually in the purview of university history departments, and thus city histories are often somewhat parochial and written by non-professionals and buffs. Books produced by ACIS people enjoy reassuring professional standards and attract readers who have nothing to do with the areas. See Thomas H. O’Connor on the Boston Irish (1995), Ronald H. Bayor & Timothy J. Meagher on historical migration to New York City (1996) and Linda Dowling Almeida on recent immigrants to New York (2001); Dennis Clark on the Philadelphia Irish (1973), Lawrence J. McCaffrey on the Chicago Irish (1987), Michael J. Funchion on Irish nationalism in Chicago (1976), and David Gleeson on the Irish in the Southern states (2001). Two of the most rewarding of these deal with smaller cities: Timothy J. Meagher’s *Inventing Irish America: Generation, Class and Ethnic Identity in a New England City, 1880-1928* (2001), about Worcester; and the one-of-a-kind *O Albany!* (1983) by Irish-American novelist William Kennedy. Candidly, Kennedy speaks of an array of ethnic groups but never neglects the Irish.

Everyone knew we could compose a history of Irish America, if only the libraries and archives of raw material were scrutinized sufficiently to write it. An Irish-American literary tradition at the time of the ACIS founding, 1961-62, looked far more ephemeral, if not will-o'-the-wisp. Certainly there were hundreds of American writers with Irish surnames, and some of them depicted Irish characters, settings, and themes. Was there any means of linking them together? Was there any shared identity or theme? Those of us who subscribed to the catalogues of Irish used-book dealers four decades ago were amused to find novelist and short-story writer John O'Hara and poet Frank O'Hara (no relation) listed under the rubric of "Irish Literature," along with Brendan Behan and Canon Sheehan. Poetry of the early twentieth-century Afro-American Claude McKay made it to the same list. Little wonder that such an authoritative figure as John V. Kelleher would opine, as early as 1947, "Irish-American Literature, and Why There Isn't Any."

The previous year, however, in the pages of the *Atlantic Monthly,*

Kelleher sought to revive the reputation of the comic persona of Mr. Dooley, and asked that he not be left in the dustbin of American humor along with Bill Nye and Petroleum V. Nasby. Not quite forgotten, Mr. Dooley had contributed a number of deathless phrases of Americana: "Politics ain't beanbag" and "Newspapers should comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable" were two. The speaking character of Mr. Dooley was the creation of Finley Peter Dunne (1867-1936), a work-a-day Chicago journalist until he invented the voice of an immigrant bartender from the city's south side. In his prime, Mr. Dooley's commentaries were carried in hundreds of newspapers and read universally, even in federal cabinet meetings. Theodore Roosevelt, often an object of Mr. Dooley's scorn, invited author Dunne to the White House.

A Harvard undergraduate named Charles Fanning took up Kelleher's call and made it a mission to plumb the depths of what had once made those long-ago newspaper columns so fascinating to so many. Fanning was less interested in Dunne/Dooley the national commentator but sought out instead more than 300 uncollected , unsyndicated columns that predated his fame, many appearing in the *Chicago Evening Post.* The admired social commentary and political satire were already present but directed toward immigrant factory workers and laborers recognizable from the neighborhood. Instead of demeaning subjects as stage Irish caricatures, he dignified them with focused attention. Dooley's rhetoric in County Roscommon dialect can be compared with Mark Twain's legitimizing American colloquial speech in *Huckleberry Finn.* Instead of being coarse, Fanning argued, "The best of Dunne's pieces are really eloquent and beautiful." And, "Together, his writing gives as full a picture as you're ever going to get of what it was like to be a working-class Irish immigrant in a city in the 19th century." Further, "Dunne is the first Irish-American voice of genius."

Born in the Irish enclave of Norwood south of Boston, Fanning had heard Galway Irish spoken on the street as a child. A life-long connection with John V. Kelleher led to the collection of the master's essays (some fugitive) for posthumous publication in 2002. He moved to the University of Pennsylvania, completing his dissertation on Finley Peter Dunne in 1972. ACIS people first learned of Fanning's work in an address titled simply, "Finley Peter Dunne," at the Stonehill conference in North Easton, Massachusetts, April 25, 1975. Reception was deeply enthusiastic, at a time of single sessions when the audience might include people from all disciplines. No small part of Fanning's rising esteem came from his gifts at the platform. Along with lucid, jargon-free prose, Fanning is a superlative speaker, like but much different from Kerby Miller, lighter and faster but never facetious. The dissertation went on to become *Finley Peter Dunne and Mr. Dooley* (1978), winning the Frederick Jackson Turner Award from the

Organization of American Historians. ACIS members were grateful to Fanning for unlocking Mr. Dooley for somewhat pedestrian reasons as well. Reading the now vanished Roscommon-in-Chicago transliterations aloud, a dialect few contemporary readers have ever heard, could make approaching the bartender as difficult as reading Robert Burns or Geoffrey Chaucer. Fanning offered a skeleton key as well as being a critical champion.

With the aid of a sequence of prestige grants, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Rockefeller Foundation, the American Council of Learned Societies, etc., Fanning moved on to his masterwork, *The Irish Voice in America* (1990, revised 2000). All during this time he shared portions of his unfolding thesis with colleagues at annual meetings, 1983, 1986, 1987 and 1988. He also produced a tasty sampler of previously unseen nineteenth-century Irish-American fiction in *Exiles of Erin* (1987), winning the American Book Award from the Before Columbus Foundation for outstanding contribution to American literature.

The Irish Voice in America illustrated the profound interconnectedness of history, culture and literature. Starting with the pre-1840 immigrants who came by choice, there was once a taste for sophisticated comic fiction. The desperate and far more numerous Famine refugees favored rags-to-riches novels and romantic novels with thick nostalgia for the home country. Even more popular were moralizing books showing readers how to get along in America and warning them not to be tempted away from Catholicism. These included plenty of illustrations of anti-Catholic prejudice. The fashion for literary realism in the early twentieth century did not favor the Irish voice, which led to a cultural amnesia ended by the rise of James T. Farrell and the *Studs Lonigan* trilogy (1932-34). Fanning compares Farrell's portrayal of Chicago neighborhoods with William Faulkner's Yoknapatawpha County. A flourishing Irish voice in the later twentieth century always favored urban environments, notably Fanning's favorites

William Kennedy, whose *Ironweed* (1983) is one of a series of Irish-themed novels set in Albany, New York, and Alice McDermot, whose Pulitzer-winning *Charming Billy* (1998) is set in New York City. Kennedy would become the only Irish-American novelist to appear on an ACIS forum, reading from his then-new novel *The Flaming Corsage* at the April, 1996, meeting in Carbondale, hosted by Fanning, and the following year subject of a tribute at the meeting in Albany, April, 1997.

"The common thread in 20th-century Irish-American literature," Fanning has written, "is the kind of community fostered by a specific place. Irish-American writers have [their universe] in the city neighborhood—it's enough of a canvas for them to do their work."

Not content with promoting his insights within the grove of academe, Fanning also ventured forth to the marketplace of ideas, best remembered in the Mary Gordon episode. In 1978 Ms. Gordon achieved phenomenal success with a first novel titled *Final Payments,* whose theme was summarized by one reviewer as dealing with "the question of martyrdom in an Irish sensibility." She was a professed admirer of Irish novelist-short story writer Mary Lavin, and had put aside a dissertation on W. B. Yeats in order to write *Final Payments,* but she recoiled at being portrayed as part of an Irish-American tradition. In interviews she portrayed herself as linked closer to Jewish-American writers, to whom she claimed a connection through her Jewish father. She asserted that there was no tradition of quality among American-Irish writers, at least until *Final Payments.* After her lecture at Boston College in spring, 1979, Fanning saw his opportunity. Approaching her with his customary politeness, he began to share word of some of the people he had been uncovering; *Irish Voice* was still eleven years off. In response, she closed her eyes and shook her head and refused to listen to anything Fanning had to say. The moment

crystallized into an anecdote that lived in ACIS oral tradition for decades. Fanning followed by sending her other materials, which she ignored.

With everyone else, Fanning's battle was won with *The Irish Voice in America* (1990). In subsequent years he republished six neglected volumes of James T. Farrell, mostly through Southern Illinois University Press. His last ACIS presentation was a tour-de-force survey of Irish-American poplar culture, linking pop songs, comic strips, radio and television shows in a plenary at the Marquette national meeting in Milwaukee, June 6, 2002. His memoir, *Mapping Norwood,* was published in 2010.

Although Fanning is without rival for the claim of founding Irish-American literature, and he has dominated discourse, especially toward the beginning, many others joined in. Daniel J. Casey and Robert E. Rhodes produced a collection of critical essays, *Irish-American Fiction* (1979), in which two contributors claimed F. Scott Fitzgerald and John O'Hara for the tradition. To this Casey and Rhodes added two collections of stories, earlier in *Friends and Relations* (1984) and more recently in *Modern Irish-American Fiction* (1989). Grace Eckley helped to canonize Mr. Dooley with the bio-critical Twayne book, *Finley Peter Dunne* (1981). At the University of Delaware meeting in April, 1980, the indefatigable Eileen Sullivan-Ybarra discovered the Cork-born fiction writer Fitz-James O'Brien (1828-1862), who spent the last ten years of his life in the United States before being killed in the Civil War. As with her find of the San Patricio Battalion. Sullivan-Ybarra would be the first of many discoverers. Despite his meager output, O'Brien is claimed by at least three critical camps; he's a counterpart of Edgar Allen Poe, an anticipator of Lewis Carroll, and a forerunner of modern science fiction.

Interest in Irish-American writers has never displaced that of Irish writers, but further discussions of James T. Farrell and William Kennedy continue. Although most Irish enclaves have

dissolved and cultural assimilation grows apace, a sense of Irishness among contemporary writers has proved tenacious, both in wide-market popular literature, like Nora Roberts and Mary Higgins Clark, or filmmakers Edward Burns and Ben Affleck. But also among writers who can sustain critical scrutiny; consider: Elizabeth Cullinan, Maureen Howard, John Kennedy Toole, Pete Hamill, Anna Quindlen, Michael Patrick MacDonald and Dennis Lehane. Additionally, in the current generation we have seen significant Irish writers migrate to the United States and write about what they find here; Paul Muldoon, Colum McCann and Colm Tóibín are among the better-known.

The substantial changes in commentary on favorite subjects are too vast to be touched on in this chapter. Many of them result from forces outside the ACIS or result from the flux in academic inquiry. In the study of Ireland there has been a huge influx of researchers leading to huge numbers of finds under the earth. Technological innovations, such as DNA studies, have changed who we now think the Irish were. Arguments over the most important episodes in Irish history take place in Ireland and simultaneously within the ACIS. Our re-evaluations of culture in literature derive from new critical language, some of it imported from France. The four areas of concern here examine how the organization responded to phenomena not raised in 1961-62. The conflict in Ulster found us somewhat unprepared but led to studies illuminating the roots of the violence. ACIS members are not journalists. Similarly, members were slow to respond to the challenge of feminism, but we made up with the delineation of the Irish Serving Girl: women's history in Irish studies affects the whole, not just part. Half the people now appearing on an ACIS program can be expected to be female. Irish-American history and literature were not on the founders' minds in 1961-62. The authority of two of our most admired members, Kerby A. Miller and Charles Fanning, built wholly new sub-disciplines. Both men had first-class academic credentials and an abundance of intellectual energy, so it would be demeaning to say that the

ACIS made their work possible. The ACIS provided them with a place to speak and to receive encouraging feedback. Such honorable service justifies the organization's existence.

Appendix 1 - ACIS Presidents

1962-65, Gilbert Cahill, State University of New York at Cortland

1965-68, David H. Greene, New York University

1968-71, John V. Kelleher, Harvard University

1971-73, Harold Orel, University of Kansas

1973-75, John Rees Moore, Hollins College

1975-78, Lawrence J. McCaffrey, Loyola University, Chicago

1978-81, Emmet Larkin, University of Chicago

1981-83, Alan Ward, College of William and Mary State University

1983-85, Thomas Hachey, Marquette University

1985-87, Robert E. Rhodes, State University of New York at Cortland

1987-89, Maureen O'Rourke Murphy, Hofstra University

1989-91, James S. Donnelly, Jr., University of Wisconsin

1991-93, Mary Helen Thuente, Indiana University/PurdueUniversity-Fort Wayne

1993-95, Blanche Touhill, University of Missouri-St. Louis

1995-97, James MacKillop, Onondaga Community College

1997-99, Lucy McDiarmid, Villanova University

1999-2001, Nancy Curtin, Fordham University

2001-03, Michael Patrick Gillespie, Marquette University

2003-05, John P. Harrington, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute

2005-07, Eamonn Wall, University of Missouri-St. Louis

2007-09, José [Josepha] Lanters, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

2009-2011, James S. Rogers, University of St. Thomas

2011-2013, Sean Farrell, Northern Illinois University

Appendix 2 - ACIS Conferences

National

April 26-27, 1963	Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana
April 24-25, 1964	University of Illinois, Urbana, Illinois
March 19-20, 1965	New York University, New York, New York
May 6-7, 1966	University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas
May 4-6, 1967	Hollins College, Hollins College, Virginia
May 9-11, 1968	SUNY at Cortland, Cortland, New York
May 8-10, 1969	Marquette University, Milwaukee, Wisconsin
April 30-May 2, 1970	"Roots of Ulster," Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, Illinois
May 6-8, 1971	College of William & Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia
May 4-6, 1972	"Ireland's 20th Century: Illusions and Realities," University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Milwaukee, Wisconsin
May 3-5, 1973	University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan
May 2-4, 1974	"A Reassessment of Ireland in the 1970's," Virginia Polytechnic Institute, Blacksburg, Virginia
April 24-26, 1975	"Irish Contribution to America," Stonehill College, North Easton, Massachusetts
April 22-24, 1976	"Irish Nationalism: Ireland and America," University of Missouri-St. Louis, St. Louis, Missouri
April 28-30, 1977	"Celtic Ireland," Metropolitan State College, Denver, Colorado
April 27-29, 1978	"Irish Interdisciplinary Studies," SUNY at Cortland, Cortland, New York
April 26-29, 1979	"The Individual and the Community," James Madison University, Harrisonburg, Virginia
April 24-26, 1980	"Rising and Regeneration in Ireland," University of Delaware, Newark, Delaware
April 30-May 2, 1981	"Three Irelands," University of Pittsburgh/Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

April 1-3, 1982,	"The Ireland of Joyce and de Valera," University of Vermont, Burlington, Vermont. A joint meeting with the Canadian Association for Irish Studies
May 18-22, 1983	Ohio Dominican College, Columbus, Ohio
May 3-6, 1984	Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem, North Carolina
April 24-27, 1985	Pacific Lutheran University/University of Puget Sound, Tacoma, Washington
May 7-10, 1986	"Politics and the Arts in Ireland," Boston College, Boston, Massachusetts
June 28-July 3, 1987	Institute for Irish Studies/University College, Dublin, Dublin, Ireland
April 20-23, 1988	"Cross-Currents in the Irish Experience," College of St. Thomas, St. Paul, Minnesota
April 12-15, 1989	Onondaga Community College, Syracuse, New York
April 25-28, 1990	University of Missouri-St. Louis, St. Louis, Missouri
April 10-13, 1991	University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin
July 5-10, 1992	"An Island Between Two Worlds: Ireland, Europe and America," University College, Galway, Galway, Ireland. A joint meeting with the Canadian Association for Irish Studies
April 20-23, 1993	Villanova University, Villanova, Pennsylvania
April 27-30, 1994	Creighton University, Omaha, Nebraska
June 25-July 1, 1995	Queen's University, Belfast, Northern Ireland. Joint Meeting with the Canadian Association for Irish Studies
April 17-20, 1996	"Irish Cultures/ Across Cultures," University of Southern Illinois, Carbondale, Illinois
April 17-19, 1997	No sponsor. Albany, New York
April 15-18, 1998	"Revolution and Revolutions, 1798, 1848," Nova Southeastern University, Fort Lauderdale, Florida
May 12-15, 1999	Virginia Polytechnic Institute, Roanoke, Virginia
June 26-July 1, 2000	University of Limerick, Limerick, Ireland
June 7-10, 2001,	Fordham University, New York, New York
June 5-8, 2002	Marquette University, Milwaukee, Wisconsin

June 4-7, 2003	University of St. Thomas, Minneapolis, Minnesota
July 11-17, 2004	University of Liverpool, Liverpool, United Kingdom. Joint meeting with the British Association for Irish Studies and the European Federation of Associations & Centres of Irish Studies
April 14-17, 2005	University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, Indiana
April 20-23, 2006	University of Missouri-St. Louis, St. Louis, Missouri
April 19-22, 2007	City University of New York, New York, New York
April 16-19, 2008	"The Global Irish: Conflict, Coexistence and Community," St. Ambrose University, Davenport, Iowa
June 10-13, 2009	"New Irish, Old Ireland: The Same People Living in the Same Place," National University of Ireland at Galway, Galway, Ireland
May 5-8, 2010	"Ireland: Then and Now," Pennsylvania State University, University Park, Pennsylvania
Mar 30-Ap 3, 2011	University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin
March 14-17, 2012	Tulane University, New Orleans, Louisiana

Appendix 3 –

Notable Books in Irish Studies by ACIS Members (some non-US) and North American Scholars and Critics. Each nominated by Two or More ACIS Members.

Up to 1969

Alspach, Russell K. *Irish Poetry from the Invasion to 1798.* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1943; 2nd ed., 1959, 1960

Hoagland, Kathleen, ed., *1000 Years of Irish Poetry.* New York: Devin-Adair,1947

Mercier, Vivian and David H. Greene, *1000 Years of Irish Prose.* New York: Devin-Adair, 1952

Noon, William T. *Joyce and Aquinas.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957

Sullivan, Kevin. *Joyce Among the Jesuits.* New York: Columbia University Press, 1958

Schrier, Arnold. *Ireland and the American Emigration, 1850-1900.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1958

Ellmann, Richard. *James Joyce.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1959

Flanagan, Thomas. *The Irish Novelists, 1800-1850.* New York: Columbia University Press, 1959

Handlin, Oscar. *Boston's Immigrants: A Study in Acculturation.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1959

Dunleavy, Gareth. *Colum's Other Island: The Irish at Lindisfarne.* Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1960

Krause, David. *Sean O'Casey: The Man and His Work.* New York: Macmillan, 1960

Litz, A. Walton. *The Art of James Joyce: Method and Design in Ulysses and Finnegans Wake.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1961

Kenner, Hugh. *Dublin's Joyce.* Boston: Beacon, 1962

Mercier, Vivian. *The Irish Comic Tradition.* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962

Curtis, L. Perry. *Coercion and Conciliation in Ireland, 1880-1892: A Study of Conservative Unionism.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963

Shannon, William V. *The American Irish: A Social and Political Portrait.* New York: Macmillan, 1964

Ellmann, Richard. *The Identity of Yeats.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1964

Loftus, Richard J. *Nationalism in Modern Anglo-Irish Poetry.* Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1964

Clark, David R. *W. B. Yeats and the Theatre of Desolate Reality.* Dublin: Dolmen Press, 1965; rpt. Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1993

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