

**EARLY IRISH IN  
OLD ALBANY, N.Y.**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9781760572105

Early Irish in old Albany, N.Y. by Franklin M. Danaher

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Cover @ 2017

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**FRANKLIN M. DANAHER**

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# EARLY IRISH

IN

OLD ALBANY, N. Y.,

WITH SPECIAL MENTION OF JAN ANDRIESSEN, "DE  
IERSMAN VAN DUBLINGH."

BY

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Paper read before the American-Irish Historical Society  
at the Annual Meeting of the latter  
in New York City, Jan. 19, 1903.

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BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS,  
THE AMERICAN - IRISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY,  
1903.

## A BRIEF INTRODUCTORY.

WE assert that each and every member of the American-Irish Historical Society assumes an obligation with his membership to do his share towards carrying out one of the objects of the Society, namely: To examine records wherever found, concerning the Irish in America; to investigate specially the immigration of the people of Ireland to this country; to endeavor to correct erroneous, distorted, and false views of history in relation to the Irish race in America, to the end that Irishmen may receive due recognition from chroniclers of American history, for their important, but little appreciated and less understood, labors in the upbuilding of this great republic.

That desired work can only be accomplished by the local historian, who, with patience, will garner for preservation in the archives of our Society, from the official and church records of his locality and from well-authenticated tradition all there is concerning the Irishmen who first settled in the place about which he writes, so that the future historian, writing of the Irish people as of the founders of this nation dedicated to liberty and religious freedom, may do them full justice, and exhibit to the gaze of the doubting the value that their manhood, strength and sturdy character gave to all that is good and great in our beloved country.

It is a human tendency to extol the great men amongst us, so as to share in their glory, and to that extent, at

least, feed our proper nationalistic pride. But their exploitation should not make us forget the humble men of brawn who came to America from Ireland, who faced and overcame dangers, who amid privation and with toil cut down the primeval forest, tilled the virgin soil and built our public works; who reared their families with inculcated love of God and country and whose bones lie in many a churchyard, unknown to fame and whose records are but the "short and simple annals of the poor."

It is amongst these that the true grandeur of the influence of the Irish people in the rise and progress of this nation can be found, and where we can do our greatest good work for the cause in which we are enlisted. It was with this in view and with intent, in my limited way, to make good my obligation, that I made search for Irishmen and Irish influences among the Dutch who settled in the town of Beverwyck, beginning in 1621, and its successor, the city of Albany, N. Y., to about the year 1813. That the results may add something to the general knowledge of the great debt which this country owes its early Irish settlers is the excuse for my self-imposed task.

## EARLY IRISH IN OLD ALBANY, N. Y.

ONE would scarcely expect to find Irishmen among the Dutch who settled along the upper Hudson in New York in the seventeenth century. Distance, the dangers of the sea, the cost of travel, differences in language and in religion, and racial and trade disputes and jealousies with the English in the adjoining New England colonies who coveted both the land and the valuable trade with the Indians, and Dutch exclusiveness, would be a sufficient statement of the reasons why they would find life there a strenuous proposition, and hardly worth living, even if driven by fate they found themselves on those inhospitable shores. Few Irish names appear in Albany's early records, or if they do they are not recognizable as such, especially if the bearers of the same are not specially designated as Irish.

The Dutch scribes who kept the official records were not at their best good spellers, and their orthography made sad havoc with good Celtic names. Who would recognize McManus under the Dutch form of Meemanus, or Donovan as Donnowa, Mahoney as Mohennie, or Oyje Oyens as Owen Owens, or Finn as Fine or Fyne, or Anderson as Andriessen, or Dunbar as Tumbar and Ten Baar, Lynch as Lentz, and Hogan as Hogen, Hoogen, Logen, Hoghing, Hoghill, Hogh and Hog, and Jones as T. Sans, T. Jans and Shawns?

The first Irishman in Albany of whom we have any



official record is John Anderson of Dublin, designated on the records as "Jan Andriessen de Iersman van Dublingh." Irishmen in those days, except as "Wild Geese," or as slaves deported by the English to their colonies, were not travelers, neither were they colonists or colonizers, and to find one of them in the Dutch town of Beverwyck in the colony of Rensselaerswyck in New Netherlands in America, so distant from his native shores, among a people alien in race, language and religion, and withal evidently beloved by the burghers thereof, a landlord and a landowner and a man of substance, is a curious fact, worth being brought to the attention of the American-Irish Historical Society two hundred and fifty years later.

The early official records of Albany county, now on file in the Albany county clerk's office in the city of Albany, are unique. The first volume of Deeds (so called) contains, after the manner of the Dutch of those days, in addition to the real estate transfers, the record of all things happening in which the public was or should be interested. A worthy burgher, who desired to sell his horse or farm, or the administrator of an estate, who wished to sell the assets of the deceased, gave notice of his intent, with a description of the property and the terms upon which it would be sold, and the same would be transcribed in the public records; lawsuits, criminal prosecution, bonds, obligations, leases, bills of sale, the thousand and one transactions of colonial life, there appear, showing varying phases of human nature and the same old strifes which now agitate us, proving that our forefathers were very much like unto us, and consequently in that respect, at least, the world has not moved much in two hundred and fifty years.

These records are originals, according to the custom of the Dutch, whose statutes were based on the Roman Civil Law, and bear the autograph signatures, or rather, in most instances, the "marks" of the parties thereto, including many curious Indian totems, and it was in this Deed Book "A," containing records from 1654 to 1657, that I have seen the original mark of Jan Andriessen, the "Iersman van Dublingh," made with his own hand, when he bought, in 1657, of Willem Frederickse Bout the wine and beer excise for Catskill, where he then resided.

The records are written in a crabbed official hand in the archaic colonial Dutch of the seventeenth century, which can be read and translated by but few living persons; but happily some of them have been translated, and from the latter we learn what there is to know concerning "Jantie."

The records show that Jan Andriessen, the Irishman, alias "Jantie" (Johnnie), was at Beverwyck (now Albany) in 1645. O'Callaghan, in his "History of New Netherlands" (vol. 1, p. 441), states that "Jan Andriessen van Dublin leased a bouwerie in 1649, described as lying north of Stony Point, being the north half of the Flatt," and it is also known that he bought a farm and homestead of Peter Bronck at Coxsackie, now in Greene county, in New York state, which he owned at the time of his death, which must have taken place in 1664.

When "Jantie" arrived we know not; it is enough to know that "Jan Andriessen de Iersman van Dublingh" was taken to the hearts of the phlegmatic Dutch burghers of ancient Albany, for all through the records (even after his death) he is familiarly and seemingly affectionately spoken of as "Jantie" or "Johnnie," even as "Jan-

ten," or "little Johnnie," and the Dutch went on his bond for his obligations, even as they accepted his bond for theirs.

That he was an Irishman is self-evident, notwithstanding his patronymic of Jan Andriessen, which is the Dutch form of John Anderson, his proper name; he is never mentioned, except with his *descriptio personæ* of "the Irishman," even in the transactions which closed up his estate after his death. Whether that was done to distinguish him from Jan, Arent, Hendrickse, or Dirk Andriessen, who were his contemporaries in Albany, or because he was a *rara avis* and deserved to be marked, or because all foreigners were so labeled, we know not, but it was evidently the custom there to designate all "outlanders" as such, for in a bill of sale of certain book accounts made in 1665, it appears that "Pieter, the Frenchman," "Hendrick, the Spaniard," and "Hans, the Norman," were mentioned among the delinquent debtors whose accounts were sold. Jantie's first appearance in the records is in the words and form following:

"Appeared before me Johannes La Montagne, in the service of the General Privileged West India Company, Vice Director, etc., William Frederickse Bout, farmer of the wine and beer excise consumable by the tapsters, in Fort Orange, village of Beverwyck and appendancies of the same, who declared that he had transferred, as by these presents, he does transfer, to Jan Andriessen, the Irishman from Dublin, dwelling in Catskill, the right in the aforesaid excise belonging to him, the assignor, in Catskill, for the sum of one hundred and fifty (150) guilders, which sum the aforesaid Jan Andriessen, promises to pay, in two terms, to wit, on the first day of May