

More Tales of the Rochester Diocese

By FR. R. MacNAMARA

Another of the monthly articles appearing during the Diocesan Centennial year. Father MacNamara is the author of the recently published diocesan history: *The Diocese of Rochester, 1868-1968*.

In our last column we set down a few anecdotes from the history of our Diocese, and introduced a few of the incidental figures of its past. Today's column is another pot-pourri.

Back in the 1830s, Irishmen were still fairly rare in upstate New York.

The pioneer Catholic at Scipio was an Irishman, Patrick Wheelan. Being a cultivated man—he came via Philadelphia—he was cordially received by the natives of that Cayuga County town. Shortly after his arrival in 1830, he attended the Grand Military Ball at nearby Sherwood. When Tom the fiddler stepped forward and played a solo, Pat was very appreciative. "But when Tom," runs the old newspaper account, "struck up the old Anthem of Erin-Go-Braugh, the old Milesian went into ecstasy, and swore by the staff of St. Patrick that he had not heard such concord of sweet sounds this side of Tara's Hills."

Irish folklore is full of accounts of the "little people"—fairies, elves, leprechauns—who live under the Irish hills and, for some reason, hold iron and products made of iron in high respect. Some are kindly, some obnoxious. In general, however, they seem to have stayed in Ireland and not to have accompanied those Irishmen who left the Ould Sod.

But if Hughey Duffy of Paddy Hill was telling the truth, there was at least one exception. For on April 24, 1887, he claimed that he saw the Little People on Latta Road near Rochester, dancing at the crossroads as they did in Ireland.

Hughey had gone to Charlotte that afternoon from Paddy Hill—the center of an Irish farmer settlement. He had purchased an iron kettle and pot hooks, and then stopped in at a wake at the Preston house. It was not until the wee small hours that he finally set out for home. Then, in the quiet of the night, he encountered the fairies.

He thought they were children, and was about to ask them what they were doing there at so late an hour. Then one of them called out: "Stand aside, all, and let Masther Duffy pass with his iron pot and pot hooks." Then they all disappeared, as if swallowed up by the earth. Hughey ran for his life.

It was a Paddy Hill man, William Connelly, who left this entry in his diary. The late Seumas MacManus, Irish storyteller, said it was the only case he had ever encountered of the—alleged—migration of Little People to America. But it must be admitted, Connelly did not quite trust Hughey's account.

Probably every diocese has its ghosts. In a footnote in

the Diocese of Rochester, 1868-1968, I have referred to a ghostly old couple that are said to hitch rides from the bus stop at Rochester's Holy Sepulchre Cemetery.

Another "ghost" story is told of St. Michael's rectory in Rochester. From 1873 to 1896 the pastor of St. Michael's was German-born Father Fridolin Pascalar. It was he who built the present handsome parish church. He was much loved, and when in 1896 he announced his retirement and his return to Germany, the news caused his parishioners great sorrow. He died in Wurtemberg, Germany, on February 3, 1899.

At the moment of his death, according to the report, there was a resonant sound of cracking in the wall of St. Michael's rectory. More than once, after that, the assistant pastor would see the old man's favorite chair quietly rocking. When this happened, he would simply breathe a prayer for the repose of the soul of the departed priest.

The assistant pastor who told about the rocking of the chair was the late Father John P. Schellhorn. In 1904 he was named founding pas-

tor of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church. He remained pastor until his retirement in 1936, with the rank of Monsignor (1932). He was also one of the largest priests in the Diocese—almost spherical.

Maybe Father Schellhorn possessed certain psychic gifts. His connection with the Pascalar "ghost" might suggest this. He did have one unusual psychic skill, that of hypnotizing animals. Sometimes he would bring two or three Pekin ducks from his poultry coop, hypnotize them, and leave them quietly perched on the back of a chair until he awakened them by a tap.

One day he visited Father F. Rauber, pastor of St. Boniface Church. Father Rauber was proud of the Rhode Island Reds that he raised. Before entering the house, Father Schellhorn hypnotized the Reds and left them lying about in their coop.

Father Rauber greeted the visiting pastor and said: "Come and see my fine Rhode Island Reds." Imagine his dismay when he found them all lying prone.

"They were alive when I saw them last!" moaned Father Rauber. The visitor

tapped them and they all "came to life" again.

Father Schellhorn is said to have tried his skill one day on a more difficult subject—a goat. After considerable effort, he succeeded. But the goat died the next day. So, at least, the story goes.

In 1909, the Redemptorist Fathers attached to St. Joseph's German Church in downtown Rochester, dismantled the wooden tower that had crowned the facade of the church since 1857. This was preparatory to the erection of

the present stone tower, set up in the last half of 1909.

The Fathers had had a fund-raising drive for this new construction and the simultaneous remodeling of the church. One of the solicitors was Mr. Philip Yawman, a founder of the office furnishings factory, Yawman and Erbe. Mr. Yawman personally approached Mr. George Eastman for a donation.

Eastman, a professed non-believer, replied with a protest. He said that he had contributed to another church-

sponsored drive some time before, and without his knowledge they had announced that his gift had been applied to the chapel. After that he had been cautious about church gifts.

"On the other hand," he said, "I can't let you down. The clock in St. Joseph's tower has been good to me for years, getting me to work on time so I'll give my donation for a new clock."

The new electric clock was installed in December, 1910. It is George Eastman's clock.



St. Joseph's Church, on Franklin St., Rochester, had this old clock-tower when industrialist George Eastman used to set his watch by it as he went to the Kodak office daily. Mr. Eastman contributed to a fund to replace tower and clock in 1909.

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'DARE' to Be Seen Elsewhere

"DARE," a television program intended for adults, featuring Father Albert P. Bartlett, McQuaid High School and seen Sundays on Channel 10 is spreading its wings.

DARE has received such wide acclaim from youth and adults both, that Father Paul V. Seifried, executive secretary to the Jesuit Educational Association of the United States, has asked that other Jesuit High Schools and their rectors be

notified about the possibilities of using the DARE show in their area.

Program personnel have already been in New York City consulting with schools along the Eastern Seaboard and Puerto Rico, consulting about effective public relations for their schools including the concept of using the DARE show, produced in Rochester, in their area. Plans are made for presentations in the Midwest in



FATHER BARTLETT

September with other schools in an effort to incorporate similar programs there.

Father Bartlett and his guests have introduced such topics as "old age," "Youth and Protest" and "Population."

Rochesterian Elected Organization's Head

A retired Rochester businessman who lost his voice to cancer and has spent the past 10 years helping people with the same disability was elected last week to the presidency of the International Association of Laryngectomies.

Currently president of the Flower City Lost Chord Club, Rochester's I.A.L. unit, Christie keeps in close touch with all laryngectomies in this area through a monthly newsletter.

Charlie Jones Says:

SCHOOL TIME

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R. James Christie heads a worldwide organization of 35,000 persons who suffer the voice handicap or deal professionally with it. Their convention was held in Portland, Me.

Christie is a director and vice president of the American Cancer Society, Monroe County unit.

He conducts speech therapy classes at the Rochester Hearing and Speech Center under grant from the American Cancer Society. He also addresses nurses training classes in area hospitals and talks to police and fire department trainees on the special aspects of artificial resuscitation for laryngectomies.

Vietnam A

Salgon (NC)—One of the largest single programs of the U.S. Catholic Relief Services (CRS) is being carried out in Vietnam.

In the fiscal year ending June 30, CRS helped over 40 million needy persons in 70 countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America.

In Vietnam, CRS Catholic Relief Services carried out its activities in cooperation with Caritas Vietnam, the relief agency of the Catholic bishops in Vietnam. It also works in close harmony with the Vietnamese Ministry of Social Welfare, Health and Relief.

Father Robert L. Charlebois, a priest of the Gary diocese, Indiana, and program director for Vietnam, said that in the period from July 1, 1967 to June 30, 1968 his agency made available over 127,000,000 pounds of food donated by the United States government for distribution to the needy. This part of the Food-Freedom Program was valued at \$9,303,895. This food was distributed at 510



Michaela ("Mike") Cohan, two servicemen

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Catholic Press Features

Qui Nhon, South Vietnam—There is still a Cohan entertaining American troops "over there."

Michaela ("Mike") Cohan, 24-year-old granddaughter of George Michael Cohan, has been a program director in Army service clubs in Korea and Vietnam the past two years, in what you might call the Cohan version of the Peace Corps.

It was George M. Cohan, the flag-waving "Yankee Doodle Dandy" himself, who during World War I first encouraged performers to entertain U.S. fighting men overseas. Cohan issued that first call for volunteers in a gigantic rally in Broadway's famed "Palace Theatre," which today houses a hit musical based on the life of the composer-singer-dancer-actor-producer, and titled, simply, "George M!"

Michaela (pronounced MA-KA-YA) volunteered for an Army Special Services position right after graduating from a small Catholic women's college in 1965, but except for the name tag she wears on her slate-blue Special Services uniform, even George M. would have difficulty recognizing her as a Cohan.

She doesn't sing or dance ("I'm afraid I don't have the talent"), the only entertainers she has asked to volunteer are servicemen whom she frequently coaxes to go up on the service club stage to sing or play a musical instrument, and in sharp contrast to the "Grand Old Flag" superstition of her grandfather, Michaela has nothing to say about anti-Vietnam demonstrations, admitting that "U.S. involvement is a tough subject. It is sometimes a difficult war to understand."

But whether a war is simple or complex, servicemen who are able to get away from the fighting for a few days of rest and relaxation find the service club a tremendous morale builder, particularly if there is someone there like Michaela, whose duties range from making sure there are enough ping-pong balls in the game room, to chatting with a soldier.

"Mostly, they talk about their home towns, about their girl friends or their wives, or just about going home," said Michaela, who "Monopoly" and then play "Willow" with some of the men, or conduct quiz games.

She insists that the Cohan heritage had nothing to do with her decision to volunteer for her Special Services tour, which will end in early September. "It sounded like interesting work," she said, "and I was anxious to travel after I graduated from Marywood," which is a Catholic women's college in Scranton, Pa., a college whose other claim to show-business fame