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“Farewell to Wexford,” Father Paul Francis Kehoe

by J. Michael Finn

Father Paul Francis Kehoe served the Diocese of Columbus from 1885 until 1888. Until recently little was known regarding his life before arriving in the US from Ireland and nothing was known regarding his life after leaving the diocese. With the assistance of Father Seamus de Val, Archivist and Historian for the Diocese of Ferns in Ireland, we were able to fill in his early years in Ireland, as well as, discover what happened to the young Irish priest after he left the service of the Columbus Diocese.

Paul Francis Kehoe was born at Moortown, Ballymitty, County Wexford, Ireland on March 2, 1858. He was the son of Paul Kehoe and Elizabeth O’Leary. Little is known regarding his early years of life. Griffiths Land Valuation of Ireland in 1854 shows Paul Kehoe living on 29 acres of land in the Moortown townland.

The earliest record of the family is the 1901 Irish census which documents the Kehoe family living in the townland of Moortown Little near Harperstown, County Wexford Ireland. Father Kehoe’s father was deceased. The family included his mother Elizabeth (age 72); sisters Mary, Maggy, and Johanna; and brothers James, and John. Four farm laborers lived with them at the time. The mother, one sister and the two brothers were Irish language speakers. John Kehoe was Assistant County Surveyor.

Father Kehoe’s early education was at St. Peter’s College, in Wexford, where he also began



Rev. Paul F. Kehoe (1858-1931)

his studies for the priesthood. Students for the priesthood at St. Peter’s did their theological and philosophy studies at the College of St. Patrick at Maynooth, Ireland. This is where he likely met Henry William Cleary, also a native of County Wexford (later the 6th bishop of Auckland, New Zealand) who was studying for the priesthood at St. Patrick’s. Cleary and Kehoe became lifelong friends.

During his years at St. Peter's, Paul Kehoe became interested in Irish politics. As an Irish speaker he was also very interested in the promotion of the Irish language. He was a supporter of the Irish National Land League and its president, Charles Stewart Parnell, who was also an elected member of the British Parliament representing Ireland.

When the Land League began in 1879 the Catholic Church in Ireland officially stood in opposition to the League largely due to the League's close association with the Irish Republican Brotherhood (the Fenians). In addition, Catholic Emancipation had only occurred in Ireland in 1829, and the Church felt that support for the Land League could undermine its legitimacy. Late in 1880 the Church changed her position on the Land League and was actively advising priests to support the organization.

On Easter Sunday, March 28, 1880 Charles Stewart Parnell made an appearance at Enniscorthy in County Wexford to speak on behalf of a candidate he was supporting in the upcoming election. Parnell had just returned from a speaking tour of the U.S. He had, in fact, recently made a stop in Columbus, Ohio on February 18, 1880.

At Enniscorthy, Parnell's political opponents pelted him with eggs and rotten vegetables when he rose to speak on behalf of his candidate. A riot ensued and Parnell was nearly dragged from the speaker's platform. His clothes were ripped and it looked like he was about to be physically assaulted. He was rescued from the angry mob and helped from the platform by a young clerical student. That young student was Paul Kehoe.

Paul Kehoe wrote a letter to the newspaper, *People*, which was a weekly published in Wexford. The letter stated his strong support for the Land League political movement and for Parnell.

Because of the Church's opposition to the Land League, the publication of the letter caused the young student some difficulty with the college administration at St. Peter's. Paul Kehoe was given the choice of either going home or transferring to a seminary that prepared priests for the foreign missions. He chose

to transfer to All Hallows College in Dublin. Priests from All Hallows were sent to such far away missions as South America, South Africa, India, Australia and the United States. All Hallows alumni were the largest group of secular priests in California up to the late 1890s. Father Kehoe graduated from All Hallows College. He received sacred tonsure, minor orders and subdeaconship during Pentecost week and deaconship on Trinity Sunday; he was ordained to the priesthood in Dublin on Wednesday, June 24, 1885.

Father Kehoe was sent to the United States, specifically, he was "adopted" as a mission priest by Rt. Rev. John A. Watterson, Bishop of Columbus. Father Kehoe was not pleased with his assignment to the overseas missions. On leaving Ireland for his mission he said, "I envy the poorest man in the poorest cabin in Wexford who has not to leave his county." We know that he considered himself to be an exile from Ireland, even though by the time he was ordained the Church fully supported the Land League and its activities.

Beginning his voyage from Ireland to America he departed from the harbor of Wexford, Ireland. On that voyage he penned the following poem entitled "*Farewell to Wexford.*"

Upon the vessel's deck I stand,
And watch the shore recede from view;
I see the hills and mountains grand,
The distant spires, the skies of blue.
While speeds the goodly ship away
The burning tears come trickling down.
And deep within my heart I say
Farewell, farewell, sweet Wexford town!

Farewell the bright and happy hours,
The sunny days of long ago,
The woods, the glens, the meads, the flowers.
The loving hearts I'll ne'er more know.
Tho' pressed by sickness, toil and care,
And bent beneath misfortune's frown,
I breathe an exile's fondest prayer
For Erin and for Wexford town.

On Slaney's banks, at close of day,
Companions of my youth will roam;
While I must wander far away
From country, friendship, love and home.
No more I'll see the sunbeams light
Her smiling fields or mountains brown;
With saddened soul I bid good night
To Erin and to Wexford town.

The land lights gleam around the bay,
A haze falls o'er the tranquil sea;
The shore recedes, it melts away,
And dimmer grows beloved Slieve Bui.
The freshing breeze swells out the sail.
The sun is set, the night comes down –
Adieu, adieu, dear Innisfail!
Farewell, farewell to Wexford town!

The poem was published in the *Wexford People* of September 15, 1888 and in 1911 it was published in a compilation of national poems by Irish priests edited by T. D. Sullivan.

On to America

In Columbus, about September, 1885 it was announced that Father Thomas F. Delaney would be leaving his assignment as Chaplain at the Ohio State Penitentiary. Father Delaney was the first full-time chaplain at the penitentiary and had been responsible for many notable accomplishments at that facility in his one-year term of service, including the establishment of a permanent chapel and a Catholic library.

To replace Father Delaney, Bishop Watterson appointed Father Kehoe. Father Kehoe arrived from Ireland in early November, 1885 and was promptly installed as the penitentiary chaplain. (note: In several writings about Father Kehoe he is credited with being the chaplain at Sing Sing prison in New York, this is incorrect).

Being assigned to the dark, grim and bleak surroundings at the Ohio State Penitentiary must have presented quite a conflict for the 27-year-old Irish priest who clearly was more accustomed to his

“bright and happy hours” amid the “smiling fields” of Ireland.

Father Kehoe celebrated his first Mass at the prison chapel on November 22, 1885. After the Mass, 1,500 convicts and 200 prison officials and visitors assembled in the main hall of the prison to welcome him. Following songs by the Penitentiary Catholic choir, Father Kehoe addressed the assembly on “*The Divinity of the Christian Church*.” On April 4, 1886 Father Kehoe baptized eleven prisoners at the penitentiary.

The Notre Dame Archives contain a letter dated January 22, 1886 from Father Kehoe to Father Daniel Hudson, C.S.C. Father Kehoe thanked Father Hudson for the copy of the *Ave Maria* for the benefit of the prisoners under his spiritual charge. Father Kehoe mentioned he had a little library in the penitentiary, thanks to the generosity of Catholic publishers. He also wrote to Father Hudson on behalf of his friend, Father Henry W. Cleary, who promised to send articles for the *Ave Maria* regarding his experiences in Rome.

Father Kehoe served as prison chaplain for approximately a year until April 25, 1886 when the Dominican Fathers began their 84 year tenure as chaplains at the prison.

Father Kehoe was then assigned briefly to St. Joseph's Cathedral and Holy Family parish in Columbus before being assigned to St. Lawrence O'Toole Parish in Ironton, Ohio. He served at St. Lawrence from 1887 until early in 1888 when he left the diocese due to an unspecified illness. A 1908 parish history for St. Lawrence O'Toole states only that Father Kehoe is “now an honored pastor in the land of his fathers.” He never returned to the Columbus Diocese, although Bishop Watterson may have continued to “keep him on the books” as a diocesan priest for several years in hopes he would one day return.

A letter in the Notre Dame archives dated February 10, 1888 to Father Daniel Hudson, C.S.C. from Father Henry William Cleary records that Father P. F. Kehoe and Cleary are in the Pyrenees, “within a stone's throw from Spain and in a climate glowing with a comfortable summer warmth.” So, it

is possible to clarify that he was gone from the diocese in early 1888.

Return to Wexford

Father Kehoe returned to his home diocese of Ferns in County Wexford, Ireland where in October 1888 where he was appointed Curate of Glenbrien by Bishop James Browne. In February, 1892 he was appointed Curate to Ferns and as Curate to Gusserane in August, 1894. He was then appointed Curate to Mulrankin in February, 1895 and to Parish Priest at Cloughbawn in February, 1911. (In Ireland the Curate, often abbreviated as C.C., is a priest assigned to a parish to assist the pastor; a Parish Priest, often abbreviated as P.P., is the equivalent of Pastor.)

In 1910 the Gaelic League organized support to make it a condition that the Irish Language was an essential subject for admittance to the newly established National University. The Wexford County Council was reluctant to agree to this condition. Father Kehoe led about two hundred people to the Council Chamber and put the case so strongly that the Council agreed to support the measure.

Father Kehoe continued to experience health problems after his appointment at Cloughbawn. His doctor recommended he take a long sea voyage. Upon the invitation of his good friend and classmate Bishop Henry William Cleary, Father Kehoe made the very long voyage to New Zealand via Australia in 1913.

Father Kehoe arrived in Auckland, New Zealand from Sidney, Australia on March 15, 1914. He stayed in New Zealand for several months with Bishop Cleary. When he returned he decided to take the long way home, leaving New Zealand, crossing the Pacific for San Francisco. In San Francisco he visited another classmate and Wexford native, Monsignor John Rogers, pastor of St. Patrick's church and hero of the 1906 San Francisco earthquake.

English immigration records show Father

Kehoe arriving in Liverpool, England from New York City on June 16, 1916, completing what, at that time, would have been a dangerous sea voyage across the Atlantic. How he traveled from San Francisco to New York City is unknown.

Upon his return to Ireland he resumed his assignment as Parish Priest to the parish of Cloughbawn, in the village of Clonroche in County Wexford. He was now one of the senior parish priests of the diocese and was known as Canon Kehoe. Always a supporter of the Irish Language, Canon Kehoe was also a member of Uí Cinsealaigh Historical Society in County Wexford.

Turning his attention to his parish of Cloughbawn, Cannon Kehoe organized all the members of the parish to remodel the parish buildings and grounds, without any contribution of cash from the congregation. He decorated the church, provided new seats, side-altars and gallery and had the Sanctuary walls lined with mosaic. He built a village hall and enlarged and modernized the school. In addition, he advocated for the planting of trees and shrubs and had the streets in Clonroche village plated with ornamental trees. He established the Clonroche Benevolent Society for the assistance of the unemployed and their dependants.

Canon Paul Francis Kehoe died at the parish house in Clonroche on Friday, October 23, 1931, at the age of 73. He is buried in the Cloughbawn Cemetery in County Wexford, Ireland.

On October 26, 1931 the Wexford County Council presented the following condolence resolution at their meeting: "That we offer our heartfelt sympathy to Mr. John Kehoe, Assistant Surveyor and the Misses Kehoe, in the death of the Very Reverend Paul Canon Kehoe, P.P., Cloughbawn. By his demise the church has lost a worthy son and the people of Cloughbawn a Pastor whose every hour was concerned for their spiritual and temporal welfare. In the forefront of every Nationalist movement his ability and foresight proved invaluable, while his work for the advancement of our native language was not the least of his activities and has earned the gratitude of every Gael."

SOURCES

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1901 Census of Ireland and the 1911 Census of Ireland, the National Archives of Ireland
Wexford County Council Archives, Meeting Minutes October 26, 1931.

The Sheridans of Somerset And their Immediate Kin

by Donald M. Schlegel

(Part 2, Continued from Vol. XXXIX No. 8)

The Minaugh Family

Patrick Minaugh, the father of Rosa Minaugh Sheridan, died on October 14, 1850, aged 94 years and was buried at St. Patrick's, Junction City. This places his birth between October, 1755 and October, 1756.¹⁹ A Patrick Moynagh, son of Bernard and Brigid (Fitzsimons) Moynagh, was baptized on March 21, 1756 in Lurgan Parish, the next parish west of Killinkere and Mullagh. Sponsors were Francis Farelly and Mary Dunn. This was the only Patrick Moynagh baptized there from the



beginning of the records in January, 1755, for the next ten years and so probably should be identified as the father of Mary Moynagh Sheridan. He is the only child of Bernard and Brigid who is mentioned in the register.²⁰

In Perry County, Ohio, the first syllable of the name was pronounced like the pronoun "my" and in Nebraska the name became Minor. In Killinkere it was said in the early 20th century that the name was pronounced Mweenagh.²¹ However, by that time the common pronunciation could have become forgotten, for in 1901 there were only nine households of the name in all of County Cavan, none of them being very close to Killinkere.

Mary, the later Mrs. John Sheridan, was the eldest daughter of Patrick and Rosa Minaugh and kept house for her parents. Two of her brothers were blacksmiths, working at Carrickgorman. There was a family tradition that her parents had arranged for her marriage with a partner of their choice living in the neighborhood, but that she refused to acquiesce, and leaving home soon afterwards married John Sheridan.²²

There apparently were seven children of Patrick and Rosa (Sheridan) Minaugh, all of whom set out for America, but they seem not all to have come

together. Mrs. Rosa Minaugh is never mentioned in the stories and must have died in Ireland.

- 1) Mary, born in 1801, wife of John Sheridan
- 2) Philip, born in 1804 or 1805
- 3) James, born about 1808
- 4) Patrick, who died at sea
- 5) Ann who married Hugh Cummisky, born in the 1810s
- 6) John, born somewhere between 1805 and 1815
- 7) Hugh, whose birth is variously given from about 1810 to 1818

A detailed discussion of this family will follow that of the Somerset Sheridans.

John and Mary in Ireland

According to his tombstone at Holy Trinity in Somerset, John Sheridan was born on Nov. 17, 1801. For some years prior to marrying, he lived in Mullagh Parish, and worked on the Smith estate, which was called Cherrymount after the name of the manor, which was across the border in County Meath.²³

Mary Minaugh was born on April 10, 1801; she and John Sheridan were married on April 10, 1826; and her first child Patrick was born on April 10, 1827.²⁴ Though not impossible, there are many coincidences here and it may be that one of the dates is incorrect. The *New Lexington Tribune* of June 14, 1888, said that Mary was born in March, 1801.

John and Mary made their home in Beagh Glebe, land belonging to the Church of Ireland, in a house near the rectory. With the house they had a plot of four acres. The abandoned house still stood in 1997, with a plaque marking it as the General's birthplace, "on the road leading south out of Killinkere."²⁵ By this is meant south out of the "village" where the church stands.

A memory of Mary in Ireland is said to have survived until the 1910s. "Fifteen years ago the present writer inquired of Pat Cullen (or Quillan) about Sheridan's mother. Pat was then about ninety, and was living, where he had been for sixty years, in the very house that had been vacated by Old John Sheridan. 'I remember her well', he replied, 'and

her children. She was a plain featured woman, but a dandy housekeeper. Her maiden name was Mweenagh, Mary Mweenagh."²⁶ Like many tales from Ireland, this must be taken with a grain of salt. According to the census of Ireland, Patrick Cullen of Beagh Glebe was aged 62 in 1901 and was aged 75 in 1911, and so was born about 1836 to 1839. He could have had no memory of the Sheridans. However, his wife Catherine's age was reported to be 65 in 1901 and 84 in 1911. If the latter were accurate, she might barely remember the Sheridans; and she would have been more likely than Patrick to have taken note of Mary's housekeeping.

About two years after Patrick was born, Rose Sheridan came along, in 1829. After another two years came Phil, on March 6, 1831. Despite controversies in the 1880s, today there is very little doubt that Phil was born in the house at Beagh Glebe.

(To be continued)

NOTES

19) The stone says:

PATRICK MYNAGH

DIED

OCT. 14, 1850

Aged 94 yrs.

It lies straight back (east) from the north wall of the rectory, amidst the Clark family.

20) The Lurgan parish register is on Family History Library microfilm 0926134.

21) Meehan p. 298

22) O'Connell, 377. He probably heard the story from Mary's granddaughters Nellie Sheridan Wilson and Mary Sheridan.

23) O'Connell, IER, pp 377 and 385-386. Again, O'Connell's source probably is Mrs. Sheridan's granddaughters.

24) Tombstones. Family bible in Drake, William F., *Little Phil : The Story of General Philip Henry Sheridan*, Prospect, Conn.: Biographical Publishing Company, c2005, p. 2 note 2.

25) Meehan, *Breifne*, p. 300-301. *Killinkere, Its History and Heritage*, pp 130-133. Posting on ancestry.com

26) Meehan, *Breifne*, p. 298

St. Mary and St. Peter Parishes, Chillicothe
Marriage Records, 1837-1848
 (Concluded, from Vol. XXXIX No. 9)

Note: From these records, it appears likely that the Jesuit Fathers split the care of the congregation, Father Kalcher handling the Germans and Father D'Hope the English-speaking members.

1844, continued

Apr. 29 Vincent Meyer and Barbara Kaiser H. D. Juncker
 May 2 Frederick Deeger and Catherine Hirt HDJ
 May 6 Patrick Flanegen and Margaret Lumback, civilly HDJ
 page 121
 June 18 Joseph Stelker and Theresa Fritsch HDJ
 Nov. 25 Ludwig Schmitt and Barbara Kaiser HDJ
 Nov. 26 Peter Rasec {Rasse} and Lydia Mary Elizabeth Green HDJ
 Dec. 30 Michael Kirsh and Anna Maria Hechinger J. B. Emig, S.J.
 page 122

1845

Aug. 23 Francis Sibold and Catherine Jacob; wit. Philip Hartlaub and Rudolph Siegfried JBE.
 page 123

1846

All by Rev. Otto Borgess:
 May 20 Nicholas Casy and Catherine Mann
 July 4 Michael Freel and Rachel Bochart
 July 11 Joseph Stelker and Cecilia Schneider
 July 13 Peter J. Rogers and Harriet A. Kerns
 Oct. 19 Landolin Hess and Maria Lind
 Oct. 26 William Lenix and Amalia Hird {no county record}
 Oct. 27 John Reizer and Elizabeth Gänsheimer
 Nov. 3 Anton Zimmermann and Catherine Bauer
 Nov. 5 George Amon and Margaret Banns
 Nov. 14 Charles Crill and Maria Anna Schoen
 Nov. 21 Peter Kern and Rosa Schwatzler

Dec. 26 William Landers and Mary Ann Doherty
 page 124

1847

Both by Rev. Otto Borgess:
 Feb. 11 Andrew Road and Christiana Borsk {Christina Borst}
 Apr. 8 John Streitenberger and Permelia Ridgeway {no county record}
 page 125
 June 29 Basil Bogenshütz and Maria Bauer Franc. Xav. Kalcher, S.J.
 July 26 Mathias Helker and Mary Dresner widow of Roman FXX
 Aug. 1 John Streitenberger and Margaret Linzl FXX {no county record}
 Sept. 27 Michael Seelig and Elizabeth Oefflerlein; wit. Henry Hoffmann and Michael Wunder FXX
 Oct. 3 Mathias Kiely and Caroline Fürterer FXX
 Nov. 15 Jacob Zimmerman and Theresa Bohn; wit. Michael Bundle and Genevieve Kellerer FXX
 Nov. 24 John Dinken and Mary Böes; witnesses W. Anderson and Carol Wade F. Xav. D'Hope, S.J.
 page 126

Nov. 25 Matthew Patrick Braddoc {Braddock} and Catherine Lenex {Lenox}; wit. William & James Lenex {her father} FXD

1848

Feb. 3 George Krines and Catherine März of Chillicothe; wit. Henry Hoffman and Nicholas Krines FXX
 Feb. 27 Henry Woods and Joan Mulvey; wit. Edward Dawney and Elizabeth Hamilton FXD
 May 14 John Zimmermann and Catherine Wunder; wit. John Gäb and Andrew Heldenmuth FXX
 May 29 Patrick Boyle and Joan Wenzler; wit.

Conrad Niehoff and Elizabeth Hamilton FXD
 June 4 Sebastian Schmausser and Praxeda
 Eschger; wit. Sebastian Merkle and Rose
 Esker FXK
 page 127
 June 22 John Smith and Sarah Sullivan; wit. John
 Linegan and Margaret Boyle FXD
 June 29 Joseph Aid and Genevieve Kellhofer;
 wit. Theodore Kellhofer and Joan Lind [in
 Father Kalcher's hand]
 Aug. 17 James McClane and Sarah Will, previ-
 ously civilly married; wit. John and Mary
 McNally FXD
 July 27 Michael Helferich and Amalia Mutschler
 FXK
 Sept. 25 Jacob Klauser and Maria Mayr FXK

Oct. 12 Gabriel Shortwood and Rosanna Trainar,
 civilly FXD
 Oct. 29 Henry Ritter and Sophia Stark; wit.
 Charles Ritter and Edward Bogonschütz FXK
 page 128
 Nov. 3 James McKenzie and Sarah McKenzie,
 with dispensation for consanguinity; wit. Mr.
 Byrne and Andrew Quinn FXD
 Nov. 26 George Stauder and Catherine Seebold
 in Chillicothe; wit. Alexander Santo and
 Christian Seebold FXK
 Dec. 27 Samuel Mathew (noncatholic) and Sarah
 Bell, married about six years ago before a
 public magistrate FXD
 [end of record]

What Ever Became of...

Rev. Christopher L. Pindar (1842-1906)

We sometimes receive questions from Cincinnati about Rev. Christopher Pindar, who was pastor of St. Joseph Parish, Circleville, in the early days of this diocese. His life is somewhat difficult to document because he transformed it twice. He began life as Christopher Picker, apparently in Oldenburg, Germany, and came to Cincinnati with his family. But in the early 1860s he began to report his birthplace as Ohio and, fancying himself a poet, he changed his name to Christopher Laomedon Pindar. He received the A.B. and M.A. degrees from St. Xavier College in Cincinnati in 1863 and 1865 and was ordained a priest in the chapel at Mt. St. Mary's by Archbishop Purcell on Sept. 8, 1865. Books of his poetry were published in Cincinnati in 1865 (juvenile poems) and in Philadelphia in 1867 (on Christian themes) and 1868 (American heroes).

His second transformation occurred in the spring of 1869, when he rejected the priesthood and abjured the Catholic faith. Informed of the problems

there by William M. Anderson, Bishop Rosecrans went to St. Joseph's on May 3 and near the end of Mass formally pronounced Pindar suspended and excommunicated. He apparently had problems with papal infallibility. And very soon he married, in Cleveland. He was accepted into the Episcopal Church and was received by Bishop Bedell into its ministry in November, 1870. He served that church in Cincinnati and Sandusky, Ohio; Dayton and Hickman, Kentucky (meanwhile graduating from the Medical College of Ohio); and Maryland. His last service was at St. James' Church, Pewee Valley, Kentucky. He died on Nov. 16, 1906 and is buried at St. James. He was survived by his widow and two or three children.

Remarks on Rev. Pindar can be found in *Journal of the Diocese of Kentucky*, 1907, p 53 (provided to us by Rev. Jim Wilkinson of the Diocese of Kentucky) and *The Churchman*, Volume 94, p 810 (Nov. 24, 1906).

Father Richard Fitzgerald's Birth

Father Richard Fitzgerald, mentioned last month, was born on Nov. 8, 1848, son of John and Mary (Clanchy) Fitzgerald, and was baptized at St. Michael's, Limerick (date unknown).

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