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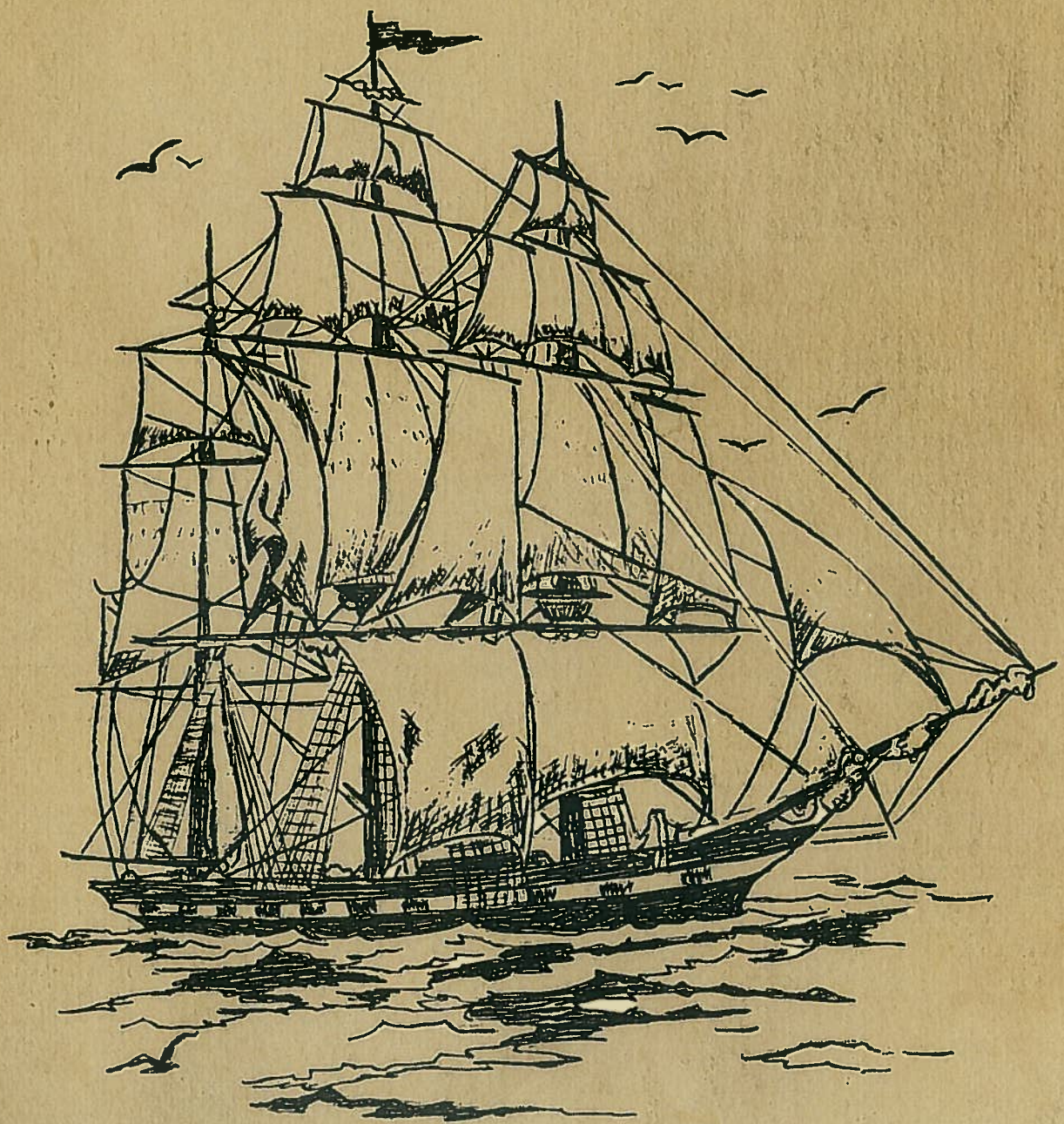
THOMAS AND BRIDGET ~~SCAHAN~~ ROACH:

IRISH EMIGRANTS TO AMERICA;
THEIR STORY AND THE HISTORY OF THEIR DESCENDANTS

by
CYNTHIA ROACH HAACK



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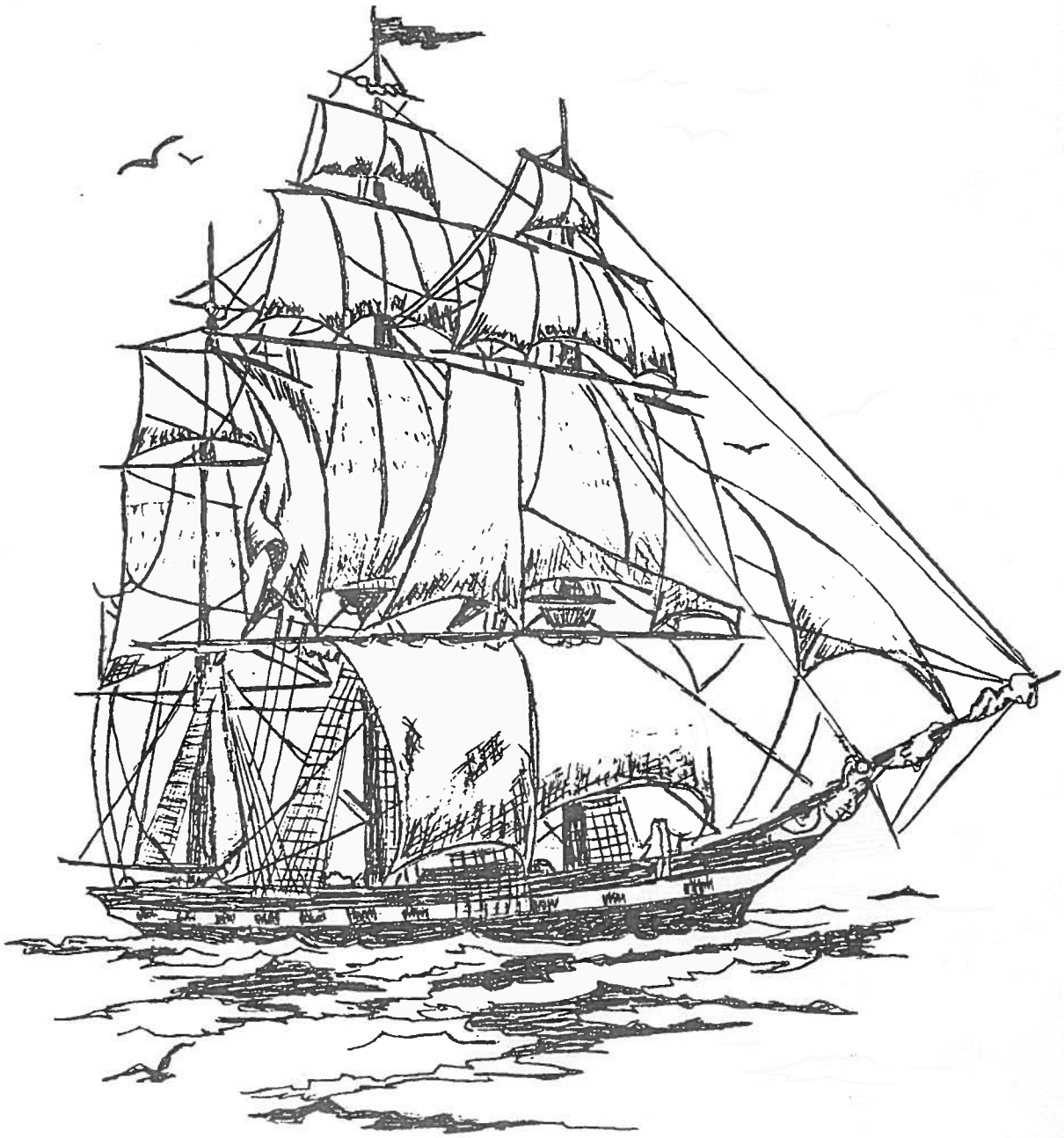


PREFACE

The stories of the Roaches were an integral part of my growing up. My father, Jess E. Roach, provided great entertainment with these tales and they subtlety forged my ties to the past. They were told while the family gathered in the living-room on cold, winter evenings; during warm Sunday afternoons when company was at our house, and more often, each evening around the supper table. Some were overheard while my father worked and exchanged yarns with the "old timers" in Eagle Bend who sat around in his shoe repair shop. The few aunts and uncles who lived near us filled in the gaps. These stories were of the family's comings and goings; tragedies; excesses; failures, and moments of courage. Vague names of towns, far distant, names of a few relatives unfamiliar to me, and the failure to "prove-up" homesteading in Dakota were among the memories shared. All were quite proud of the one member of the original clan who had joined the army during the Indian Wars and was an "Indian Scout" out west. A favorite story was about the great uncle who, as a baby or small child, was hidden in a barrel or trunk and smuggled on board when there was no money for his fare to America; he almost suffocated before they were able to get to him and rescue him.

Any queries as to what had become of them all brought only thoughtful pauses and puzzled answers. None of my own family made any apparent attempt to locate any of these relatives-men aren't much good at this sort of thing, generally; it's the women in families who save the treasures, write the letters, keep the diaries, and preserve the family traditions. The "Depression" came along making money short; then WWII interfered and time and effort was involved in other pursuits. The older members of the family were slowly slipping away; the younger ones left had fewer memories and less interest in their past and so answers to many questions were steadily becoming lost.

When my father's health began to fail and we knew he would not be with us much longer, I asked him a number of questions of specific people, towns, happenings, and dates but he was becoming forgetful and got things confused. I didn't really know what to ask him. He spent part of the last year he was alive in 1974, writing down some things he'd remembered-a thumb-nail sketch of the Roaches. After he died, it was a year before I could bring myself to look through these little colored sheets of paper he had written on from his note pad. Reading them, my curiosity was renewed.

The nation's Bi-Centennial was celebrated and "Roots" was shown on TV. In that same period of time, a Christmas card came from Joe Roache of Rapid City, South Dakota, addressed to my father-it was forwarded to my mother. In it he told amongst other things, about the members of the James Roache family of Woonsocket, South Dakota that were still alive. I resolved then to search and find out what had happened to all the other Roach family members and where they had all

gone. My only regret then and periodically, as I've worked on this project was that I had not started years ago while my father and many others were still alive-they would have enjoyed it so and I, in turn, would have gotten so much more information from them. It has taken me 6 years of almost constant work researching and gathering information for this history and the past 2½ years actually organizing it all and writing it down.

This history covers a little more than 100 years and ends with the birth of the last member of the fourth generation in January of 1949-possibly someone will be able to finish it and bring it up to date someday-one of the most difficult things I began to encounter was the accelerating divorces in our enlarged family and allied lines; one began to see this develop slowly in the mid-1920's and really gained momentum during the "Depression" and through WWII. Each decade more separations than the one before; these events are almost impossible to document as they involve so much emotion. They create additional families who then drift away and contact is lost; relatives and family members gather about the divorced member and in most cases will tell an outsider nothing. So most of the divorces and subsequent events surrounding them and the people involved are incomplete here.

Special acknowledgements must go to a number of Roach family members for their encouragement, sharing of their own family's vital statistics, and "cash grants" to help pay for postage, search fees, stationery, and copying charges. First of all, I wish to thank Caro Sedgewick Roach who has become a dear, dear friend besides being a great second cousin; she not only shared what she had researched for 3 years on the John and Mary Kelly Roach family but countless bits of stories, dates, names, places, and photographs on them and other members of the larger Roach family. Special thanks to Goldie Ice Munger and her family for the hospitality shown me at her home in Shelbyville, Indiana when I visited there 2½ years before she died. Her memories as a child in "Indian Territory" solved the mystery of Bridget Scahan Roach's death and final resting place and why and how some of the Roaches ended up in Oklahoma. Agnes Roach Lalley Burry has been such a delight to know and visit; what a keen memory she has! Her recollections of her family (Edward and Maggie Roach Burns Roach) and the details of Thomas Roach, Sr.'s tragic death in Indiana, her mother's memories of childhood, and much information of their allied lines and other details on William Patrick Roach's descendants, has been invaluable. Many thanks also go to Catherine Roache Belgard, Irene Cheek Brewer, Bess Roach Burnett, Floss Humphrey Burry, Marie Roache Munro Caudill, Violet Roach Juola, Jane Wagner Kilgore, Theris Cook Lee Liszczak, Mary Bergin Lynch, Nita Alexander McKay, Phyllis Roach Toland O'hathairne, Mary Roach Parker, Myrtle Roach Oyres Pilling, Jalma Heng Roach, Ray Roach, and Joe L. Roache. All generously shared treasured photographs. There are many others who aided me. I contacted at least one member of nearly every family and only a few did not respond or did not wish to be included. There were those who sent what they wanted written about themselves as they submitted it and that was done. The Sanders descendants were difficult to locate and so less is written about them; also, the Samuels girls.

This history was written with a love of family in mind; a pride in our Irish heritage; respect for all members and the events they lived with, and through. Nothing was recorded with malice or ill will toward anyone-there are bound to be errors and mistakes and some will find misinformation concerning themselves or members of their families. I would be grateful to hear from anyone that has corrections for me.

I hope that this history will be interesting and informative to all; entertaining to some and will give each person reading it a renewed interest in their own past and a respect for those that have gone before, who gave so much so we could have life and a better one than they found.

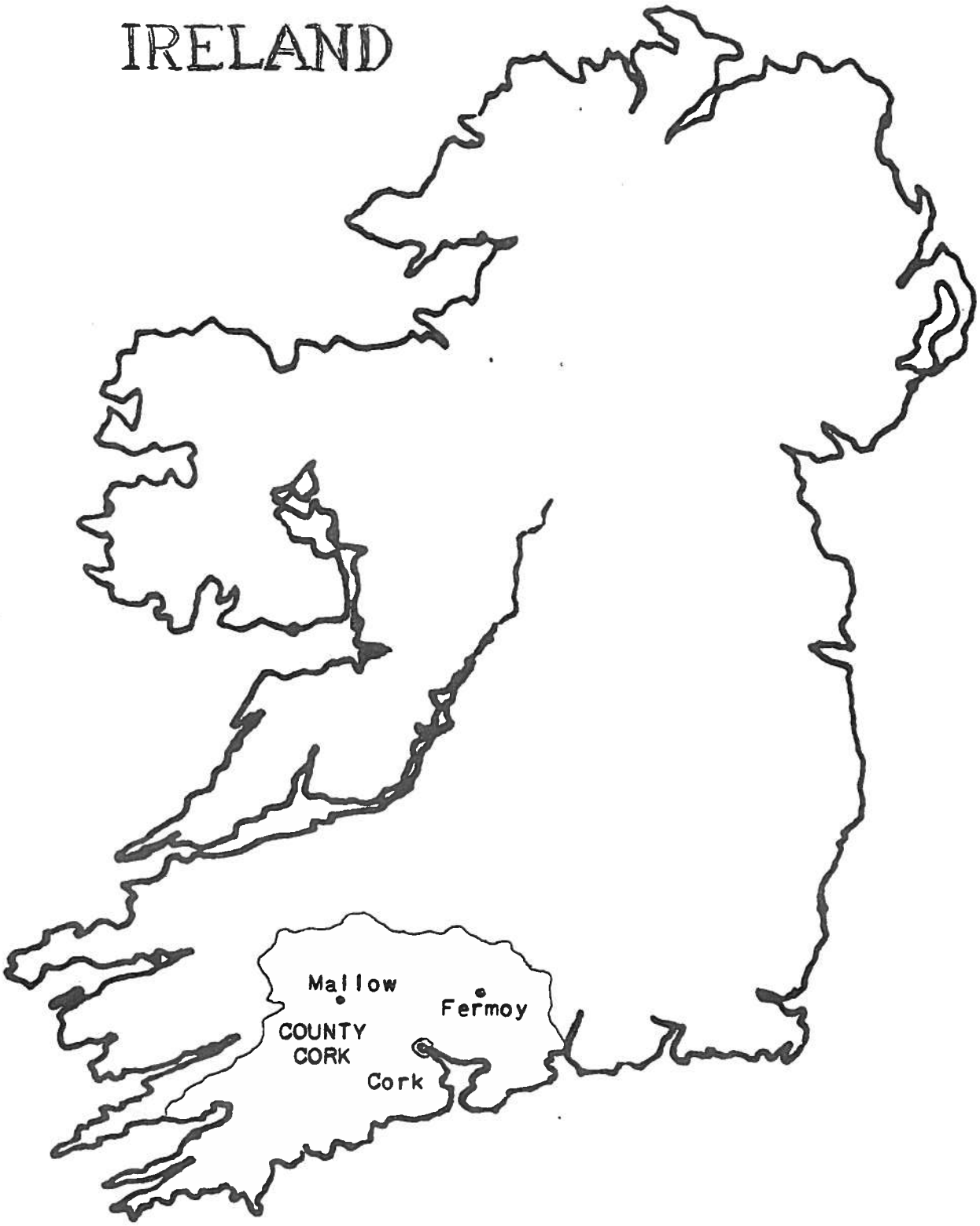
-Cynthia Roach Haack
2520 La Guna Ct.
Emporia, Ks. 66801

July 22, 1982

DEDICATION

This family history is dedicated to the memory of my father, Jess E. Roach, who loved telling of his Roach relatives and ancestors, and over the years entertained family and friends with his recollections of by-gone days. Without the clues and inspiration these memories furnished this book could not have been written.

-Cynthia Roach Haack


IRELAND
Mallow
Fermoy
COUNTY
CORK
Cork

THOMAS AND BRIDGET SCAHAN ROACH: IRISH EMIGRANTS TO AMERICA; THEIR STORY AND THE HISTORY OF THEIR DESCENDANTS

"Time like an ever rolling stream,
Bears all thy sons away.
They fly forgotten, as a dream
Dies at the opening day." - Methodist Hymn

Thomas Roach came from the southern part of Ireland; County Cork according to family reports. We know little of his beginnings due to his untimely death in his early forties and the misplacement of his "letter of intent" to become a citizen in the Federal District Courthouse in Trenton, New Jersey.* The name Roach originated in 3 southern counties of Ireland and is of French or Norman origin-one of the many influences and traces of the Norman Conquest of "Erin". It was originally "De La Roche" and means "of the rock". In Gaelic it is written De Róiste or Róistéach .

"Roche, Roache; Nor. 'de la Roche' - of the rock, from residence beside some prominent rock; an old Norman surname. Families of this name settled in different parts of Ireland but the best known were those of Cork, Limerick, and Wexford. In the first-named county, the Roches obtained by marriage the district about Fermoy known as Roche's country; head of this family was Viscount Fermoy. The Roches of Limerick were a wealthy and respected merchant family. Among 20 exempted from pardon by Ireton when he obtained posession of the city in 1651, were Alderman Jordan Roche and Edmund Roche. Roche of Rochesland was one of the principal gentlemen of Wexford in 1598". 1

"Various places and towns especially all over Ireland are named after Roches. The place-name Rochetown occurs 6 times in County Wexford, twice each in counties Cork and Kilkenny and once in County Limerick, Tipperary, Kildare, Meath, Westmeath, and Dublin. In the last named there is also a Rocheshill; Roche's Street in Limerick commemorates the family living there." 2

Almost nothing is known of Thomas Roach's wife, Bridget Scahan except what surname books tell us of the origin of her last name, and the information given by their son Joseph Dennis Roach in his military pension files. It is most likely her family originated in County Tipperary and that she was born and raised there. The name Scahan is interesting; it has several spellings: Skeahan, Skehan, Skeane, and O'Skeghan. On several of her children's death records they have spelled it as Skane, Scahan, and the priest at their baptisms wrote it as Scheehan, etc.. In Gaelic it is written thusly: Ó Scéachain meaning descendant of Skeahan which meant "from a brier" or "of a brier"; and is an old Tipperary surname. Another version of it in Gaelic is: Ó Scéachain; cf. Mac Scéachain ". 3

* The ship's captain of the "Ivanhoe" on which he arrived in this country did not list his place of origin on the passenger list.

1 "Irish Names and Surnames"; General Pub. Co., Baltimore, Md. 1967
2 "American Origins", by L.G. Pine; GR 929.1 Tex. A&M Univ. Library.
3 "Irish Names and Surnames"; Gen. Pub. Co., Baltimore, Md. 1967.


IRELAND
COUNTY
TIPPERARY
Tipperary
Drangan

Bridget Scahan may have been living in Drangan, County Tipperary when she met and married Thomas Roach. Another town mentioned by Joseph Dennis Roach as his birthplace, besides Drangan, was a place called Newtown. There is a Newtown on the northern border of County Tipperary and County Offaly; another one is located just north of the city of Tipperary. Possibly after Joseph Dennis was born and not too old, Bridget and Thomas were forced to leave their home in Drangan, being either evicted or going of their own free will when remaining members of her family died. It could be that a relative or family member lived in Newtown and so they went there to live. Another reason could have been that Thomas didn't want Bridget to be alone after he left for America, and to be sure there was someone to help her and look after their small son, she went to live with relatives who would take her in in Newtown. All this is conjecture-so much will never be known-we can only go on family stories, guesses and logical conclusions.

In all the stories my own father told, plus other relatives, they say our family name came from County Cork; I also recall hearing County Tipperary as our origin. So that explains why there were two counties mentioned at different times-Thomas Roach came from County Cork and Bridget Scahan from County Tipperary.

So from somewhere in County Cork Thomas Roach was born and orphaned at an early age; born in about 1828, he may have lost his parents and other family members in an early famine in Ireland in about 1830. Family stories tell how he was taken in by a family who farmed and were mean to him. Whether or not they were relatives or just neighbors is not known.

Ireland was and is a beautiful and charming place. But its people have always had hard times. Irish people who left extolled its virtues; the charm, the greenness, the names of the people and places roll lyrically off the tongue. But politics, economics of times to come, and a population ever burgeoning were to spell doom to many Irish in a way they could never fathom in the 1820's.

For the most part, the Irish were country people-they lived in whitewashed cottages with thatched roofs along the rural roads and lanes and burned peat in their fireplaces. Piles of peat sat stacked by each door. The villages were close knit and small; families had lived in the same place for years and years and everyone knew everyone else and what their business was-they could do a favor for anyone if they were a mind to. No need to be lonely there. It was a country full of warm fellowship and you could always hear good conversation over a "mug of stout". It was also a beautiful country, green and especially lovely in the spring. Flowering shrubs bordered the hedgerows and country lanes.

The cause of the Irish problems was that the peasant could not keep up with the times; could not change much the way he lived, worked, and earned a living in the 19th century. Times were changing but the Irish peasant stayed almost as he had over dozens of previous decades. On top of all that, his land was owned and controlled by landlords who lived in England and cared little for those who worked his land-they saw Ireland only as a means of their income. The greater mass of peasants lived in hopeless poverty; they were tenants who worked desparately on patches of ground too small to support their families. The first half of the 1800's their situation grew more dismal year by year.

The peasant society was a stable one-old ways continued on the same over time. The ability of the people to take crises and diversity was made possible because of the "cushion" of family and neighborly closeness. The village was what each person identified himself with and each had a responsibility and place there. When the "Old Countryman" had gone to America he identified himself with his village; spoke fondly of family, relationships, and his position there. The family was the operating economic unit-each member was obligated to the others in his group-much of the land was communal in a way and not marked in any well-defined plot. Family land in the village was locked in an unyielding bond. At the core of this arrangement was the marriage system.

Every adult person was expected to get married-it added a new economic unit-the bride's dowry added to the well-being of her in-laws; but the man's family also had to then divide their available land so the new couple had some. As time went on these land divisions became smaller and smaller. All the other factors in the village that took from what he could grow and earn kept multiplying also; the taxes to the absentee landlords, their share of the crops, tithes to the church, etc...

In every kind of work the peasant did, he ran into the same difficulty-he could never get enough money together at one time to get ahead or accumulate belongings to help him produce more or make his tasks easier. Every bit of income was spent long before they got it in their hands; it was already destined for certain items and not to be used for anything else, such as taxes, rent, shoe money, salt money, and funeral money.

Disasters tied the "cottier" to his place; terrible happenings, familiar. This ability to "hang on" when everything was going wrong numbed the ones who tried to keep going, because it had always been this way and they were so used to it. The peasant suffered from waning spirit and a strong will to really fight back and overcome whatever it was. They became rather passive about life and accepted it with a kind of fatality. Revolting or getting away was just not part of their dreams.

The priests, of course, were great comforts to the peasants and models of stability and hope. They looked after everyone's souls and their bodies as well. Too much drinking was looked upon askance and those guilty were continually scolded; it didn't seem to do much good. They were also the few and sometimes the only educated persons in the village or parish. Education was hard to come by as it was not available for the peasantry and most, if they had the time or stamina, would not have bothered to learn to read or write anyway. Some learning in these skills was given on the sly by the priests, wherever and whenever they could. Behind hedgerows, in barns, behind closed doors, etc.. Whenever a letter came to a person, if one did, it was taken to the man "of the cloth" to decipherand was read to the one who received it. All other messages that required education to understand was also translated by the parish priest-he wrote for them, too.

When strange things happened that were not easily explained, the Irish blamed the "fairies". If the mare's tail got burrs in it or the milk turned sour they said the fairies caused it-the priests knew how to exorcise them. Fairies after all were only spirits of those who had died without the last rites of the church. Most Irish were catholics

and England being Protestant caused no end of problems.

The prejudice of the English against Catholiscism plus the political subordination the Irish suffered made their lives even worse. So much of the population's energy for basic rights ended up nowhere. The achievment of Catholic emancipation in 1828 after a long struggle led by Daniel O'Connell gave the Irish property owners a voice in Parliament at last, but the law barely touched the lives of the peasantry.

Political agitation following this allowance of more Irish participation in Parliament did not help the average peasant. The issues argued there only affected the small middle class groups. These issues rarely dealt with the problems that the peasants found important. The only way the peasants were able to get any reaction or attention from the government was to resort to violence which was self-defeating. Secret groups of young men(Blackfeet, Whiteboys, etc.)especially, were formed to burn buildings, ravage the crops of a heartless landlord or beat up a local official after sundown. The sad thing was that people were no better off after the incident than before.

So time passed and the Irish peasantry endured. In the 1800's when England began to build and use factories, she wanted to keep it all on home soil. Her colonies could send her the raw materials she would need and she would make them into goods she would then sell overseas. The Irish were needed to raise the food needed to feed the factory workers.

At this time, England encouraged the Irish landowners to plant all their lands to grain to furnish English factory workers with plenty of food. The Irish tenantry were to do all the work-they owned little or no land by now and had no money with which to pay their rent; they had to pay in days work. Some estimates are the average peasant paid half his yearly working days to the landlords. They were quickly evicted from their cottages if they got behind in their rent-local law enforcement did this dirty work upon the orders of any landlord-new tenants could always be easily found.

The tenants depended on potatoes for their food. It is a dangerous thing to depend on one item for survival. Theirs was a monotonous diet of milk and potatoes. Meat was a rare luxury as was tea and sugar. There was never enough food. The gradual inadequate food supply was caused in large part to the increase in population, which progressed more rapidly and with greater damage in Ireland than anywhere else in Europe. The island held less than a million people in 1660; by 1840 it had a population of over 8,000,000. By that date 80% of the families were "cottiers" who owned no land and rented tiny plots and kept themselves alive by working for others. The only way tenants could adjust to the situation as time went on, was to divide their land allotments into ever more smaller parcels. A small farm of the 1840's was average if it contained 2 or 3 acres-anything over that was highly unusual. Eventually, it fell to 1 or 1½ acres. A farm of this size was not large enough to sustain a family, even one that lived on milk and potatoes. The peasants got along only by working wherever they could at whatever they could-many went to England and got seasonal jobs and brought home the money. Thousands crossed the Irish Sea annually to earn enough cash to bring home for rent, oatmeal before the potatoes came on and other basic necessities. They would work then to eke out the things they had planted from their rented soil.

Sadly, the money they were able to earn was so meagre-it is estimated each family in those days earned from all sources only about 32 shillings per year. In present times(1980)that comes to only about $4.00-what it was worth then and what it bought can only be guessed at, but even for those times it was a pittance.

The Irish were not wasteful. When it came to the potato they used every part of it. The "haulum" or stalk was used as part of the thatch on their roofs and the peelings could be fed to the pig. Most people tried to keep a pig, not to enjoy the ham or bacon themselves, but to sell it when it was fattened to get the money for shoes or rent.

There was a special kind of potato or "pratie" as the Irish called the, called a "lumper". It would grow almost anywhere and didn't need to be fertilized. People planted lots of "lumpers". Out of 9 million people who were living in Ireland in 1845, 4 million depended entirely on potatoes. An elderly emigrant recalled, "Och, we had everything we wanted in the potato, God Bless it. We had only to throw a few of them in the hot ashes and turn them, and we had our supper".

The way a man lived in the old days was to plant plenty of potatoes and raise a pig and some chickens, taking the pig and chickens to market to get money to buy clothes and shoes. But gradually as time went on, rents grew higher and the pig and chickens wouldn't pay for things anymore so they were given up. People could not get enough to feed them. It was potatoes alone, then.

Potatoes alone as a complete diet did not give a man much strength. And even if you left the potatoes in the ground until they were fully grown to be dug and eaten, it was difficult to keep them from one harvest to the next. During the months of May through August the old crop was usually eaten up and the new one not ready to eat yet. Those spring and summer months were called the "meal months". In these "meal months" people that could afford it bought meal and made "stirabout" or oatmeal gruel to eat. Those who had no money to buy meal planted their potatoes for themselves for fall and took to the roads and begged. Some men got enough together to buy passage on a packet to England to get work. They'd take their tools with them and worked on English farms until the potato crop was ready and then they'd return to Ireland with cash; sometimes as much as 3 pounds for their summer's work. There were not many who could do that.

Due to the poor diet of the Irish and their inability to work hard the landlords thought they weren't producing enough. So they decided the best thing to do with their holdings in Ireland was to turn the farms into cattle ranges-roast beef was a favorite in England. In many places tenants were evicted. The local sheriff or law enforcement agents would knock down the "cottiers" huts so they could not come back to them. Still, most of the Irish managed to get along, that is, until 1845!

In 1845 a disease hit the potato crops all over Europe, Great Britain, and Ireland. The leaves grew back after the original vines had shriveled and then rotted on the stems. In countries like Germany this blight was a serious matter but in Ireland, it was a tragedy. In September of 1845, the blight was first seen on the potato plants. Half the crop was ruined. By 1846 the disease had spread all over Ireland-no potatoes at all were saved. It was the same in 1847, 1848 and in 1849. At first the people accepted this setback calmly enough not realizing tragedy was at hand. Panic followed and then despair. Peo-

ple handled this in different ways-some went into their cottages and lay down to wait for death; others left their homes and wandered the roads to beg for a living.

Before long, thousands were dying. In the poorer parts of the island especially in the west, many bodies lay unburied or were slid unceremoniously into hastily dug graves. The priest's masses and prayers seem to do no good-the great patriot Daniel o'Connell set out for Rome to seek the Pope's help but he died before he reached the Holy City and the potato blight continued.

"Soon 'famine fever' was raging as well as starvation. People were dying by the thousands now. Mary Hayden and George A. Moonan in their Short History of the Irish People writes:

> 'By the roadside the people lay down and died. Neighbors entering a cabin, found within the corpses of all those who had lived there. Starving crowds made their way to the newly built workhouses.. ...where in the overcrowded buildings, the famine fever raged, and every morning a cartload of corpses was conveyed to the great pit dug in the churchyard to receive them!'

In places the people ate seaweed. In some, they ate dead donkeys. There were rumors on cannibalism."4 Many lived for a time on nettles and other weeds they found in the fields and cooked like spinach, but this caused them to have dysentery. Others in desperation, pawned family treasures; wedding dresses lovingly saved; special clothes for good only; the few pieces of furniture they owned, and clothes laid by to be buried in. All were eventually traded to the few people, usually a local merchant or usurer, who had money to lend or grain put by. The peasants owned so few things of any value; Cecil Woodham-Smith in her book, "The Great Humger" writes, "Furniture was a luxury; the inhabitants of Tullohobagly, County Donegal, numbering 9,000 had in 1837 only 10 beds, 93 chairs, and 243 stools between them. Pigs slept with their owners on dirt floors, manure heaps choked doors, sometimes even stood inside; the evicted and unemployed put roofs over ditches, burrowed into banks, and existed in bog holes".5

".....potatoes would run out and grain would have to be eaten instead; the laborers would then have to buy it on credit, at exhorbitant prices from the petty dealer and usurer who was the scourge of the Irish village-the dreaded 'Gombeen Man'."6 A little oatmeal tasted so good and kept them for a few more days. But slowly the very young, mothers with newborns, and the very old perished, usually dying first. The strongest were the teenagers and those young people in their 20's and early 30's. One could keep the rent collectors away by leaving part of the roof undone or appearing in a "state of repair"...if there were no pig, he could also not collect on that. And some, who knew of their whereabouts, moved into nearby caves where one could exist out of the elements until the tax or rent collector left the area. If there

4 "Passage to America" by Katherine B. Shippen; Harper & Row, Pub.; East 33rd St., New York, N.Y.; 1949-1950. p. 1 8-109.
5 "The Great Hunger", by Cecil Woodham-Smith; New English Lib.,Ltd.; London; Pub. by Love & Malcomson, Ltd., Redhill, Surrey. 1962-new edition, 1974.
6 Ibid., pp 30.

were no one around or it appeared as if no one lived in the place anymore, they could not collect from ghosts. So they moved on and the tenants returned to their cottages until the next time. Eventually, the tax people got onto this, and when they came to what appeared an abandoned cottage, they would knock it down so the tenants could not return to it.

In the midst of all this turmoil and tragedy was Thomas Roach, now a young man of 16 or 17 in the year of 1846. Whoever this family was that took him in as an orphan may have been relatives so they felt an obligation upon the death of his parents to care for him. When small he could not help with the work and in those times yet, life was not as precarious nor food as hard to come by, so he was welcomed. In time, he would grow and be another person in the household to help with the work and do more than just earn his keep-an investment as it were. But now the famine was upon them-the first year, 1845 was hard, but the family continued to keep him-he had a home with them, but the ill feelings began to creep in; he now was an extra mouth to feed; possibly not up to paying his way anymore; the arguments and quarreling over small things-demanding more work and effort that was difficult to do. The feeling around him continually that he was not welcome, in their way and not really "one of them". But he endured not having anyplace else to go and putting up with the bad feelings and ill will, until, the day sometime after he had turned 18, in 1846, and full-grown now, he and the farmer whom he lived and worked came to a breaking point. Something or some event sent the hate and bad feelings boiling up and out of Thomas Roach so that without considering the consequences in a moment of rage he went at this man who had raised him and possibly abused him, and beat him until he thought the man was dead. In this instance, then, Thomas Roach left wherever it was he called "home" in County Cork, probably taking nothing with him but the clothes on his back, and fled from there, always believing until the day he died that he had killed this man. He ran east over the county line into County Tipperary, going along with others who now were constantly on the move, filling the roads through every little village and town in Ireland; one amonst many who may also have been fleeing from crimes or acts of desperation, or just to move on to a place where someone would take them in and feed them.

He eventually ended up in a place called Drangan-a village in the south and east of County Tipperary. Here for some reason he must have stayed for a time; either given a job to earn his keep and get some food or was taken in by a family that took pity on him and gave him a place to sleep and something to eat. How long he was here is not known, but it was long enough to meet, fall in love with, and marry Bridget Scahan. What her circumstances were will also never be known, but only guessed at. If one reasons after knowing other similar situations in that time from reading accounts written by others, and those who lived then, she was probably born and raised in that area of Drangan and was still with her family in their home. How many had died in the Scahan household and what other members Bridget was helping to care for is a guess, but it is possible a parent may have still been alive and several brothers and sisters if they were nearer her age. She may also have been living with an older brother or sister who was married and took her in.

In our own family's stories there is one similar: Mary Kelly Roach's mother, Ann Quinn. She had been finally left alone at home and only had an older brother alive who was married; he took Ann in but his wife never liked nor got along with Ann in this situation. There was constant bad feelings in this household because of her being there. She worked a

year and saved all she could and then finally packed all her belongings and her extra savings in a trunk; her brother may have taken her to the place she was to leave them, and she was off to America. But soon after the ship was away from the shore and out to sea some distance, it sank and many of the immigrants drowned. Ann Quinn was one of the lucky ones, was saved and brought back to the port, but her trunk with all her belongings plus her money had been lost. So now she had to make her way back home to her brother's house and his hateful wife-can you imagine the welcome she got? She vowed to try again-worked and saved until she again had enough to make the trip; this time she made it and quite possibly landed in Boston or New York. Just a young girl of 19 or 20, but about the average of many of the Irish immigrants. She had already been through enough sadness and trauma to last a lifetime. The Kelly-Roach family stories tell that she had been "promised" through the efforts of a matchmaker in Ireland to the young man who would later, in fact, become her husband in America-John Kelly. He had come on ahead to America before her.

Thomas Roach married Bridget Scahan in late 1846 or in 1847. These were the worsening years of the famine. How they managed to plan and begin a life together in spite of these odds is a wonder. Everywhere conditions continued to get worse; more of their own friends and family members dying or leaving for America. Thomas may have found work on one of the work projects Britain sponsored in Ireland to give her subjects jobs. It was one of the minor efforts the British made in those years to aid the Irish-by the time they finally started these projects it was too little and too late for many.

As the crisis mounted and the famine became devastating, England tried to ship grain to Ireland but due to the Navigation Acts, it could only be sent in British vessels and none were ever available when needed. The possibility of carrying grain in warships was considered but this was thought of as interfering in England's trade. They tried to set up public works in Ireland such as building a railroad for example, but considered that, too, as interfering with private enterprise. Such money as was being spent on public works in Ireland was mostly wasted.

The Quakers in America were quick to respond to needs of Ireland when they learned the dire situation there; they sent what aid they could along with two United States government's battleships loaded with American grain. But these offers amounted to almost nothing in the face of the need.

The peasant could hardly comprehend what was happening to him as he looked over his barren fields, growing nothing to sell or eat. His neighbors lands were also empty and the village, too. Desolation was all about him. The empty weeks went by, marked by the burial of the first victims. The gentry continued to dish out thin soup at the workhouse door; a heartsick weariness settled over the stricken cottages.

The count mounted-body after body was cared for and buried. The sexton's bell tolled endlessly marking the narrowing family circle. People still able, were beginning to shape a resolution to all that was happening to them and what to do about it. All around, the empty or knocked-down huts were grim reminders-the road was pointing the way out.....

The events had forced each person to consider narrower and narrwer choices. Year by year there were fewer alternatives until the crit-

Thomas Roach's trail from where he may have lived in County Cork to the village of Drangan in County Tipperary in about 1846.

His route from Drangan on to the port of Dublin in the late fall of 1849 on his way to America.

ical day arrived when only a single solution remained-to emigrate or to die. Those who were still able and had the will made that decision and departed. The youngest, strongest and the one member of the family was chosen to go first-to make his or her way and send money back for the next one to come. Enlarged families including aunts, uncles, grandparents and even in-laws pooled their meagre funds to buy this one person a ticket to America. He would leave; escape-give up this abusive land his father and forbears never mastered. He would leave and never see sight of home again. He would become a stranger along the road, bundle on his back, some leading a wife and children toward a different destiny....they had all turned into a hopeless mass almost unable to make willful decisions.

It was finally in these days of the late summer or fall of 1849 that Thomas Roach, too, decided to leave Ireland and go to America. What events finally pushed him to the brink of this decision was probably typical of so many others...he had been married to Bridget Scahan now for about 3 years; it is likely that they may have had a child in 1847 that did not live due to the terrible conditions of the times or may have been stillborn because of Bridget's health; in 1848 they did have a son that lived. He was named Joseph Dennis Roach and came into this world in those crucial times in Drangan village, Thurles parish, on February 18, 1848. Luck was on their side and both were healthy enough to survive, but things happening around them continued to make their futures uncertain. Perhaps it was a death in Bridget's immediate family-possibly a relative of Tom's or hers; or friends or neighbors in Drangan, decided they were leaving and urged him to come along. Many had gone ahead, earned and sent money back for others in their family to follow. It was less dangerous that way-Thomas and Bridget Scahan Roach could probably only get together enough for one fare at that time so money was of the essence. She would have to manage with a 1½ year old child the best she could until he could send any money back from America-a time period of possibly 4 or 5 months.

Times were worsening in Ireland in late 1848, if that was possible; they had been grave in 1846 and 1847 but now England was herself undergoing an economic downturn. A serious depression was spreading throughout Britain and she could no longer continue even the small monetary and financial help she had given Ireland in the past 2½ years for charity programs and relief work. The English citizens were also disgusted with the Irish people, thinking them greedy, unthankful and always wanting more. And another set of circumstances happening at that time in many parts of Ireland really cut the aid to a trickle. A number of "patriot priests" and other community leaders across "Erin" were advocating revolution and there was sporadic killing and murdering local law officials. Persons in charge of a number of the charity programs were hated by locals and shot by the peasants.

In late 1848 and early 1849 the villagers and farmers who had the means to hold on through the earlier famine years were now leaving by the thousands. These were a better class of Irish; the country could ill afford to lose them but they were going. Entire villages and farm after farm in the parts of the countryside now lay almost totally abandoned. It was eerie.

And evictions in other places went on unabated-tragic scenes of local sheriffs accompanied by local toughs to do their dirty work showed up at cottage after cottage and dragged the cottiers out into the cold and then knocked their homes down with crowbars and any other tool they could lay their hands on. These pitiful scenes occurred over


N
SCOTLAND
IRELAND
THE
IRISH SEA
LIVERPOOL
DUBLIN
WALES
ST. GEORGE'S
CHANNEL
ENGLAND

and over across Ireland in those late years of the 1840's-people starving and ill-clothed turned out into the elements to fend as best they could and no sympathy shown nor aid given.

So Thomas Roach made his decision to leave-how did he get passage fare? As was mentioned before, relatives sometimes were able to pool their moneys and send one family member ahead, alone-it is not clearly known. Some peasants had managed to save a few tools and sold them; others may have tucked a few pounds away and had not touched it-their lifesavings; and many who had not paid their year's rent, took it, fled and gave it to the shipping agent for a ticket instead of the landlord.

Many peasants forced off their land had already become charges on the local parish funds, so as it was the surplus people were already having their way paid to leave by the government.

Some, still strongwilled and proud refused to take the government's "hand-out" of the $6.00 to $10.00 fare-they would make it on their own someway. The fare varied-someplaces and sometimes it was less; in later years of the famine the fare became much higher; in the $30.00 range as the United States made the regulations tougher and refused to accept boatloads of sick and dying passengers. This automatically eliminated the destitute emigrant from going to America.

The ship's passage fare was only part of the cost of leaving an inland village; getting to the port city if one took a coach cost money. Eating along the way and then upon arriving in the city one could not always get a ship out immediately-it took anywhere from a day or two to several weeks. All the while the emigrant had to pay for a place to stay and food to eat. Many simply were so down and out that they left their villages on foot, carrying babies or luggage they could manage. The roads were full of tired souls wandering along, sending up little puffs of dust from dry summer roads, as they went along-wives and children trailing behind. Whatever money they had with them would have to last-some certainly had learned from the authorities or priests of the costs. Others had had friends or relatives go before and write back telling them what to expect; the actual cost, what to avoid, and how it had been for them. But there were always those unforseen events that caused them to spend more of their precious money early on in the trip and they took from what the traveller would need later on.

The peasant who finally turned his back on his village and at the crossroads began a long journey that would forever stay with him as a most momentous experience....for many, it was their first time away from home, away from safety and a caring circle of people and settlement where he had spent his entire life up to that point.

Leaving his village, the emigrant headed for the nearest seaport... in the beginning it was hard to know the road; where he wanted to go and how to get there; there were no guides; only memories of stories told by passing beggars, peddlers and the like that had come through his village. After a time, letters from others that had gone before to America and guidebooks told how and where to travel but they were only the dimmest marks for those who could not read or write and were inexperienced travellers.

Means of transportation varied with the conditions; there were public stages but most were too expensive for the poor peasants and were generally meant for the gentry alone, when in normal times were the only ones who used them. Once in awhile there was a lucky person who had

a cart. More rare, a beast to pull it; both would be sold at the destination. Not many poor Irish had been able to hold onto a horse and wagon when everything else in their world disappeared around them. Mostly the emigrants depended on their own legs and began their journey on foot. Sometimes the trip would be several hundred miles-it might consume several weeks or a month. And all the while every turn in the road concealed its own peculiar dangers-wrong information; blunders, cheats, exposure to the elements, and assaults by man and beast.

Existence along the way is precarious. Money is scarce so the emigrant has to find a place to stay wherever he can; must eat what he brings with him. If all else fails, he must try to live off the land, beg, or find work for what he needs.

The rigors of the journey took a heavy toll in human lives-not everyone could pay. Many were left alongside the road who had started out with hope and determination in the spring but weakened as time passed and could not continue. They succumbed to hunger, illness, and unlucky accidents. The others held to the uncertain way at all costs, passing by other men's fields and their crops; through strange villages and in the company of laborers, beggars, peddlers, and others like themselves found cold comfort in that they were all alike; outcasts in the world of settled men.

None of these poor Irish could afford to linger-whatever the risk it was better to get to the closest port as soon as possible. Until the 1840's and 1850's the difficulty of going overland in Ireland made the emigrant strike out for the nearest place on the coast-the seaport was secondary in consideration. In Ireland the ports most finally sought out were Dublin, Belfast, Cork, Limerick, Sligo or small ports on the Shannon River.

As this large influx of humanity boosted the volume of shipping business the focal points towards which the emigrants moved were fewer and larger. For the Irish, it was mostly Dublin and across the Irish Sea on a packet to Liverpool and it rapidly became more engrossed in carrying the business of Ireland. These shipping lines spread the information for going to America to every little village and hamlet; signs went up near major public places. Brokers working for the shipping lines set up booths in these distant places and sold tickets and arranged the emigrants trips right there. And the travesties the travelers suffered became less prone to physical hardships but man-made.

As near as I can figure it, Thomas Roach left Drangan and his little family about the first part of November, 1849. He, more than likely headed on foot to Dublin where those he was going with were also headed. The weather was getting chilly and winter was coming on; perhaps as good as any time to leave and get on to America. His parting surely was memorable and sad; he might never see Bridget and Joseph, his son, again-they might perish or become unable to follow him, even if he sent money. And so he left County Tipperary; it would be several months before they would hear from him, if ever. His going and those experiences he had would "break ground" for Bridget when she came. So he too turned at the crossroads and looked back one last time and then headed east and the distant port of Dublin.

Already in 1800 the seaport city was a large place compared to the villages where most emigrants came from. They swelled rapidly thereafter with trade. It was a place full of wonders for those who had never seen a city-so many people; large and crowded buildings; the sun was hard to