

Rowel Friess
drawing used to
illustrate John
Henitt's pamphlet,
& collection of 'weaver
poetry' - available
Linsendall Library

High Street print
Ulster Museum or
else early engraving
of Linenhall Library

Picture Dr. McDonnell
"Mary Anne McDonnell"
book has one, I think

Picture Arthur O'Neill
"Annals of the Irish
Harpers" ?

Circular reproduced
in "Antiquary" lettering
Camera follows the
text as it is read

Also

Watercolours of
"High Street in the
early 17th century"
Ulster Museum

Also "18th century
view of Belfast from
banks of Lagan."
Ulster Museum

But while some cloth was kept at home to provide for their own families, the bulk was sold to linen merchants at fairs in market towns like Lisburn, Dromore, Ballymoney, Bangor and Dungannon. By the end of the eighteenth century the bulk of Ireland's linen was made in Ulster. Belfast prospered as a port, and when the manufacture of cotton was introduced in 1780, the textile industries added to the wealth of the great merchants. A leisured and cultured

class developed in the City, and the Linen Hall Library was established in 1788.

Among the founders was a famous man from the Glens of Antrim/Doctor James McDonnell

whose people had first come to Ireland from Scotland in the Thirteenth century. They had managed to hold on to their territory in the North of Antrim for five hundred years, and kept to the customs of an ancient Gaelic aristocracy even at the time when James was a boy. The famous harper

Arthur O'Neill lodged at their house, and the practice of copying of Gaelic MSS was assiduously practiced there. Not only did James speak the Irish language at home but he was brought up to love Irish Music, and to love the way of life in which he was reared.

When practicing as a doctor in Belfast at the turn of the 18th century he was primarily responsible for the publication of an historical circular issued in Belfast in 1791: "Some inhabitants of Belfast, feeling themselves interested in everything which relates to the Honor, as well as the Prosperity of their country; propose to open a subscription which they intend to apply in attempting to revive and perpetuate THE ANCIENT MUSIC AND POETRY OF IRELAND. They are solicitous to preserve from oblivion the few fragments, which have been permitted to remain as Mounuments of the refined Taste and Genius of their Ancestors.

In order to carry this project into execution, it must appear obvious to those acquainted with the situation of this Country, that it will be necessary to assemble the Harpers, almost exclusively possessed of all the remains of the MUSIC, POETRY and ORAL TRADITIONS OF IRELAND.

It is proposed, that the Harpers should be induced to assemble in Belfast (suppose on the 1st of July next) by the distribution of such prizes as may seem adequate to the subscribers: And that a person well versed in the Language and Antiquities of the Nation, should attend, with a skilful musician to transcribe and arrange the most beautiful and interesting parts of their knowledge.

An undertaking of this nature, will undoubtedly meet the approbation of Men of Refinement and Erudition in every country: And when it is considered how intimately the SPIRIT and CHARACTER of a people are connected with their NATIONAL POETRY and MUSIC it is presumed that the Irish Patriot and Politician, will not deem it an object unworthy of his patronage and Protection." Belfast Dec. 1791.

*There is a picture of
this event but I forget
the source*

*Also try
Engraving
"High Street, Belfast
in 1786"*

Ulster Museum

It was actually on 11th July, 1792 that the Harpers meeting took place, in the Assembly rooms above the Exchange, the principal building in the City, at that time. Of the ten performers present all but three were from Ulster - Art O'Neill, from Tyrone, Charles Fanning from Cavan, Daniel Black and Denis Hempson (he by the way was 97 years of age) from Co. Armagh and James Duncan from Co. Down. The ten sat up together on the stage of the Assembly rooms to entertain the elite of Protestant Belfast - yes, even on the 12th of July - and in among the harpers moved a youth of nineteen, noting down the airs they played.

and political views were united in a common purpose". Amongst those who wrote for the theatre and for its magazine "Ulad" were Rutherford Mayne, Lynn Doyle, St. John Ervine, George Shields the dramatists, Forrest Reid, Helen Waddel, Alice Milligan, Robert Lynd, the essayist, Stephen G. Wynn the historian, James Connolly and Roger Casement, the revolutionaries.

*pictures here by
side of H. Hughes
and C. Hardebeck*

and two men of music, Herbert Hughes and Carl Hardebeck.

These musicians never lifted a gun but the cultural revolution they initiated, each in his own sphere, spread throughout the country to involve, not only the "respectable" citizens of Belfast but the educated classes who had in Ferguson's time thought it "inexpedient to encourage anything tending to foster Irish sentiment". Herbert Hughes was a Protestant Belfast man and Carl Hardebeck a Belfast man by adoption, and a Catholic. They did not

Donegal landscape

look for the music of Ireland in the tomes of Bunting and Petrie labelled "Ancient Irish music" - they went out into the country where the music was alive and vigorous. Hardebeck took himself to the Gaeltacht in Donegal where among other songs, he accurately and for the first time ever transcribed "Bean an Fhir Ruaidh" as Carleton's mother would have preferred to sing it - with the Irish words melting into the tune.

*Picture mounted
with Carhill in
background*

Back home in 102, Limestone Road, Belfast, under the shadow of the Cavehill, he published at his own address and his own expense, the three volumes of "Seoda Ceoil" (Gems of melody) which set a headline to all subsequent collections of songs in Gaelic.

Picture H. Hughes

Herbert Hughes also went to Donegal and came home to publish "Songs of Uladh", containing the song that now means Ulster - and Ireland - wherever it is heard anywhere in the world - "My Lagan Love".

picture Harty

Zoom out to
show three men's
pictures together

O Boyle to
camera

picture Errigal

picture: cover of
book

Film or stills
rural scene
landmarks, like
Moore Mts
Antrim Coast
Glens of Antrim
etc.

leaf through
book as
appropriate
illustration

You probably know it best in the arrangement by Hamilton Harty, who was born in Hillsborough Co. Down, and is undoubtedly the most finely gifted composer of Irish birth. There we have the three of them - Harty, Hughes and Hardebeck - out of the mess of sectarian Ulster, three men who will give us hope as long as their names alliterate.

I knew Carl Hardebeck from I was a boy and I eagerly imbibed his ideas about the close corporate relationship between the Irish language and our national music; and about the necessity of understanding the mind and outlook of the Gaelic-speaking Irishman. The Gaelic speaking Irishman I found of course in my native Ulster, in the Donegal Gaeltacht. / There in the shadow of 'Errigal - Ulster's other magical mountain - I listened to the storytellers and the singers and finally made my own small contribution to the literature of Ulster folk song.

By the time that book was published in 1944 the work of Hughes and Hardebeck, the poetry of A.E. and Alice Milligan and Ethna Carbery, the Gaelic endeavours of An t-Ath Domhnall O Tuathail and Father Murray, ^{all} had influenced the thinking of many men in the towns and cities of the North. / The men who cared for such things - the poets musicians social historians geographers and folklorists had begun to search in the countryside for their identity, their roots, which had been obscured by the increasing mechanization and materialistic philosophy which surrounded them. Estyn Evans of Queen's University had written a book. So had Robert Lloyd Praeger, a botanist from County Down. Praeger's book "The Way that I Went" sub-titled 'An Irishman in Ireland' gave his fellow Ulstermen a hint of where they might look for their roots.

Estyn Evans called his book "Irish Heritage" and in it he explored what he called the living past, the unrecorded past that spoke to him out of the manners and customs, trades and skills and lore of the rural community.

Suitable picture

from Irish Folkways

picture: Ulster
Folk Museum

O Boyle to
Camera
or else
mean street in
Belfast

clip from

"Dusty Bluebells"

He showed us all that - as he himself put it in a later book "Irish Folkways" -

"The crafts of arable farming of animal husbandry and the home industries have done more to shape our instincts and thoughts than the trampling of armies or the wrangling of kings". / Under his influence the Ulster Folk life Society was founded and eventually with the financial help of the Government of Northern Ireland, the Ulster Folk Museum - the first one of its kind in Ireland - was opened in Cultra on the shores of Belfast Lough. /

It was in Belfast itself that I began my own collection of Ulster folksongs in the English language. I was born there - only two generations from the country - and I knew that in the matter of folksong, the city was a microcosm of the rest of the Province of Ulster. The poor and the landless, the luckless homeweaver and the country mason, the victims of the Great Hunger of '47 all had poured into Belfast to look for work, and had slowly settled down. / It was under the shadow of a big mill that I first recorded Frank McPeake, from Ballymacpeake in Derry. It will surprise no one who has ever heard of the plantation of Ulster that the name of ~~his~~ song was "Will ye go lassie, go?" In Frank's boyhood the lack of social communication between the planter Scot and the native Irish Farmer had been gradually - if selectively - eroded by a shared poverty in the countryside. We have been told that they brought into the city the old jealousies and animosities of the rural communities, and that is very true, but they also brought their love of singing - and to this day many of the songs they made are echoed in the streets by the children of an even less fortunate generation. David Hammond - himself of Scots extraction and a native of Belfast like myself - has put it all on film for the whole world to see - in "Dusty Bluebells". /