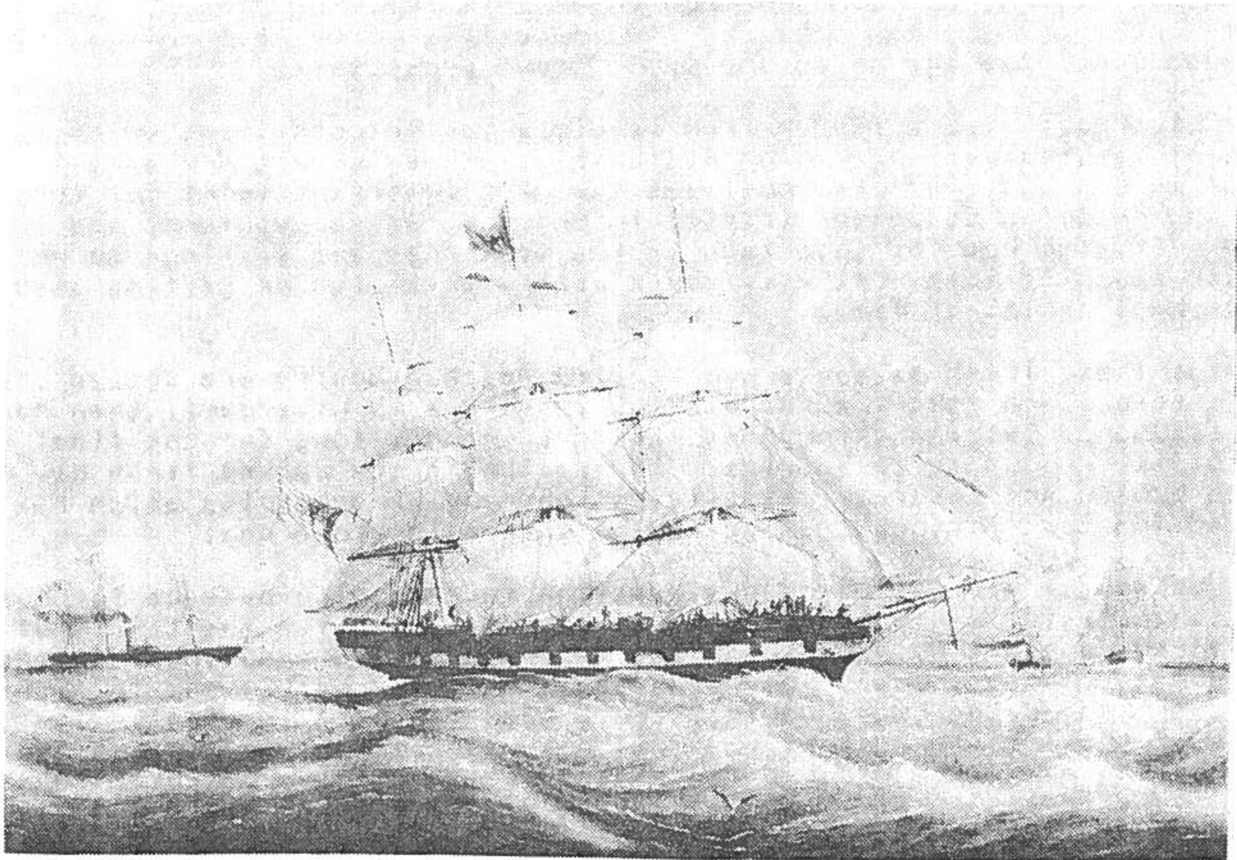


-Courtesty of the Peabody Museum of Salem, Mass.

"Ivanhoe", a packet ship of the Red Star Line that carried Thomas Roach from Liverpool, England to New York City in 1849-1850

see; common noises of the countryside were stilled and it was difficult to get your directions straight....where should the peasant go in the city? Make it to the docks and wharves-the place he has come so far to get to. Here are all the captains of the ships, the agents; here he will bargain for passage if he doesn't have a ticket already, and until he sails, here he will stay-close by.

While the emigrant waited for his ship to sail he had to find lodgings, preferably as near the docks as possible. These harbor district boarding houses catered to sailors and eventually special quarters for the emigrants; a penny a night bought straw to lie on in a room with as many as 40 persons. Living this way launched the peasant into his first taste of "city living" which for many would continue in America for years to come. He was isolated in his newness to the situation; so many things happened to him now so rapidly he was hardly able to cope. Feeding himself or a family if he had come with one was a real problem. Lodgings and food continued to eat away at his reserve cash and since the area in which he was staying was usually the slums of the port city, being parted from his belongings and money by criminal elements was not unlikely. The busiest ports were also the most crime ridden. Liverpool, the largest and most bustling of ports grew

from a population of 100,000 in 1811 to 375,000 in 1851. The stranger in search of a ship found the central quarters of the city crowded with a miserable, sodden mass of humanity living in cellars; housed in abandoned storage buildings or run-down tenements. Drunkeness, poverty, crime and vice were commonplace. An investigation in 1836 counted 1,200 thieves under the age of 15 and 3,600 known prostitutes.

Liverpool also suffered from terrible health conditions which caused alot of diseases and a high death rate. These conditions were the worst in England, yet Liverpool was the most important point for incoming and outgoing passenger traffic in England, Wales, Scotland, and Ireland. It also had the advantage of the most frequent sailings so emigrants reaching this port city could pretty well plan on getting away in a short period of time.

So those Irish peasants who finally reached Dublin and waited until a ship would take them across the Irish Sea to Liverpool, then had the trauma of waiting through haphazard accommodations for the final leg of their journey to America. In the 1840's the packet lines between Dublin and Liverpool finally ran on regular schedules which relieved the more fortunate emigrants of uncertain crossings.

Cheapness was the main consideration in arranging passage for most emigrants-their imaginations could never fully conceive the trials of the voyage ahead. No cabins for the majority of them-knowing that they would need whatever money they managed to save for settlement in America, they judged the quarters they would occupy by the low cost. The holds of these ships brought fish, timber, tobacco, or cotton to Ireland or England; were cleared and cleaned some and then 2-tiered bunks were installed; an aisle left and possibly a latrine or two put in. Each one of these bunks would be home for a family. This was called steerage.

The era of the steamships arrived on the scene about this time but affected the emigrants very little. Only the upper-classes or gentry could pay the passage fares and more valuable freightage on these ships. The sailing ships still carried most of the emigrants whose business they fervently sought, often lowering the price of tickets to $10.00 and lower. This rate finally put the fare in reach of the poorest of Irish peasants.

The captains of each ship did not have to make the deals for passage with each emigrant as time went on. They had already made their arrangements and paid their money; had their tickets purchased in a broker's office in their village. Enterprising middlemen contracted for the steerage space of whole ships and then resold accommodations to prospective travelers. Many times this chance to make more money than usual, these people oversold tickets on these ships. When the unfortunate peasant tried to come on board after the captain had taken on his limit and was turned away, he could only hope to locate the swindler and get his money back.

Finally the day for sailing would come-Thomas Roach had made his arrangements for passage in Liverpool on the packet, "Ivanhoe" that carried 320 passengers; 318 in steerage and 2 in the cabins on deck, captained by Stephen C. Knight. It sailed about the first part of December, 1849, and he was listed on the passenger list next to a young man, Daniel Roach, age 21. Whether or not this was a relative or only an acquaintance is unknown, but the same last name may have drawn them together while they waited for their sailing day in Liverpool. Like most trips on sailing ships at this time, this one might last about 6

weeks. This would be a winter trip and the weather in the North Atlantic is so unpredictable-storms and strong winds causing rough seas.

The day of sailing brought much excitement along the wharves-peasants poured from the lodging houses; adults lugging trunks or bundles and children carrying bundles of straw for their beds. Men wrestled the heavy water barrels and large chests. They forced their way into the crowd at ship's side, expectant. In this jostling mob, some would lose each other for a time; frantic cries calling out for a lost child or partner; peddlers in the mass trying to sell last minute food items and cookware. But most waited quietly and anxiously for the roll call-watching curiously the boat that would be their home for the coming 4 to 6 weeks, sometimes as long as 2 months if the weather and winds were difficult. The average crossing from Liverpool to New York took 40 days. These ships were in the main too small, and many more people than should have been allowed were jammed into their holds. The quality of the emigrants' life on this trip was controlled entirely by the number of people on board. Many upon first boarding, look around and stay on deck-they would be below decks long enough. They stayed on deck, at the rail as the ship slipped away from the dock and out into the bay and then finally out into the Irish Sea-watching the shore fade away. All must have pondered their journey and the memories of what they had left. Leaving Dublin was their first emotional leave-taking, but now leaving Liverpool they were at last on the real journey. There is a verse which expresses what many may have felt at that moment: it is entitled, "The Immigrant's Farewell":

> Farewell to thee Erin Mavourneen
> Thy valleys I'll tread nevermore;
> This heart that now bleeds for thy sorrows,
> Will waste on a far distant shore.
>
> Thy green sods lie cold on my parents,
> A cross marks the place of their rest-
> The wind that moans sadly above them,
> Will waft their poor child to the West.

After some time on deck watching land slip away, the emigrants, if they hadn't before, made their way down below into steerage where they would stay most of the long trip ahead.

Thomas Roach and Daniel Roach, his companion, would find that they would be required to go with their belongings to one end of the hold where only men and older boys were allowed. A portion of a rough bunk would be their space along with at least 6 other persons for the balance of the journey. Here is a description of steerage from Oscar Handlin's "The Uprooted":

> "Below decks...its usual dimensions 75 ft. long, 25 ft. wide, 5½ ft. high. Descend. In the fitful light your eye will discover a middle aisle 5 ft. wide. It will be awhile before you can make out separate shapes within it, the water closets at either end(sometimes there was only one and the men were obliged to go up on deck and go over the side),one or several cooking stoves, and the tables. The aisle itself......is formed by 2 rows of bunks that run to the side of the ship."
>
> "Examine a bunk. One wooden partition reaches from floor to ceiling to divide it from the aisle, another stretches horizontally from wall to aisle to cre-

ate two decks. Within the partitions are the boxlike spaces, 10 ft. wide, 5 ft. long, less than 3 ft. high. For the months of the voyage, each is home for 6 to 10 beings."

Life was hard here. Each family received its daily ration of water, adding to it larger and larger doses of vinegar to conceal the odor. From the limited hoard of provisions brought along, the mother struggled to eke out food for the whole journey."7

Each family had so much time allotted it to cook its meal on the crowded communal stove; if some food took too long they would have to eat the food in whatever stage of doneness or undoneness it was. The unlucky souls who had the last turns were many times surprised in the midst of their cooking by the emergence of a sailor from above deck with his pail of water, which he threw upon the coals, etc., sending up great clouds of steam. These rules were strict and rarely broken; no one could chance a live coal smouldering to set the ship afire later. The mother had to plan her meals carefully-she knew it her supplies ran out she'd have to buy from the captain, who could be merciless in his demands for payment. Some masters deliberately deceived their passengers as to how long they would be at sea so they could make money on the sale of food and grog. Later, in 1850, the government finally began to try to protect the passengers by regulating the supplies that had to be taken on board for each person. But even then, there were the unscrupulous who found ways to get around these regulations. After a ship had left the harbor, a tender would come alongside, load up with casks and crates of supplies from the emigrant ship that the inspector had checked earlier and would then take them back to the port warehouse.

"It was no surprise that disease should be a familiar visitor. The only ventilation was through the hatches battened down in rough weather. When the close air was not stifling hot, it was bitter cold in the absence of fire. Rats were at home in the dirt and disorder. The results, cholera, dysentery, yellow fever, smallpox, measles, and the generic 'ship's fever' that might be anything. The normal mortality was about 10%, although in the great year, 1847, it was 20%."

"....from the harshness, the monotony, the misery of the journey, there was no effective relief...against the open brutalities, against the seamen who reckoned the women fair game, against the danger from within of petty thefts and quarrels, the passengers formed spontaneous organizations of their own. The voluntary little associations were governed by codes of agreement, enforced by watchmen appointed from among themselves. But there was no power in these groups, on major matters, to resist the all-powerful Captain and crew."

"So they'd lie there...amidst retching noisome stench, the stomach-turning filth of 100's of bodies confined to close quarters. Many nights, they could see, by the sickly light of swinging lanterns, the creaking ugly timbers crowding in about them; they could hear the sounds of men

7 "The Uprooted", by Oscar Handlin; Atlantic Monthly Press Book; Little, Brown, & Co.; Boston-Toronto, 2nd ed.; 1973. pp 45-46.

in uneasy sleep, of children in fitful rest; everywhere they could sense the menace of hostile winds and waves, of indifferent companions, of repressed passions."

"There are times when man can take no more. Incidents occur; ugly noises of childbirth; sopping disorder when the sea seeps in in a storm; unsuccessful rat-hunts; the splash of burials under a dark sky and without the consolation of a priest...and a rage takes hold of the sufferers, or their survivors; they pace about in the warm, sticky passage. They clench fists. But against whom shall they raise them? Indeed they are helpless, and they fall into meaningless arguments among themselves. Furious blows are given by the wrestling mess of men in the narrow spaces, until exhausted, they stand back, angry, ashamed, pick up the pitiful belongings kicked loose, broken, wet from the bilge water oozing up through the spaces of the floor boards."8

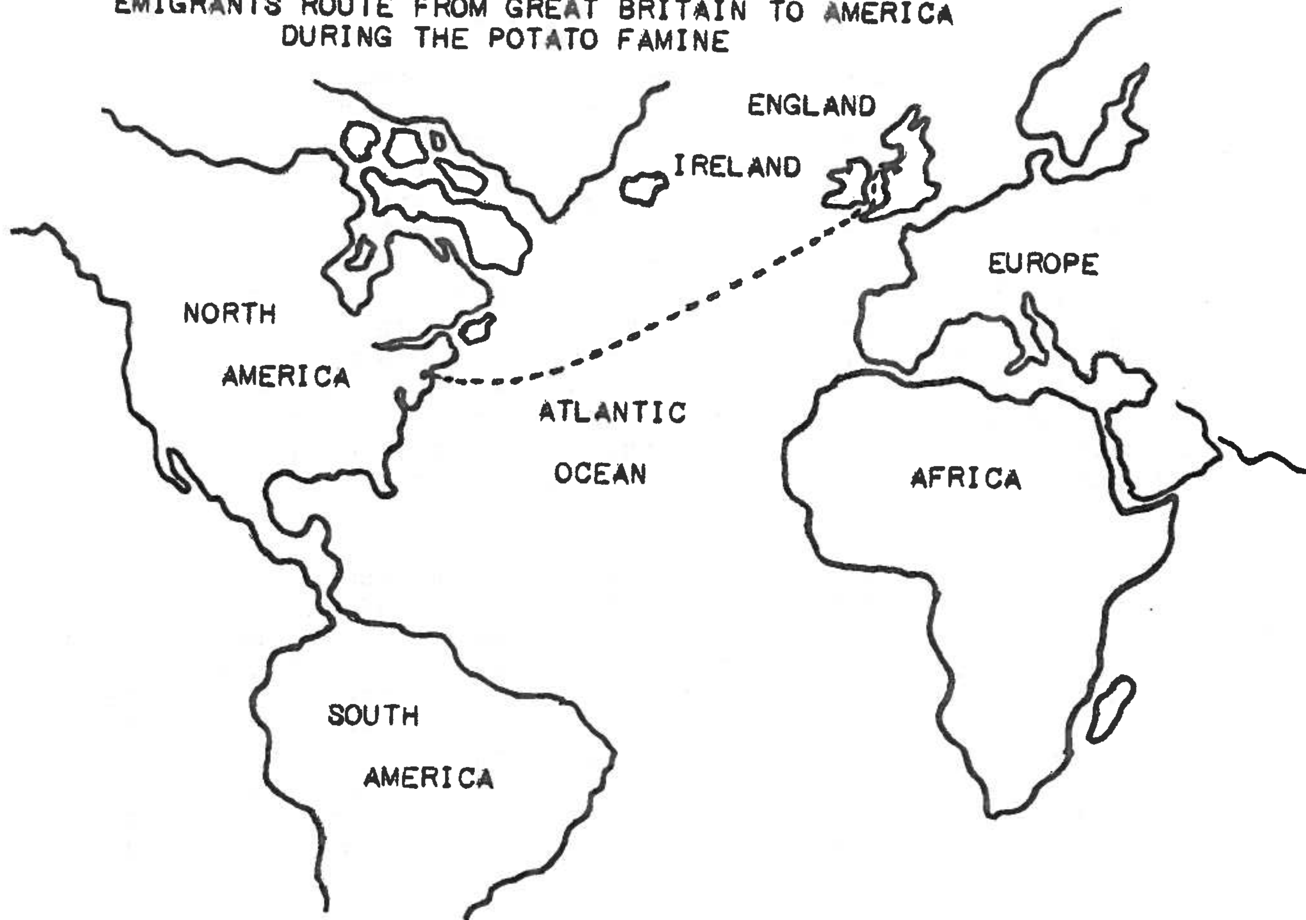
In one popular novel of the Irish immigration and the ship conditions, the dark smelly interior of steerage was described vividly. The inside walls of the wooden ship seeped water and were always damp while the ship creaked all around them. A coarse burlap curtain hung from the ceiling to partition off the men's section from that of the women and children. Little light reached through the hatches into the hold-the air was rancid and still; oily lanterns gave out the only light-we can see that the women, children, and babies lie on rough bunks under thin and dingy blankets. The broken floor was strewn with the urine of the children and scattered sawdust put there to absorb some of the residue. It was cold in steerage-there was no heat possible as any fire left for any length of time in a stove or heater might start the ship burning.

The older girl children slept in the top bunks, the very ill in the lower ones, held against the sides of their sick, starved mothers. Somewhere, all the time, children were whimpering or crying-continually crying from the cold and being hungry. If they had eaten, it was thin oatmeal that they had had and a piece of stale, moldy bread. The smell of mice was on everything.

As the stinking air blew through the curtain at the end of the passageway some man beyond it in a bunk played a plaintive tune on a harmonica; a sad Irish ballad and a few hoarse voices hummed along. Some sat on the edge of their bunks in the cold of the men's partitioned section and thought of their plight. Sick emigrants groaned in their painwracked sleep. When the harmonica had stopped, no one kept singing and then the men sat mutely side by side with their heads down or they gave in, lay down and slept. Time passed quicker when one slept. The ship groaned and creaked, continuing on its passage to America.

Suddenly, one of the men began a wracking cough and others near him awakened and stirred; several of them also began to cough; terrible deep, wrenching coughs and then spitting. The sawdust on the floor, in that quarter was flecked with blood from these diseased lungs. The awful smell of the air here from unbathed and dying bodies and from the latrines filled the damp, cold air. The wooden walls and

8 "The Uprooted", by Oscar Handlin; Atlantic Monthly Press Book; Little, Brown, & Co.; Boston-Toronto, 2nd ed., 1973. pp 45-46.



ceilings of the ship oozed beads of water.

During bad weather and storms, which Thomas and Bridget Scahan Roach both may have endured as they both came in the winter months when the North Atlantic was at its worst, the little air and light that filtered into steerage was cut off when the hatches were closed. This is described in an excerpt from Ann Novotny's book, "Strangers At The Door":

> "The scene in steerage during the worst Atlantic storms was hellish; as the small ship plunged through heavy seas, waves smashed against the hollow-sounding bow and sent rattling showers of spray against the deck overhead, while the imprisoned immigrants screamed as they were flung about in their bunks. When the swaying lantern sputtered out, they were left in utter darkness, and most of them prayed as if their last hour had come."
>
> "The storms and sickness were too terrible to recall easily, but impossible ever to forget. One woman from a Sussex village wrote to her parents after landing in New York in May, 1828: 'I often look back upon the scenes that we have passed through. While we were passing over the water our sufferings were great; but that God that is living to all them that trust in Him, has brought us through. I will not grieve your hearts with all our sufferings, for my paper will not hold it. Little Mary was very ill with the fever that so many died with,....

7 children and one woman;to hear their cries and moans, it was very bad. I was so ill myself, that I was forced to crawl out of my bed and lay on the floor while John made the bed. If you know of any coming here, tell them never to come where the vessel is so full; for we was shut down in darkness for a fortnight, till so many died; then the hatch was opened. I will not grieve your poor hearts with more about what we poor creatures suffered. I cannot tell you what day of the month we landed into New York; but we was about 33 days coming over, which was called a good passage.' " 9

As one reads of the crossings and especially the more detailed accounts given by Cecil Woodham-Smith in her book, "The Great Hunger", one realizes how lucky and fortunate our Roach, Kelly, Quinn, Burns, McCormick, and Scahan relatives were. If they had come to this country at the peak of the famine in 1847, they would have no doubt come as wards of Great Britain and then taken to Canada where almost all immigrants arrived then and perished from disease in quarantine. Mary Crawford's family(she married Joseph Dennis Roach)came from East or English Canada and they may have been among the ones brought there earlier and survived the trip, fevers, and quarantine on the St. Lawrence below Quebec or Montreal. Her father was born in Ireland; Mary's mother in English Canada, so her parents may have been Irish who came over in those bad times.

During the terrible months of 1847, landlords in Ireland sent every peasant they could in any state of health, dress or undress, away by the shipload. Early on in the famine in 1846, hundreds were given a few shillings and sent across the Irish Sea on packets to Scotland, Wales, and England. Most ended up in Liverpool where they immediately went on welfare. As time went on the British taxpayers could hardly pay for the programs needed to support all those Irish emigrants. Large estates were absolutely cleared of "cottiers" in this way; contracts were made by a landlord's agent to take all his workers to Canada or Scotland, Wales, or England; promised them food, clothing, and jobs-supplies for the journey, etc.. Many were forced to leave Ireland, but were so debilitated and ill they could do nothing but agree to go. They had premonitions they would never live to see another land but hoped if they did they could eventually make their way and become successful. Those sent to Canada despaired and secretly planned to get across the border into the United States as soon as they could.

The Kellys came from County Cork-the western part of that county was hard hit during the famine; the McCormicks may have originated in Connaught, the northwestern region of Ireland containing counties Mayo, Clare, Sligo, Roscommon, and Galway; this area was the poorest and the most disastered of all Irish regions. An elderly McCormick relative told that the family came from "Conic", and no town or village can be found by that name, although there may be one. Connaught sounds something like "conic" so that has been ascertained possibly as their home. Matt McCormick left Ireland alone as a 17-year old boy-left several sisters and brothers whom he never heard of again-got to a port and obtained a job aboard a sailing ship peeling potatoes and other jobs to earn his way to America. The part of Ireland he may have left-the westernmost section contains rocky land, mountains, poor roads, inaccessible small farms and a general population living almost continually a debilitating life. It makes one marvel that any of our ancestors lived

9 "Strangers At The Door", by Ann Novotny; Chatham Press; Riverside, Conn.; 1971. pp 40.

to emigrate at all.

The Quinns home area was County Antrim and County Down in northern Ireland. They came as an entire family of seven; 5 children and the parents, landing in the early 1840's in Philadelphia. Not long after their arrival here, the parents contracted cholera and died. The children were raised by a German family who had a carriage-making trade. The balance of the related families and allied lines of the Roaches more than likely came to this country in the years around 1850 when times and conditions for crossing had gotten better. By this time all who were not strong or lucky enough, had perished from starvation and several kinds of fever that accompanied famine and the dreaded typhus from the body lice that nearly everyone without fail became infected with. The poor state of health, low levels of energy to keep oneself bathed and supplied with clean clothes; crowded conditions in every home; the Irish peasant's generous habit of never turning a stranger away and huddling together for warmth, all contributed to the louses spread and its prolific numbers. Many emigrants were infected by lice and first exposed to typhus in Liverpool, waiting to sail. By the time our ancestors came to America, they had all more than likely had several bouts with disease, making them immune to some of these fevers on board ship; also, by 1849-1851 immigrants could come to the United States if they paid up to 6 or 7 pounds for a passage fare which is about $30.00-$35.00, plus about $2.50 for an entry fee and were advised to also have at least $10.00 left to start life in this country. This rarely happened. They were guaranteed the harbor they chose at these higher prices and possibly were more saavy on the ins and outs of crossing in these times from letters sent back by those who had gone before. The United States government's tougher laws and enforcement now surely helped make the trips more endurable.

So after possibly 6 weeks at sea, Thomas Roach along with the other 319 passengers on the "Ivanhoe" (one had perished and was buried at sea) became aware they were nearing their destination-the coast of North America had been sighted.

There will be some interval before the final landing, many times these little ships spent days sailing down the rocky coast to their destined harbors. Occasionally a ship will go aground and wreck upon the rocks-a heart-rending event after having made it safely across the Atlantic and now to go down in the treacherous and foggy waters so close to their goals. But the sense that America is so close and being able to see the coast each day brings expectation into some contact with reality.

Steerage becomes a beehive of preparational activities as the ship clears the headlands of the bay; as land appears on both sides and narrows toward the port; then the pilot comes on board. Passengers try to clean themselves, wash their clothes and children are put in order. All is made neat and organized as best as can be done. Anxious eyes make out the skyline of the port city they are approaching-church steeples and taller buildings mark their destination. Then everything comes to a halt! They are all in quarantine.

The huge numbers and deplorable condition of the Irish immigrants arriving in North America at the peak of the famine in 1846-1847, caused receiving countries to make new laws and rules for welfare and care of the ill and destitute peasants. The United States passed strict laws which for the most part caused many British immigrant ships to avoid her ports and make for harbors in Canada. On a number of notorious English ships bringing Irish peasants to America, nearly a quarter of the pass-

Origins in Ireland where a number of our ancestors came from; Quinns from Co. Antrim and Co. Down; McCormicks from Connaught(the western cluster of counties), and Kellys from County Cork. The Crawfords and Burns' origins are unknown, as are the Chapmans.

engers died. Sailors in many ports told that they could always tell an immigrant ship, without asking what the cargo was, by its stink. As late as 1854, when conditions had been much improved on the larger and faster clipper ships, one out of every 6 immigrants still became dangerously ill or died at sea.

"Passenger Acts of 1847 passed by the United States Congress in the spring of that year increased the cost of a passage in U.S. ships, thus discouraging destitute emigrants, and regulations already in existence governing the landing of passengers at the Atlantic ports were stringently enforced. New York and Boston had powers to require masters of vessels to give a bond, a financial guarantee that no passenger would become a burden on the community. The 'commutation fee' in New York was $10.00 for each passenger on board and kept some ships from entering its harbor. 'Sick ships' were ordered to Canada-Boston was receiving more destitute and ill Irish emigrants than she could tolerate and in June, 1847, the city council there passed an ordinance that established a quarantine on Deer Island, 8 miles off the Boston Harbor."10

As the "Ivanhoe" came into waters heading to New York harbor, one can imagine what went on aboard ship. A description of this event from a popular novel of the Irish immigration to this country tells how it may have been on the ship Thomas Roach arrived on: The emigrants waited anxiously for their vessel to approach a berthen and tie up dockside. Possibly some were allowed on deck but usually all steerage passengers were kept down in the hold at this time, especially if there was illness aboard.

They would hardly feel the ship's steady but slow approach to the pier midst a forest of bare masts and crowded hulls. Seamen were already working on the anchored vessels, and their coarse, rude voices came faintly to the arriving passengers. The dark, sluggish water of the harbor looked black, but the moving crests reflected the color of the dawn. It looked so cold. In the early morning light now could be seen the wharves, warehouses and long piers, and beyond them crowded brick buildings and tenements. Their roofs were wet and here and there a narrow street went off between buildings, winding out of sight. Heavy wagons and drays were beginning to move along these cobbled streets, their horses straining. A nearby ship, sails damp but beginning to catch the wind, bowed and moved away from a pier so close to another ship you could hear its sound, so close did it come.

Little by little the docking ship moved closer to the wharf and the long sheds upon them, while passengers strained to spot a familiar face in the crowd on the pier. There were so many people there, including some women and they were weeping, for they already knew that the steerage passengers would not be able to land. Some waved forlornly in greeting.

Then with a rattle of chains, a loud thump, the broad wooden gangplank was lowered to the wharf. Suddenly a swell of voices came from the crowd and above it all, gulls wheeled above the ship and against a graying sky that threatened. Damp sails fell to the deck-water whispered and roiled about the hull. The harbor waters were filled with garbage, pieces of wood, dead animals and now were the color of pewter. In a moment it was riffled by a mean and driving rain, mixed with snow.

10 "The Great Hunger" by Cecil Woodham-Smith; New English Library, Ltd.; Love & Malcomsen, Ltd. Pub.; Redhill, Surrey, G.B.; 1962-1974;pp 243

There were only two cabin passengers aboard the "Ivanhoe" who would disembark first. The sounds of their footsteps and some of the sailors aiding them could be heard through the decks into the steerage below. Their muffled voices and calls could also be heard. The scene on deck showed these first passengers leaving with their trunks and boxes; women in furs and men in greatcoats and tall beaver hats. Carriages began to appear dockside with their drivers to pick up these more fortunate passengers. The cold windwhipped their coats and people held their hats on with one hand while they embraced friends and loved ones who had come to meet them. Ladies were then helped into the waiting carriages-men climbed in after them; they waited for the extra luggage to be taken from the ships and looked on from their conveyances. One could hear their laughter and talking, even in steerage. These were landed gentry or Americans returning from visits abroad. Soon their carriages rumbled away.

The crowd waiting for the travelers in steerage fell back to let these first passengers pass, then huddled like cattle to one side. This group would not be allowed to go aboard the ship to seek out their relatives in steerage for fear of contagion. Nor were the steerage passengers allowed up on the decks now, even for air and a searching look through the crowds for their own relatives. (Some ship masters did allow their passengers in steerage on the upper decks on occasion, but few were that considerate.) They waited barely hoping someone of authority aboard would present themselves and give word of how long the wait might be and perhaps mention any names-what illnesses were aboard, etc...To leave too soon might mean a loved one would come down the gangplank and be lost in their new surroundings, suffer confusion or be taken advantage of by the low-life that hung around dockside. Better to wait a little longer......

The scene on the wharf around them consisted now of piles of freight and workers pushing carts and wheelbarrows; still this quiet rainsoaked crowd waited hoping and praying for the glimpse of a beloved lost face on the ship. The gray early morning light mingled with fog and smoke made it difficult to see any feature clearly-the water began to move the ship slightly in the tide's pull-soft swirling and quiet dipping.

The same scene could well have occurred aboard the "Ivanhoe". All ill with fever that first part of January, 1850, would be worried about whether or not they would be refused entrance to this country or be detained either on their ship for 30 days or in a hospital shed on Staten Island, until they got well or died. (Some reports tell that by 1850 the captain of a ship with sick people on board had to pay a $300 bond for each emigrant sent to the hospital on Staten Island.) It is not known how stringently this was enforced; these hospitals for New York were filled with patients for a number of years during the peak of immigration. The American people <u>did</u> have compassion for these souls so it is likely that after a ship was quarantined for its limit those still ill were taken to the hospital sheds, bond or no.

We don't know if Thomas Roach was well or not when the "Ivanhoe" underwent inspection by a doctor sent out by the New York Immigration Commission. If he was, he would be among those granted entry after a day or two of waiting for a burthen along the Battery, the docking area of Manhattan Island where all the ships tied up. Once cleared to go ashore and having paid his entry fee to the captain, Thomas Roach would leave the "Ivanhoe", come down the gangplank and into the dockside crowd to begin his life in America.

There he may have encountered one of the many unscrupulous persons; Irishmen who had come before him and now were preying on the newly arrived and unsuspecting emigrant, hanging around the gangway of the "Ivanhoe". Former emigrants themselves would approach fellow countrymen and try to take advantage of them; Irishmen befriending Irishmen. These "low-life touts" were called runners. Runners were found in every port in the United States, Canada, and in Europe, but it was in New York that they were the worst. Immediately upon disembarking from his ship, the newly arrived emigrant was accosted by these villains. Sometimes, they were even able to get aboard the quarantined vessels. The runners spoke to his victim in their native tongue; Irish to the Irish; German to the German; English to the English. Stunned by the bustle of arrival and unless some friend or relative met him he was scared and confused and listened and was lost. The boldness and tenaciousness the runners exhibited was extraordinary; though typhus and cholera struck terror to most, these people would make their way out to Staten Island and board quarantined ships. When caught or refused admittance to these infected quarantine establishments, they would scale walls or row out in small boats from New York City-there weren't enough police to control them.

When first approaching a "client" the runner would recommend the comfort and economy of a boarding house managed by one of his friends; sixpence only was charged for a meal; sixpence for a bed; luggage was stored free. Only too often the emigrant allowed himself and his luggage to be taken away.

Runners were also dangerous men-big fisted, body punchers who prided themselves going through life on their muscles..they worked in gangs and each gang had its own bullies; bloody fights were waged over posession of terrified emigrants, the strongest ones carrying off the prey. Many new-landed Irish had their trunk or bundles seized and carried off against their protests by overbearing, persistent "runners" unless they were protected by a policeman.

These emigrant boarding houses were usually owned by men who had formerly been runners themselves, and they hired one or two ex-colleagues to bring them customers from the docks. The Irish emigrant boarding houses in lower New York near the harbor (3rd Ward) almost always had an Irish landlord who had become a U.S. citizen. A typical landlord was a heavy-set, big, muscular fellow with a cunning face full of brutality and a line of blarney a mile long.

The ground floor of his boarding house was a grogery or tavern selling the "coarsest and commonest" kind of liquor distilled from Indian corn and colored to represent brandy. The rooms he rented were filthy little cubes which held as many as 8 to 10 "boarders" jammed together. Once the poor emigrant was in the clutches of these terrible people there was no escape; baggage was taken away and "kept" in locked cellars and was only gotten back after an exhorbitant price was paid for "storing it". The charge for meals and bed turned out to be three or four times the price originally quoted. The unlucky emigrant perhaps from the wilds of Mayo or Clare and helpless in the immensity of the big city, was bullied, cheated, and sometimes detained by force until all his money had been got from him along with his luggage.

These people also sold tickets on trains, ferries, canalboats, etc. to points further West, to the unsuspecting newcomers and most were fraudulent and left the traveler stranded half-way to his destination. In order to continue on he had to fork out more of his dwindling cash to

MAP OF NEW YORK AND THE ADJACENT CITIES

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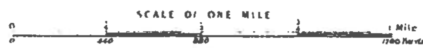


NEW YORK HARBOR

GOVERNORS ISLAND

FORT COLUMBUS

BUTTERMILK CHANNEL

HUDSON

EAST RIVER

THE BATTERY

WASHINGTON PARK

CITY PARK

U.S. COB DOCK

THE WALLABOUT

ATLANTIC BASIN

PROPOSED BATTERY

get where he was going. The government agencies that might protect or aid the emigrant were ineffective against the large amount of fraud going on, or had not been formed in the early 1850's. Some emigrants that were healthy but destitute were taken in by the alms-houses in New York for $2.50 a week, paid for by the City Commissioners and some hundreds were found work on New Jersey farms.

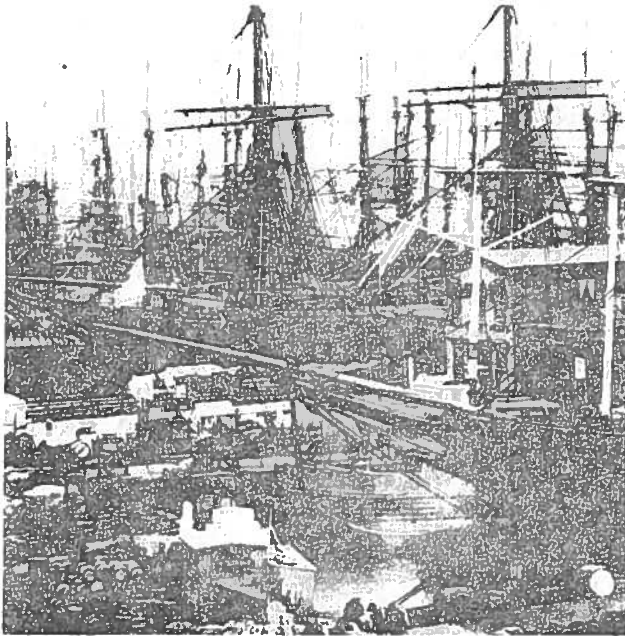
We do not know what Thomas Roach did following his arrival in New York City; a Thomas Roach was located in September of 1850 working for a farmer in Lawrence township, Mercer County, New Jersey, where the family lived later-possibly he was one the emigrants who took advantage of a farm job offered by the alms-houses and the New York City Commissioners. A number of Thomas Roaches have been noted in ship's lists and towns and times where our relative lived, so it is not certain which one he was. There are also 7 Thomas Roaches listed living in New York City in the census of 1850 for that place...My own feelings are that he stayed on in New York City to begin working as soon as possible to earn money to send back to Bridget; he lived in a crowded room and endured the conditions of that city so as to be near the docks when Bridget, Joseph Dennis, and William Patrick would finally come.

In the New York City Directory of 1851 and 1852, 4 Thomas Roaches are listed-2 were shoemakers; one a cabinetmaker; one was listed as a laborer living at 16 Carlisle Street; (see map on page 33) that may have been our relative, as he always listed himself as a laborer.

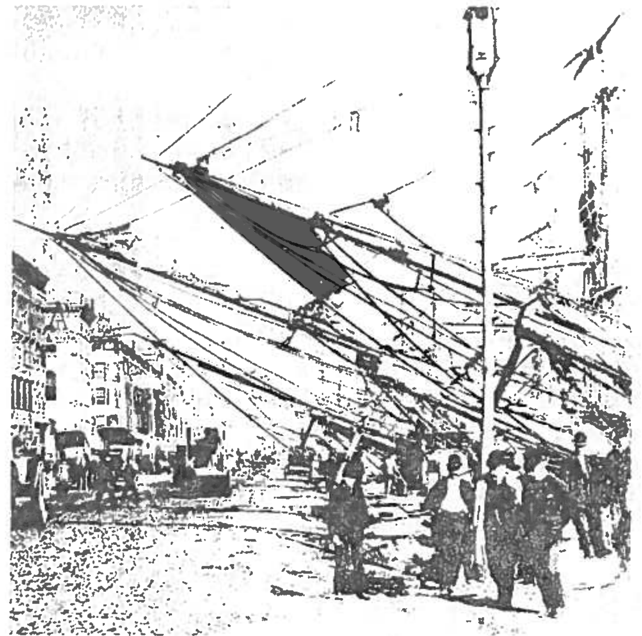
Once debarked the immigrant in America faced some of the same problems they had run up against in Europe. The big port cities-New York, New Orleans, Boston, Philadelphia, and Baltimore were crowded and growing. These newcomers landed in all the port cities but most came to New York...and most were laborers-unskilled. They knew no trade or craft and didn't even farm as it was done in America. Most had little or no education and no money. But they had buoyant spirits and did not fear hard work, and were glad to have the ocean between them and their old lives.

They took any job they could find at whatever pay, as they needed to begin sending money back to their homeland and loved ones so they could follow. There were plenty of jobs here then, as America was building and growing. The Irish were in the thick of this growth-they were hod-carriers for the buildings in big cities; they worked with pick and shovel in the coal mines of Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Ohio, and Illinois. They made roads, dug canals, and manned barges; they blasted most of the tunnels east of the Rockies; they drove the spikes that held the rails in place. Many were "tarriers" on the railroad gangs that ran the steam drills and removed the loosened rock. A great many Irishmen were killed by accidents in these heavy construction jobs. But the danger in these jobs did not keep them from continuing to perform them as they had had difficulties before.

The immigrants background and experience in his native country had a profound effect on his settlement in the New World. The peasants arrival in America without sufficient funds nor the know-how to cope in a city and were usually suffering from health problems that had driven them away from their homeland. On top of that, the hardships encountered on their ocean journey had weakened them so they were in pitiful straits. Yet they had to begin at once to try to earn their keep and daily bread. Those who wished to become farmers had little or no capital with which to begin. Instead, most found themselves confined to the cities where they had landed and few of them ever accumulated enough



South St. Ferry Building, *1860, daguerreotype. Courtesy South Street Seaport Museum.*



South St., New York, *ca. 1876. Courtesy Peabody Museum of Salem.*

The New York waterfront scenes on Lower Manhattan that were typical of what Thomas Roach and Bridget Scahan Roach may have seen when they landed in 1850-1851 from Ireland.

resources to make any meaningful choice about their way of life. Theirs was an adjustment to unending labor and poverty.

Fortunately for all the newly arriving immigrants America's economy needed all kinds of workers where brawn counted. In the 1820's and 1830's the great canals were being dug as first links in the national transportation system, and in the 50 years between 1830 and 1880, thousands of miles of rail were being laid. There were no heavy earth-moving equipment but there were picks and shovels; everything had to be done by hand. The mainstay of the construction gangs were the Irish laborers and they did this gruelling work. Irish communities formed all along these canals and railroad projects and many immigrants stayed on when the gang moved on.

There was a great demand for the Irish laborer's muscle in all the growing cities. This unskilled labor built new streets and aqueducts; lighting, sewerage and transit systems, and residential, commercial, and public buildings to meet the needs of a soaring population. Masons and carpenters were always in short supply; there was a need, too, for men who could carry a hod and wield a shovel. In addition, the cities had opportunities for porters, draymen, and stevedores for which low wages and the willingness to toil was less important than the skill.

In time, the American business people found new ways to use the Irish immigrants labors. They learned to dig coal in the anthracite mines of Pennsylvania; wield a needle as tailors; and eventually to tend machines in the many factories. In New England textile mills they replaced farm girls and made a more dependable, less costly and permanent work force than ever before. Numerous new enterprises that came with in-

dustrialization throughout the country also needed the talents of the Irish.

None of these jobs gave a man an adequate livliehood. Hours were long, conditions harsh, wages low, and periods of unemployment long. Because of this, each family required that several people in the group work to help earn a living. The women in the family old enough to do laundry, sew, work as domestics for wealthier families, or even in a factory were soon familiar in the work force. It was a matter of course that children began to earn their keep as quickly as possible.

America's use of all these immigrants did nothing to help them reorganize their lives that had been so desperate in the old country and their subsequent migration. Almost entirely city dwellers, they made up between 20% and 30% of the population of New York, Boston, Philadelphia, and Baltimore. There, poverty forced them into crowded makeshift tenements of the slums where they were ready victims of crime and disease. One observer noted there were few gray-haired Irishmen, so many died young. Many adults drank excessively and the youths were tempted into crime and vice-both responses to the feelings of hopelessness they felt and a conviction of a future free of poverty.

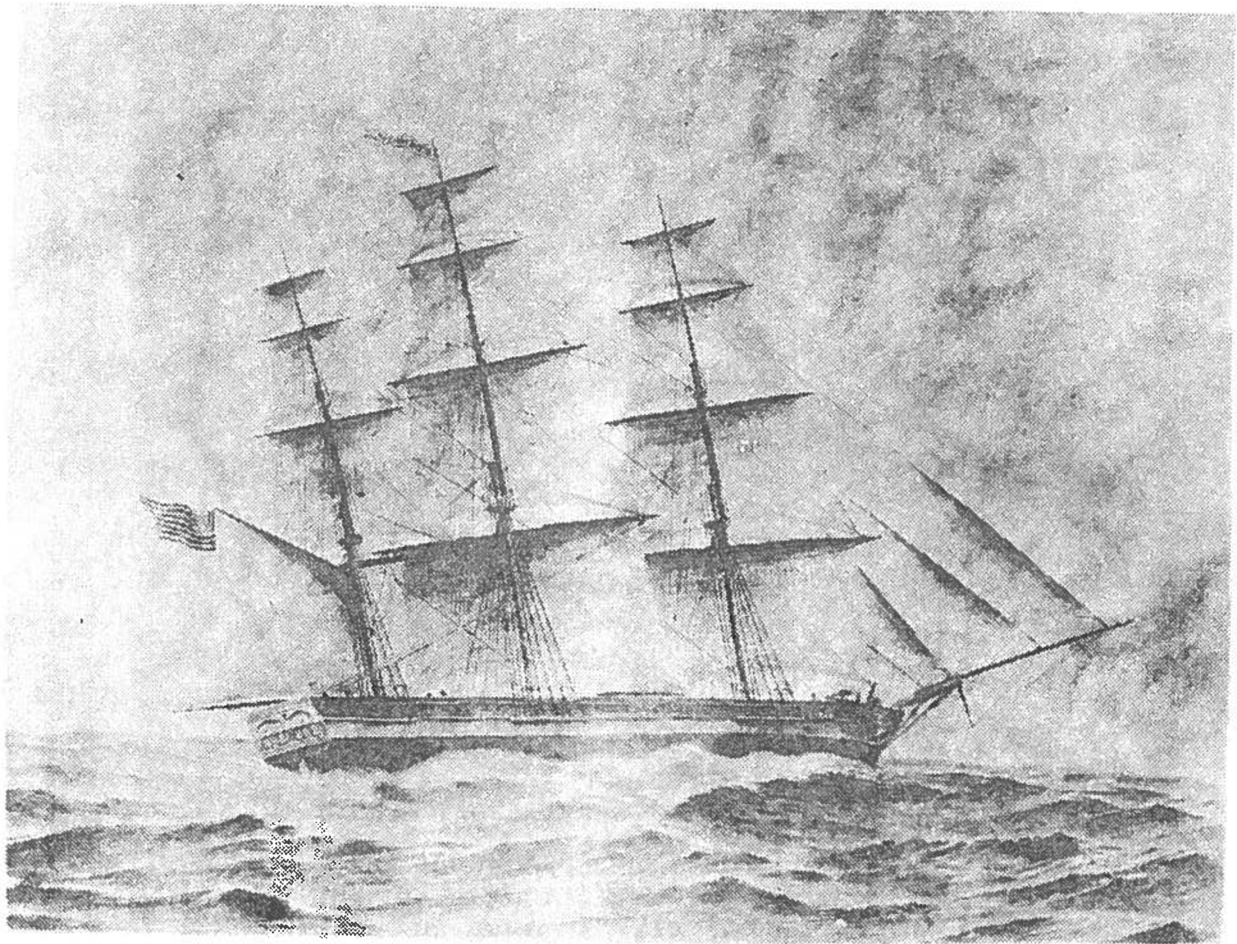
The year and a half that passed from the time Thomas Roach left Ireland and his family, until they arrived in this country must have impressed upon him the importance of getting away from the city and into the country. He, like so many, would see all the hard times; crowded conditions, unsanitary streets and yards, disease, and the crime that abounded in New York City.

But for now, he must stay and get work each day, save all he could and send it back to Bridget. She would need some of what he sent each time to live on and share with whomever she was living. It would be hard for her to save but she must. It would take a little more than a year and even then, according to family stories, she did not have enough.

After Thomas Roach left for America in late October or early November of 1849, it is thought that Bridget found she was pregnant with their second child. Thomas would not know of this at the earliest, until she had heard from him in America and knew where to write him. It would mean the passage of 6 or 7 months. Getting letters written and sent was tedious and a difficult chore. A priest or educated person they could trust would have to write for them, and precious money spent for postage...then the long, long wait for any answer. If this was the situation, William Patrick Roach would have been born sometime in the summer of 1850. The date, September 29, he gave as his birthdate in later years, was also the date, documented, of his younger brother, Daniel. Quite a coincidence, but possible. He also, always told people in later years that he had been born in Dublin and came to this country at age 17. On what may be his naturalization papers found in Fowler, Indiana he also claimed to have come to this country as a 3 or 4-year old in 1853-54 via Liverpool to the port of New York City. No proof has been found to substantiate this-many Catholic churches have been searched in New York City that were there in the 1850's for a baptism record for William Patrick Roach and none have been found. Also, an extensive search has also been made through reels of Passenger Lists at the National Archives for the years 1849-1854 and he has not been found listed there either. So it is now thought that William Patrick Roach was born in County Tipperary, Ireland in the late summer or early fall of 1850.

So, while Thomas Roach was in New York City working and sending Bridget money when he could, she was carrying on as best she could in Newtown or Drangan, County Tipperary, carrying for her family and planning to leave Ireland as soon as she could save enough.

It is quite possible a number of villagers; neighbors; relatives or friends planned to leave for America together and so Bridget's plans of when to go were not entirely her own. They would help her with her belongings and with Joseph and Patrick. The records show she sailed from the port of Limerick in County Limerick on the Shannon River. This was a closer port than Dublin-easier for her to reach and would not take as long in time and endurance as any other port would. So the decision to leave County Tipperary in late February or early March was made-it is a rare possibility they had coach fare and rode to Limerick-my own guess is that as most did in those times, they walked to Limerick and it being cold and rainy they probably didn't make much time. Some of the men in their crowd would have to help her with her luggage or whatever it was she brought, and with small children in the group, the speed with which they were able to travel would not be swift. Arriving in Limerick, they would immediately try to make arrangements for their passage; the ship Bridget sailed on was a small one, the "Elisha Denison", a packet and it carried 185 passengers. A Captain John Morton was in charge-some emi-



-courtesy of the Peabody Museum of Salem, Ma.

The packet, "Elisha Denison" that brought Bridget Scahan Roach and her two small sons, Joseph Dennis Roach and William Patrick Roach to New York City from Limerick, Ireland on Apr. 21, 1851.

The route taken by Bridget Scahan Roach her two small children, and possibly several relatives, friends, or people from Drangan to the Port of Limerick in the late winter of 1851.

grants were able to bargain on the price of their tickets, but in 1851 the fare was pretty well set and higher than in the earlier years of the famine when it was only about $10.00. In order to insure her the port of New York City, she probably had to pay about $30.00 – $35.00. What Joseph's fare was, I don't know, and also what they charged for a babe in arms is unknown. Each passenger had to bring along some of his food and he could also purchase additional items if his own supplies ran out before reaching his destination. Many of the ships that carried immigrants from Ireland to America in those days were American built and owned-they were regular packet runs between certain Irish ports and American ports. They would leave America with a load of goods for Ireland and then put in bunks, etc. in their holds for a return trip of immigrants to America. It seems strange to me that the terrible conditions and treatment dealt these people were given by Americans, in many cases, they themselves, earlier immigrants to America.

The port of Limerick was not as big nor as busy as others in Ireland, so it may have taken enough longer to get the full passenger load thus causing Bridget to use up her precious savings for her and Joseph's boarding and food. William Patrick would still be nursing so he would not have to be bought food. The family story tells that when she came to pay for her tickets she didn't have enough money; so she hid Joseph or Patrick in her trunk or barrel. This was until they were safely away from shore and then this "hidden" child was to be let out. It turned out that by the time anyone was able to release this child, it was half dead of suffocation. Evidently, whoever it was, he recovered; it is my guess here, that Patrick was the "stowaway" being an infant and smaller-also easier to put in whatever trunk or barrel Bridget brought with her. He could have been given something to make him sleep until he could be released. What other things that happened to the Roach family on board is not known. After reading of others crossings it is likely they suffered at one time or another from seasickness and several bouts of fever or other illness before reaching America. The food she brought along for them had to be cooked on a communal stove. The large number of people trying to use these facilities caused many problems, one of which was the interruption of the cooking which left the food half raw and caused dysentery to some who partook of it. The children were especially affected. There was just so much time allowed for these stoves to burn and when that time was up, a sailor would come and douse the coals with a bucket of water. Many meals were caught half-cooked and the unlucky passengers had to eat their gruel or oatmeal, etc. in that state. If one figures an average trip from Ireland to America as lasting 6 weeks, then Bridget, Joseph, and Patrick Roach must have sailed from Limerick on the "Elisha Denison" in the first week in March. This was not the best time of the year to leave-usually people chose the warmer months-but in those years the emigrants were leaving whenever they could. The minute they got enough money together and conditions were right, they left.

Passenger lists at the Archives show that Bridget Scahan Roach, age 25(she was 23)and John Roach, age 3(he was Joseph)were the 7th and 8th passengers to board the "Elisha Denison". It listed no luggage for them by Captain Morton-many captains didn't bother to put this down for the records-and the ship carried a total of 185 passengers in steerage. If Bridget had indeed hidden William Patrick in her trunk, then he would not be listed. They arrived at a burthen in New York harbor at the Battery, or along the piers on the Lower East or West side of Manhattan on April 21, 1851. Whether they had to undergo quarantine or not is only a guess; surely Bridget would worry about Thomas being there to meet her; if she was able to get up on deck she would nervously search the faces of those in the crowd for that familiar face. What would she do

if he were not there? Well, he was and it must have been a moving and emotional reunion-so much had happened since they had all been together. They would make their way through all the dockside hoodlums and runners and bustle to their room or rooms at 16 Carlisle Street or wherever Thomas had a room for them. Bridget, Joseph Dennis, and William Patrick needed to rest and begin to adjust to their new lives in America.*

The Thomas and Bridget Roach family stayed on in New York City well into or through 1852 as he is listed there at 16 Carlisle Street as a laborer during that time. But they were determined to leave there and go somewhere the air and surroundings were cleaner; less crime, and where the housing was not so crowded. If William Patrick had been born in 1850, he would now be 2-Joseph Dennis, a 4 year-old, cleaner country surroundings would be best for them. So Thomas took his family to live in New Jersey. Possibly they only crossed the Hudson River on a ferry and settled for a time near Hoboken or Jersey City, but certainly by 1854 when their 3rd child, Thomas, Jr. was born they were living near Trenton. Lawrence Township is thought to have been their home then; later they did live there. Some stories tell that Thomas Roach, Sr., worked on the railroads; he may have worked at all kinds of jobs, whenever and wherever he could. From existing census and a few birth records in existence on this period of time and for our family, it seems the family moved around Mercer County a good bit. Never very far between moves, but a few miles at a time. This was a rural setting; the railroads had already been built, although they had to be maintained. It had a number of very small villages of around 50 people up to 200. Each town had a handful of business establishments; a hotel, I or 2 general stores, a blacksmith shop, school, churches, a livery. And almost everyone had several mills on a local river that ground the local farmer's grain and then a mill that made textiles. I personally think that Thomas Roach, Sr. worked a good bit in these local mills. He would move the family as he followed available milling jobs; many people in those days were unemployed alot, especially if they did farm labor. Perhaps Thomas Roach, Sr. worked on farms during the growing seasons and then took millwork in the winter.

On June 10, 1854 Thomas Roach, Jr. was born; baptism records at Sacred Heart Catholic Church* in Trenton show his birthdate and baptismal date as July 2, 1854. No place of birth was given. Daniel Maher and Mary Brennan were his sponsors; whether they were just members of the congregation or friends of our family and came to Trenton to be at this ceremony is not known. The priest who performed the baptism was

* The Irish section of New York City in those days of the 1850's is explained in "All About New York" by Rian James; "The Irish section which has moved in bodily on what was once aristocratic old Chelsea, runs from about 13th St., West of 9th Ave. to 24th St., also west of 9th Ave. ..Another Irish section, known once as Hell's Kitchen, begins at about 48th St. and runs north to the borders of San Juan Hill(at 60th St.) all west of 10th Avenue. The police in both these areas travel in pairs." pp 247.

* In 1854 Sacred Heart was known at "St. John's" and served the Irish Catholics in a huge area of western New Jersey.