

IN THE BEGINNING...

Our story begins with a monument, a tombstone in western Wisconsin. In St. Patrick's Cemetery, St. Croix Co., are many large, colorful tombstones on the graves of immigrant Irish and their families. One such stone, an obelisk, white, maybe 9 ft. tall, has a weathered inscription which reads:

William Heffron

died

Aug. 7, 1868

Bridget O'Haire

wife of Wm. Heffron

died

Mar. 17, 1894

Aged

80 yrs

A native of Parish

of Kilmore, Co. Mayo

Ireland

William and Bridget Heffron and their five children left Ireland during the famine years and came to the United States. During the first twelve or so years in this country they lived in several places, including Vermont, Ohio, and Kentucky. Three more children were born during this period, as well as two grandsons. About 1860, they and their family settled in St. Croix County, Wisconsin. They became a part of the community of Erin Prairie, an Irish immigrant settlement (usually called "Erin"). Over the next few years, several other Irish immigrant families from Kilmore Parish and the adjoining Kilcommon Parish, Co. Mayo, also settled in Erin. William and Bridget had 64 grandchildren, most of them were raised in St. Croix Co., many in Erin. Beginning in the 1890's, their descendants began to disperse, some going to the frontier in North Dakota, some to Vancouver, B. C., and several to the urban area of the twin cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul. Still others went west to California and Washington. William and Bridget had 103 great-grandchildren, most of them were born outside of St. Croix Co. When great-great-grandchildren began life, St. Croix Co., for most, had become an unknown part of the world. Today, the several hundred living descendants of William and Bridget are spread from Boston, Mass., to Kailua-Kona, Hawaii, and from the snows of North Dakota and Montana to the sunshine of southern Florida.

The following is the story of William and Bridget Heffron and their descendants. But first, a diversion backwards in time. William and Bridget came to America from Co. Mayo, Ireland, but why did they leave Ireland? The explanation requires an excursion into local Irish history, Irish geography and Irish customs.

BEFORE THE BEGINNING...

The Irish are not the same as the English. They are two different peoples, ethnically, linguistically, historically, and, since the reformation of the English Church, religiously. Irish are descended from the ancient Celtic people who once populated much of western Europe. Their language is Gaelic, a Celtic language. The English and their language are of Germanic origin and came to the British Isles with the fall of the Roman Empire and the invasion of the German tribes. While England was once a Celtic land, they were subjected to rule by the Romans, invasion by the German "barbarians", Vikings, and finally the Normans. The Romans never quite got around to invading Ireland. The Germanic tribes also did not invade Ireland and thus the Celtic fringe of Europe was preserved in Ireland. The Viking invasion was devastating to much of Ireland but they were unable to conquer or destroy the Gaelic culture.

With the English invasion of Ireland in 1169, over 7 centuries of English oppression, colonization, and subjugation began. When the English Reformation began under Henry VIII, a new era of terror began, culminating in the Cromwellian invasion of 1650 when the Irish were slaughtered and the survivors were transported to the west of Ireland.

Origin of Heffron Family.

Although William and Bridget Heffron lived in Kilmore Parish, Co. Mayo, before coming to America, the family name is not indigenous to the area. The Heffrons' that live in the area today claim that the family came to Co. Mayo from Co. Tipperary during Cromwellian times (mid seventeenth century). During that period, the English, under Oliver Cromwell's armies, drove most of the Irish speaking people from east of the Shannon River to the western parts of Ireland, ("to Hell or Connaught"). The more productive areas of Ireland were appropriated and given to the English colonists or members of Cromwell's army, the Irish were killed or removed to the western province of Connaught.

Kilmore Parish, Co. Mayo.

Kilmore Parish, where William and Bridget Heffron lived, is a civil parish in the northwest corner of Co. Mayo, Ireland. It consists of the Mullet Peninsula and several offshore islands, all lying west of the town of Belmullet. Belmullet is within the adjoining Kilcommon Parish, a large area of bog land and mountains east of Belmullet. These two civil parishes, Kilmore and Kilcommon, make up the area called Erris Barony. Most of the population of Erris is concentrated within a 10 to 15 mile radius of Belmullet, the largest town within the Barony. Much of the land in Erris is mountainous and unsuitable for farming but near Belmullet there are some farms, many of them dairies. Some commercial fishing is done from the coastal area of Erris. It is an isolated section of Ireland, not served by railroads, and with roads which are marginal, even by Irish standards. Tourism is a minor part of the economy. Many people who live there today are Gaelic speaking.

During the first half of the nineteenth century Erris, like the rest of Ireland, was in the midst of a population explosion. The 1841 census of Ireland showed about 8 million people, a population density greater than that of China. The result was extensive destitution, especially in the rural west of Ireland. Travellers from Europe were appalled at the poverty, many finding it the worst in Europe.

The land was owned by a few landlords who leased it to the Irish peasants. As the population grew, the arable land was divided and subdivided into smaller and smaller parcels. The potatoe became the only practical food for the people because it took less land to support a family with potatoes than with any other crop. Wheat and other grains were raised to sell to pay the rent. The peasants existed largely on potatoes and buttermilk. The grain was exported to England and Europe. In some places the Irish lost the knowledge to cook other foods or even to bake bread. The intense competition for land resulted in very high rents, sometimes 100% higher than in England.

Prior to about 1820 there were no roads into Erris from the surrounding Baronies. This isolation kept the population low and concentrated in the easily farmed land. When roads were built from Castlebar and Ballina, population increased in Erris. Extensive reclamation of bog land made more land available. Population grew rapidly and farm production in the area increased. Between 1822 and 1835 the production of oats and barley in Erris increased from 80 tons to 1800 tons.

Bellmullet was established in 1822 and became the major market town of the area. Binghamstown, on the Mullet Peninsula, was also a market town. Fishing supplemented the agricultural economy. The 1841 census showed Erris had a population of about 30,000 people and Bellmullet had a population of 637.

"Life in Erris was primitive but there was some gaiety and prosperity. On Sundays, market days, and holidays the men wore frieze coats, red or black, with corduroy or pilot cloth trousers, gaudy waistcoats and felt hats; the women had stuff gowns, looped up to show a red or black flannel petticoat, and caps with gay ribbons; on special occasions both wore shoes and stockings." (The Great Hunger, by Cecil Woodham-Smith, p311)

The Potatoe Famine In Erris Barony

The potato crop of 1845 was infested with a previously unknown disease, potatoe blight, which came to Europe from North America. In Ireland that year the blight destroyed over half of the potatoes. In 1846 the total destruction of potatoes occurred. The 1847 crop was not damaged by blight but there were very few potatoes planted because the seed potatoes had been consumed as food. The 1848 potatoe crop was again completely destroyed. The four years beginning with the harvest in 1845 and ending with the harvest of 1849 are generally known as the famine years. About one fourth of the population of Ireland died or emigrated during these years. The country was reduced to such destitution that emigration continued for decades afterward. Probably a million Irish people left Ireland during the famine, many settling in North America.

Erris Barony, like the rest of western Ireland, was particularly hard hit by the famine. The following are examples of descriptions of the area by relief workers who visited Erris Barony during the famine.

"The failure of the potato brought ruin: frieze coats, red flannel petticoats, gaudy waistcoats and gay ribbons were sold, and many thousands of the inhabitants of Erris were reduced to a state which the Commissariat officer...declared was the lowest and most degraded he had ever met with, even among the Ashantees or wild Indians. Cabins in Erris were cut out of the living bog, the walls of the bog forming two or three sides; entrances were so low that it was necessary to crawl in on all fours, and the height inside--four to eight feet--made it almost impossible to stand upright. Large families, sometimes more than eight persons, lived in these 'human burrows'; they were 'quiet harmless persons, terrified of strangers'" (Ibid, p. 311)

A Quaker relief worker from York, England, James Hack Tuke, visited Erris Barony in 1847. The following description was written by him in a letter to the Society of Friends in Dublin. "I must be allowed to dwell at some length upon the peculiar misery of this Barony of Erris, and the parish of Bellmullet, which I spent some days in examining.... This barony is situated on the extreme northwest coast of Mayo, bounded on two sides by the Atlantic Ocean. The population last year was computed at about 28,000; of that number, it is said that at least 2,000 have emigrated...and that 6,000 have perished by starvation, dysentery, and fever. There is left a miserable remnant of little more than 20,000; of whom 10,000, at least, are, strictly speaking, on the very verge of starvation. Ten thousand people within 48 hours journey of the metropolis of the world, [London] living, or rather starving, upon turnip-tops, sand-eels, and sea-weed; a diet which no one in England would consider fit for the meanest animal which he keeps."

Evictions became widespread throughout Ireland in 1847 and Erris Barony was not spared. "The most notorious example, however, was supplied by the unhappy district of Bellmullet, in Erris, on the estate of a Mr. Walshe. He lived at Crossmolina, and was a magistrate, but had taken no part in relief work during the famine. The inhabitants of three villages were evicted by Mr. Walshe, with the help of a company of the 49th Regiment; their houses were thrown down and they were turned out, in the depth of the winter, to exist as best they might. The largest of these hamlets was Mullaroghe, on the peninsula of the Mullet...a woman who had been evicted made a statement.... She had been, she said, 'living in Mullaroghe with her husband, when young Mr. Walshe and two drivers came, about ten days before Christmas (1847)...the second day the people were all turned out of doors and the roofs of their houses pulled down. That night they made a bit of

a tent. or shelter, of wood and straw; that the drivers threw down and drove them from the place.... It would have "pitied the sun" she said, "to look at them as they had to go head foremost under hail and storm.' They implored the drivers to allow them to remain a short time as it was so near the time of festival (Christmas) but they would not....' Mullaroghe was 'literally a heap of ruins' wrote James Hack Tuke; the Townland assessment book showed that, in 1845, 102 families were rated there, but only the walls of three houses now stood.... Two more hamlets on Mr. Walshe's land, Tiraun and Clogher, were destroyed in the same way: the inhabitants were driven out with the help of troops and their cabins demolished. The people, timid by nature, were stunned. Tuke saw 'miserable objects lingering helpless and bewildered round the ruins of their homes, while outside their few possessions disintegrated in the rain. Between Mullaroghe and Clogher, Mr. Hamilton...set up a 'feeding station' where more than three hundred persons gathered 'in various stages of fever, starvation and nakedness'; many, too weak to stand, lay on the ground; the worst...did not appear; they were too ill to crawl out of their hiding-places and shelters." (Ibid, p. 319-320)

Disease caused by famine also took its toll in Erris. Famine dropsy, resulting from long continued famine, resulted in swelling first of the limbs, then of the body. A Quaker relief worker describe children in Belmullet "who had previously been emaciated, now exhibited frightful swelling, though most of them were too weak to stand" (Ibid, p. 194)

Fishing was a supplemental food industry in the west of Ireland, especially in Erris. The famine nearly destroyed the industry even though the need for fish increased. Boats and equipment were sold or pawned to buy food or pay rent. Fishermen on the public works were afraid to leave their jobs and return to fishing, public works being a more reliable source of income with which to feed their families. The sever winter (of 1846-47) made it impossible to leave the harbors for weeks at a time. Fishermen weakened by hunger and disease were physically unable to row their boats out to the fishing grounds. As a result, the amount of fish available as food decreased even as the need increased.

The Famine Emigration.

William and Bridget Heffron and their five young children left Erris Barony during the famine, sometime during the years of 1846 to 1848. The port by which they left, their first destination in North America, and the ship which brought them are all unknown. About a million Irish made the Atlantic crossing during the famine years and much is known of the conditions of this trip. Since Ireland and Canada were both part of the British Commonwealth, passage to Montreal was cheaper than to the U. S. Also, the U. S. restricted entry to the Irish people, making legal entry very difficult. Many Irish landed in Canada, then made their way across the U. S. border.

The famine emigration began in the spring of 1846. the first to leave were not the destitute but the comfortable farmers, many of whom left from Westport, Co. Mayo in April and May. The first ship landed in Quebec on April 24, 1846. These immigrants were described as well-to-do, healthy and with a little capital. By August of 1846 the situation had changed. The potatoe had failed completely and destitute people crowded on board sailing ships in an attempt to reach Quebec before ice closed the St. Lawrence River. Some were sent by landlords anxious to clear their land of people. Others used all their money to secure passage. They often arrived in Quebec without the 6 pence needed for steamer passage to Montreal.

During the winter, fever had added to the misery in Ireland and by Feb., 1847, the headlong flight to get out of Ireland began. Many left directly from western ports of Ireland. Three thousand left from Sligo that winter. Bands of as many as 700 people passed through Mayo to emigrate, some from Ballina, Westport, Killala, and other small ports. Ships were overcrowded, under provisioned, and had no medical personel or supplies. The result was disaster.

Ships entering the St. Lawrence were required to stop at the Grosse Isle quarantine station, 30 miles downriver from Quebec. The first ship to enter the St. Lawrence in the spring of 1847 arrived on May 17. She carried 241 passengers, 84 with fever. (The quarantine hospital on Grosse Isle was built for 150 patients.) Four days later, May 21, eight ships arrived

with a total of 430 fevered people. Three days later, 17 ships arrived, all with fever on board. By May 29, 36 ships with 13,000 immigrants on board were waiting at Grosse Isle. By May 31, there were 40 ships extending 2 miles down river. There were about 1,100 cases of fever on Grosse Isle, and probably as many on board ships waiting to be taken off.

By July there were 2,500 sick people at Grosse Isle. Members of the staff caught typhus and many died. Twelve of the fourteen on the staff were sick at one time. Patients overflowed the hospital into sheds and finally outside on the ground. Many waited for days to be taken off ships.

Overcrowding at Grosse Isle made it impossible to hold all the sick and boatloads of fevered patients were sent upriver to Quebec and Montreal. Hundreds of sick were landed on the wharfs of Montreal with no medical aid available. Fever sheds were built at Point St. Charles, near Montreal. Conditions soon approached those at Grosse Isle.

By fall, when ice closed the river and immigration stopped, thousands had died at Grosse Isle and Montreal, not only immigrants but also doctors, nurses, priests, nuns, and others who came to help. At Grosse Isle a monument has the following inscription:

In this secluded spot lie the mortal remains
of 5,294 persons, who, fleeing from pestilence
and famine in Ireland in the year 1847 found
in America but a grave.

A second monument on Grosse Isle, a Celtic cross has two inscriptions which read;

Sacred to the memory of thousands of
Irish immigrants who to preserve the
faith suffered hunger and exile in 1847-
48 and stricken with fever ended here
their sorrowful pilgrimage.

Thousands of the children of the Gael were
lost on this island while fleeing from
foreign tyrannical laws and an artificial
famine in the years 1847-48. God bless
them. God save Ireland.

Near Point St. Charles in Montreal is a stone which is inscribed;

To
preserve from desecration
the remains of 6,000 immigrants
who died from ship fever
A. D. 1847-48
this stone
is erected by the workmen
Messrs. Peto, Brassey, and Betts
employed in the construction
of the
Victoria Bridge

A. D. 1859

Most of the immigrants who arrived in Canada entered the U. S. where economic opportunity was greater and they were not subject to the laws of the hated English. The U. S. and some state governments tried to keep them out. The people of the U. S. viewed the flood of Irish immigrants with resentment. They were destitute, diseased, uneducated, unskilled, and Catholic. Many were old and infirm. Many of those who arrived in Canada entered the U. S. by simply walking across the border. Those whose ships arrived in the U. S. usually landed at New York or Boston. Some who were turned away at these ports were landed by small boats on the shores of New England. Boston and New York, and some other cities, soon had large populations of Irish paupers settled in ghettos.

William And Bridget Heffron In America

William and Bridget Heffron were in the U. S. by July 1, 1848, when their daughter, Margaret, was born in Rutland, Vermont. Their next child, John R., was born about 1852-1853, probably in Kentucky. Their youngest son, Thomas, was born in Ohio in Dec., 1856. Their oldest daughter, Mary, was married to Patrick Kane somewhere in the U. S. and their first son, Owen Kane, was born about 1857 in Ohio and their second son, William Kane, was born about 1858, in Kentucky (Paducah?). During this period the family were most likely moving from place to place, where ever they could find employment. Large numbers of Irish were employed at this time in construction of railroads and canals. Many were employed in lead mining in southern Wisconsin, (including many families which eventually settled on farms in St. Croix Co., Wisc.). Lumbering along the St. Croix River, both in Wisconsin and Minnesota, also provided the Irish immigrants with employment during this period.

Land records show that William and Bridget Heffron bought land in Emerald Township in May, 1859, and in Erin Prairie Township in June, 1864. Their oldest son, David Heffron, bought land in Erin Prairie in Aug., 1861. Their son William Heffron was listed on the membership certificate of the St. Croix Co. Old Settlers' Assoc. as being a resident since 1860. The family is not listed on the 1860 St. Croix Co. census.

This information, even though very incomplete and inconclusive, suggest that the family may have landed in Quebec, was ferried to Montreal, entered the U. S. via the Lake Champlain-Hudson River waterway, worked in several places including Vermont, Kentucky, and Ohio before finally moving, via the Ohio, Mississippi, and St. Croix Rivers, to St. Croix Co., Wisc., about 1860.

Other Emigrants From Erris Who Settled In St. Croix Co., Wisc.

In St. Patricks Catholic Cemetery, Erin Prairie Township, are tombstones with the following inscriptions;

KANE--John Kane (1810-1882). Owen Kane (1831-18__) Kilmore Parish

GARRITY--Edward Garrity (1834-____). Katherine Garrity (1837-1878)
Kilmore Parish.

EARLY--Anthony Early (1843-1899). Kilmore Parish

LALLY--John Lally (1834-1881). Kilmore Parish
Thomas Lally (1846-1879). Bilmullet

LAVELL--Thomas Lavell (1815-1870). Phillip Lavell (1844-1877)
Bellmullet

McANDREW--Harry McAndrew (1878-1912). Belmullet

STEPHENS--Alice Stephens, wife of Thomas Stephens, (1831-1866)
Belmullet

COUGHAN--Bridget Coughan O'Malley (1833-1885), wife of Thomas O'Malley,
Kilmore Parish

In the Catholic Cemetery, Hudson, Wisc., is a tombstone which reads;

BARRET--James Barret, died Jan. 4, 1884, age 64. Kilmore Parish

In addition to these people, other Irish families of St. Croix Co. were known to have come from Erris Barony. These include two other Heffron families. The first, William Heffron and wife Mary Menahan were in Kilmore Parish in 1860 and 1863 when their two sons, David and Anthony were baptized. This family was in Erin Prairie Township in 1870 and in Stanton Township in 1900, where they are listed on the census records. William and Mary and three of their children are buried in St. Bridget's Cemetery, Stanton Township, St. Croix Co., Wisc.

The other Heffron family, Catherine Gerrity Heffron, widow of Richard Heffron, and their son John Heffron and their daughter Grace Heffron Niland, lived in Erin Prairie and were from Belmullet. John's granddaughter, Mary Knudson, lives in New Richmond, Wisc.

A Stevens family of Glen Castle, Kilcommon Parish, Erris Barony, also were immigrants to St. Croix Co. These were the nine children of Thomas Stevens, an Englishman from Lancashire, who went to Erris Barony early in the 19th century. Evidently all of this family left Glen Castle during or after the famine because none of that name are found there now.

Many families of the same names as listed above are still found in Erris Barony. (Conspicuous by their absence, in addition to Stephens, are any members of the Early family.) Several other family names are found in the records of both St. Croix Co. and Erris Barony, including Gallagher, O'Hare, O'Malley, Padden, O'Riley, Walsh, Gaynor, and Phillips. Many of these can be assumed to have migrated from Erris Barony to St. Croix Co. The migration of these families took place both during the famine years and for several years afterwards.

Erin Prairie And Emerald Townships.

As the names suggests, these two townships in St. Croix Co. were settled primarily by Irish immigrants. The first Irish land claim in Erin Prairie was by John Casey in 1854. About 20 Irish families settled there in 1855. William Fleming was the first Irishman to settle in Emerald Village in 1858. Erin Prairie became the hub of the Irish rural community and at one time had a population of several hundred, nearly all of them Irish or children of Irish. Several stores were located there. St. Patricks' Catholic Church and Cemetery were the hub of the social life of these Irish Catholic people.

Erin Prairie was described in the Northwestern Chronicle by a writer who found that, since he could not afford to visit Ireland a visit to Erin was the next best thing.

"The prosperity the Irish settlers on this prairie--and there are none others--have attained to within a few years, is wonderful, indeed, and refutes so thoroughly the ignorant and too frequently malicious slanderers--who taking some barroom loafer as a model, judge the Irish people from this low standard--that I have felt proud and happy to listen to many a settler's story of early trials and ultimate success.

Twelve years ago the first Irish settlers came into Erin Prairie with little or no capital, but brave hearts and strong arms; now the Irish have not alone possessed themselves of every acre of this fine prairie for six miles square, but they have spread out into the townships of Emerald, on the east, Hammond on the south, Warren, southwest, Richmond, west and Star Prairie, north.

In most instances the Irish who moved from Erin Prairie into those other townships bought improved farms, for which they paid from twenty to thirty dollars an acre; they did not go in quest of better land than they had where they first settled, for it would be impossible to find such; but, in order to have room to farm on a larger scale and they got ready purchasers in their neighbors, who remained, and were also anxious to enlarge their farms." (History of the Irish in Wisconsin in the Nineteenth Century, by Grace McDonald, p. 107)

The Irish who settled together in "Irish" communities, such as Erin Prairie, retained much of the customs from the old country. ("They change their sky and not their mind who cross the sea".) Some spoke only Gaelic because they thought it traitorous to learn the English language. They had frequent community functions for dances, christenings, weddings, wakes, and other events which were an excuse for a party. Wakes in particular were large social gatherings, where food and whiskey were served, stories of leprechauns, fairies, and ghosts were told, and Irish keeners bewailed the dead with their lamentations and dirges. (Ibid, p. 251)

All that remains today of Erin Prairie is the St. Patricks Catholic Church and Cemetery and one store, Erin Corners, which is intermittantly open. When the railroad came through St. Croix Co., Erin was bypassed and soon disappeared. New Richmond, to the west, became the closest market town of to the farmers of Erin Prairie Township

THE SECOND GENERATION--THE CHILDREN OF WILLIAM AND BRIDGET (O'HARE) HEFFRON

William and Bridget Heffron had three daughters and five sons. (Since the oldest, Mary, was 20 years older than the youngest, Thomas, it is probable that there were other children who died young.) Five children were born in Ireland, one each in Vermont, Kentucky, and Ohio. Five of these eight lived from about 1860 until their deaths in St. Croix, Co. One daughter, Rose Anna Heffron Lumphrey, (#4), lived in Stillwater, Minn., from about 1866 until 1882. Then she and her family moved to Stanton, St. Croix Co., where she lived the rest of her life. One son and one daughter left St. Croix County with their families late in their lives. These were Patrick Heffron, (#5), who went to Vancouver, B. C., Canada, with his wife and most of their children and Margaret (Heffron) Gerrity, (#7), who moved with her husband and children to Ray, N. D., about 1902. (Margaret Gerrity also lived briefly in Minneapolis when first married)

All of the second generation were farmers for some part of their lives, but two apparently found other occupations before they died. Patrick, (#5), was a landlord on the 1880 census and a sawmill laborer on the 1900 census, and in 1892 was a merchant in New Richmond. John R., (#8), ran a hotel in New Richmond and was listed as a railroad laborer on the 1910 census. As young men, both William, (#6), and John R., (#8), worked as raftsmen, probably on the St. Croix River where pine logs were gathered into rafts to be floated to the lumber mills. Evidently none of the sons served in the military during the American Civil War, though the three oldest were of the age where they could have served.

Seven of the eight children had children of their own, producing a total of 64 grandchildren for William and Bridget (possibly a few more who died in infancy). The spouses of each of the eight children were either Irish emigrants or children of Irish emigrants with one exception. The exception, Joseph Lumphrey, husband of Rosa Anna Heffron, (#4), was of French-Canadian ancestry.

On June 12, 1899, a toronado struck New Richmond, an event known as the New Richmond Cyclone. The business district of New Richmond was totally destroyed, as were many of the farms both south and north of New Richmond. The death toll was 119 people, property damage was several million dollars. Two of William and Bridget's sons, Thomas and Patrick, were caught up in this storm. The widow of a third son, Katie Heffron, was killed. Several of the grandchildren

were also present, some of them lost much of their property. In some cases the grandchildren and their families left St. Croix Co. because of the damage caused by the storm, and lived in other areas. Thus some of the descendants of William and Bridget Heffron were born and raised elsewhere as a result of the New Richmond Cyclone.

THE THIRD GENERATION--THE GRANDCHILDREN OF WILLIAM AND BRIDGET HEFFRON

William and Bridget Heffron had 64 grandchildren, (28 grandsons, 36 granddaughters) excluding a few who died in infancy. Most of them were born in St. Croix County, Wisc., the exceptions being the first 2 children of Mary (Heffron) Kane (born before the family arrived in Wisconsin). the children of Rose (Heffron) Lumphrey (who were born in Stillwater, Minn., but lived in St. Croix County from about 1882 onward), and the first son of Margaret (Heffron) Gerrity (who was born in Minneapolis).

This generation was a product of St. Croix County. All but one lived in St. Croix Co. for some part of their lives. About 25% lived there all of their lives. The rest left, usually as young adults, for other areas. Four of Mary Kanes children settled in Seattle, two in North Dakota and two in Minneapolis. Rose Lumphrey's daughter settled in St. Paul. Patrick Heffron's family, except for his oldest daughter, settled in Vancouver, B. C. but many left there for California and the Orient. William Heffron's children settled in Minneapolis, St. Paul, and Duluth, Minn. and in Washington, Oregon, North Dakota, and California. Margaret Gerrity's family all went to North Dakota but some of her children left there for California and other western states. All of John R. Heffron's children left St. Croix Co., and were scattered from Minneapolis and St. Paul to Missouri, Texas, Iowa, and Montana. Tom Heffron's children settled in Wisconsin and Minneapolis.

Those who left St. Croix Co. retained their ties to their original home. Most visited St. Croix Co. as adults, even after many years living in other areas hundreds of miles distant. Pat Gerrity (#54) wrote from North Dakota in Dec. 1956, (5 months before his death) "As far as traveling is concerned we are too old for any more of it but would I ever love to cross the bridge at Hudson and travel over the territory I spent my happy days in."

The first grandchild born was Owen Kane (#10), born about 1856-57 in Ohio. The last born was Helen Heffron (#50), born April 12, 1906 in St. Croix County. Clarrisa (Heffron) Wallace (#35), who died Oct. 18, 1989, in Burlingame, Cal., was the last survivor of these 64 grandchildren.

Many of the grandchildren were school teachers. At least 11 of the granddaughters and 2 of the grandsons taught for some part of their lives. The longest teaching career was 60 years by Anna Bridget Kane (#14). The Irish of St. Croix Co., like Irish in other sections of the U. S., were strong in their support of public schools. They encouraged their children to become educated and many became teachers. In the late 1890's, the seven public schools in or near Erin Prairie were conducted by Irish Catholic teachers. (History of the Irish in Wisconsin in the Nineteenth Century, by Grace McDonald, p. 219)

About half of the grandsons were farmers for some part of their lives. At least two served in France during World War I. These were William Bernard Heffron, (# 71), and Henry C. Heffron, (# 46)

Twenty nine of the grandchildren had children of their own, producing a total of 104 great-grandchildren (again excepting a few who died in infancy). Mary Lorretta (Heffron) Gallagher (#61) had the most children, 13. At least 20 grandchildren never married or were married only briefly. Six grandchildren died before the age of 25.

THE FOURTH GENERATION--THE GREATGRANDCHILDREN OF WILLIAM AND BRIDGET HEFFRON AND THEIR FAMILIES

There are 104 great-grandchildren of William and Bridget Heffron, the fourth generation. The oldest, Mary Kane (#74), was born July 1, 1886, while the youngest, Mary Ellen Heffron Albers (#177), was born Nov. 21, 1943. Although six were born in the late 19th century, this generation is primarily a product of the 20th century. At present, (March, 1991,) there are 58 living, 43 deceased and 3 unaccounted for in this generation. About one fourth were born in St. Croix County, Wisconsin, and about another one fourth born either in other areas of Wisconsin or in Minnesota. Other states which are the birthplace of at least one of this generation are North Dakota, Washington, Missouri, Iowa, Ohio, and California. Six were born in Vancouver, B. C. (Birthplaces of several have not been determined.)

These statistics do not tell the story of this generation. They are products of the great American Melting Pot. Only a few are of only Irish heritage, most are of mixed ethnic heritage. Most are not products of St. Croix Co., as were their parents, and many have never been to St. Croix Co. They are not primarily rural (only about 10% were farmers) but lived mostly in urban areas (many in Minneapolis-St. Paul, Seattle, San Francisco, and Los Angeles). More than 10% were teachers but other occupations include a whole spectrum of possibilities, including 2 doctors, 3 lawyers, 4 nurses, several engineers, secretaries, electricians, and business owners. There is also a postmaster, professional basketball coach, architect, T. V. entertainer, and a former Nun. Many are veterans, having served in two World Wars and the Korean War.

The fourth generation produced a total of 260 children, the fifth generation. (This number includes some but probably not all of the step children). The oldest of these, James K. Burke (#181), was born Dec. 17, 1914, while the youngest, Alison Albers (#437), was born June 20, 1982. (It is unlikely that more will be born to this generation.) The fifth generation is even more diverse than the fourth and also more urban. There are probably more of them living in and around Los Angeles than in any other area. There are also many in San Francisco, Seattle, Minneapolis and St. Paul metro-areas. Occupations are too diverse to list but only a small number are farmers. Ethnically, they are no longer mostly Irish but are of a wide range of ethnic heritage. Many are unaware of their Irish heritage, or their family connection to St. Croix Co., Wisc.

The next two generations (the sixth and seventh) are expanding rapidly. Although many are still unaccounted for, there are at least 344 in the sixth generation and 61 in the seventh with births occurring at least monthly. I know of no member of the 8th generation yet but it will not be long.