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'The Merchant Prince of the Copper Country': one immigrant's American success story

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It's a long, long way from Tipperary to the Copper Country of the Upper Peninsula of Michigan and one finds a far different world at the western end of Lake Superior than one does in south central Ireland. For one man, who made that journey as a child, it ultimately involved business success and recognition as a leader, first among his fellow Irish Catholic immigrants in their new home, but later, respect and recognition as a leader by the larger community as well. While far from typical of the lives of Irish immigrants to either the United States or Michigan's Copper Country in the middle of the nineteenth century, Edward Ryan's life, is an example of the promise America held for some, and the possibilities that existed for a few to succeed beyond their wildest dreams or hopes. When he died in December of 1900 both the Houghton and Calumet newspapers referred to him as the "Merchant Prince of the Copper Country."¹ The evening paper reported his death and followed with stories of his remarkable career, services to the community, and funeral. Edward Ryan was a man of many accomplishments and successes with significant impacts on the particular communities of which he was a part. His achievements were especially relevant to the diverse communities of the Irish Diaspora.²

Post 1960s scholars, especially social historians, have consistently de-emphasised the study of atypical people like Ryan, who achieved notable wealth and success rising from humble beginnings. They prefer to present a more inclusive, "bottom up" history of the working class and other "Anonymous Americans."³ These subjects tended to go unnoticed in their time, except *en masse*, and have left little direct evidence of their existence. While this approach has great merit – and is one I have followed in the past, especially in my work on the family lives of shoemakers during industrialisation, and still pursue in the larger project from which this essay grows – and has led to great advances in our understanding of immigrant and the working class lives, there is also considerable value in examining the experience of the less typical immigrants or individuals, those who achieved individual success and notice. This certainly is true in cases like Ryan's where success was solidly grounded in the immigrant, working-class community where they lived out their lives. Throughout his adult life Ryan was an active member of the Hancock St. Patrick Benevolent Society and later the Ancient Order of Hibernians, and a communicant and generous supporter of the Catholic church, both in Hancock and in the Diocese of Marquette. He always remained firmly rooted in his Irish immigrant community. Once successful, he had neighbours who joined him as economic and social leaders of the Hancock Irish community – physician Joseph E. Scallon, attorney Jeremiah T. Finnegan, and Michael Finn, notary and village clerk, and others. They all resided within a short stretch along Hancock Street, below the village's main business district.⁴

Edward Ryan, the future merchant prince, was born in County Tipperary, Ireland on April 22, 1840, the son of John and Margaret Cuddihy Ryan. He had at least two older brothers, John C. and William. Both brothers had prominent careers in Copper Country mining. In 1844, the Ryans initially emigrated from Ireland to Wiota, Lafayette County, in the lead mining district of

southwestern Wisconsin, where the older John Ryan farmed. The Ryans, thus, were not part of the massive migration triggered by *An Gorta Mór*, the devastating multiple year failures of the potato crop between 1845 and 1851 that fueled massive migration from Ireland. Instead, they came during the last years of the less frenzied and more structured earlier emigration.⁵ Families such as the Ryans emigrated as units with sufficient resources to move away from the east coast cities already associated with immigrant slums and ghettos. Famine emigrants did not often have that option. Members of the Cuddihy family emigrated at this time as well and they were from near Tipperary Town – possibly the townland of Ballingarry where there were copper and lead mines; the Cuddihys also were part of the pre-Famine emigration.⁶ It is reasonable to assume, although not yet firmly established, that Edward Ryan's family were also from Ballingarry, or its vicinity. His brothers' early emergence in the Copper Country as mine captains – positions requiring a great deal of skill and experience – and the family's choice of a mining district as their destination suggests some connection to mining in Ireland.

In 1854 Edward Ryan moved to Houghton to live with his brother John C. who apparently had already relocated there. Houghton was emerging as the business and commercial centre of the copper district of Michigan's Upper Peninsula. John C. and another brother, William, worked in the copper mines and soon became well known in the region as mine captains and later mine superintendents – men with prestigious, responsible positions in the mining community.⁷ John C. spent the last part of his career in partnership with his brother Edward in the Hancock Copper Mine. William served as Captain at the South Pewabic, later known as the Atlantic, Mine, and the Adams Mine both south of Houghton. Later he journeyed west to take charge of a gold mine in Montana operated by the same partnership.⁸ One of John C.'s sons, William, served as sheriff of Houghton County in the 1880s before going into business in Denver and another, John D., ultimately became head of both the Anaconda and Montana Power companies, one of the wealthiest, most powerful men in America in the early decades of the twentieth century.⁹

Surprisingly, considering his family background, Edward Ryan initially did not work underground in the copper mines. After different kinds of employment and with very little formal education, in 1857 he took a job with Ransom Shelden, one of the most successful pioneer businessmen in the Copper Country.¹⁰ The main street in Houghton is now called Shelden Avenue. At first, young Ryan led a team of horses hauling new merchandise up the hill from the dock on Portage Lake to Shelden's store. Later, he made deliveries, travelling about the area in a horse-drawn cart to the many small mining camps and locations around Houghton, before finally becoming a clerk in Shelden's general store in the rapidly growing village of Houghton. By all accounts he was a personable, well-liked young man. These qualities sped his advancement to the position of clerk. His relationship with Shelden was a critical and recurring factor in his early successes.

In 1862 Edward Ryan, a twenty-two year old store clerk, an immigrant with a very limited education, and an Irish-Catholic Democrat, ran for sheriff in what had been a heavily Republican area previously. While issues of the local newspapers from the time of the campaign no longer survive, the editor's reaction to Ryan's initial days in office suggest that he did not get much, if any, support from that quarter. Instead opposition most likely focused on his ethnic and religious loyalties, which had already become irretrievably intertwined in the United States. In a series of articles, J. R. Devereux, editor and publisher of the *Portage Lake Mining Gazette*, made it clear he was not happy with Ryan's victory, or with the prospect of an Irish Catholic sheriff in Houghton County.¹¹

Sheriff Ryan, we are happy to say, has thus far disappointed the many predictions we have heard made that when he came into office, the Irish would be allowed to do as they pleased, – rule the town perhaps, – but the prophets have all proved false for the Sheriff and all his prominent friends are laboring hard and earnestly to make their countrymen keep the peace, – and they have done well, considering the provocation they have had to act otherwise.¹²

In 1864, instead of seeking re-election, Ryan opened his own general merchandise store in Hancock, with a capital of \$2000. For a time, brother William, who provided additional capital, was a partner. Ransom Sheldon also financially backed his former clerk. On March 20, 1863, shortly after taking office as sheriff, Ryan wrote to Sheldon asking his assistance for the planned venture. Sheldon's reply has not survived, but he did endorse at least one note for Ryan, guaranteeing his credit and suggesting very strongly that he had agreed to help his former clerk.¹³ Ryan's letter to Sheldon deserves to be quoted in its entirety. It is the only document written by Ryan, apparently, that has survived.

Mr. R. Sheldon

Dear Sir – having purchased a place in the village of Hancock and at the solicitations of many friends I have made up my mind to go into the mercantile business this spring I can raise about two thousand dollars and my brother William is going in with me. I think there is no Question or doubt but what I can do a good and safe business, as having so much experience in the Lake trade while in your Employ, and from my extensive acquaintance with the people I am very confident that with prudence, energy and Strict attention to business I will meet with success for having a place of my own. I will have no rent to pay and the fact that I am with my brother going to attend to the business and do the work ourselves our Expenses will not be much. The great majority of the people on that Side of the Lake will patronize me from the fact that they do not Like those who are now engaged in business on that Side. I do not think that my official business will interfere with this enterprise as I have got Some Good and efficient deupties (sic) who are fully competent to transact the business I am getting along with the duties of my office without the least impediment or trouble in fact every body Seem to be fully Satisfied with my actions Since I assumed the duties and have made up their minds that the utmost rigor of the law will be enforced it matters not who they may be who deserve it we have had a very Quiet Sober and peacble (sic) Community Since my term of office Commenced as the old animosities irritated and brought about by drunken Sprees Seems to have died away and there is a Fraternal feeling of unity existing amongst the different nationalities which I have never witnessed here before but notwithstanding all this the duties of my office seem to be very dull and dry from the fact that there is not enough to do to Keep me buisy (sic) and being always in the habit of working I do not like Loafing. So I made up my mind that I would Keep me busy. As I find that working is more Suitable and more profitable for me than Laying Still (Even if a person has a big salary (sic)) and as selling goods is the business which I am best posted in and like better than any other I have come to the conclusion to try it. So I thought I would write to you and let you know what my intentions were –and also as your assistance to help me start it is my intention if you will help me through to go down on the first boat and select my Goods (with Your help) so I hope when you receive this you will respond in haste if Sir from Your acquaintance with me and my business Qualifications you Should fell (sic) Justified in assisting me be assured that you Shall not regret the confidence you placed in my ability or integrity. I Shall have my Store So that I can put goods in it by the middle of May next if this business which I am about to Start would tend in any way to injure or Compete with your business I Should not engage in it but as it is going to be carried on in the village of Hancock it will not injure your business the least the business of that Side is now mostly monopolized by Leopold & Co. and true to their Jewish instincts they do not wish to See any body live Save themselves. Any arrangements Sir that you would wish me to make with you in regard to this affair I Shall be ready

to agree if You go my Security For what Credit may want I can pay you as I sell the goods or otherwise if you indorse (sic) my notes I will warrant you that they Shall be promptly paid hoping that this will find you and family in a good state of Health I remain Sir Respectfully

Yours &c.

Edward Ryan¹⁴

Ryan's letter shows both his lack of formal education in its spelling, grammar, and capitalisation and his innate intelligence and interest in advancing himself. He also clearly sees Shelden as a potential ally in his quest for success. His negative attitude towards the Leopolds, major Jewish merchants in the Copper Country, is problematic. Since he was four years old when he left County Tipperary, this is clearly an attitude he developed in the United States. Whether it came from his family or from the larger society is impossible to determine given the evidence. Perhaps it reflects what he knows to be Shelden's own attitude towards his business rivals. In any event Ryan comes across as an ambitious young man, not afraid to work hard, or to seek assistance from someone he sees as a friend and benefactor. It also makes clear that he saw serving as sheriff, and, in light of his later career, political office as only a step towards success, not a goal in itself.

Significantly, Ryan opened his store in Hancock, not in Houghton where he would have been in direct competition with Shelden. Shelden soon, however, sold his store and other mercantile interests and focused on mining and real estate. After a short time, Ryan bought out his brother's share and William returned to mining as agent at the South Pewabic, later the Atlantic, Mine, in 1865. His career took him far from the Copper Country and, unlike his brother John C., he does not seem to have returned once he left.

Due to the rapid growth of the Quincy Mining Company Hancock, which hired large numbers of Irish immigrants from such copper mining areas as the Beara Peninsula community of Allihies in County Cork, Bonmahon in County Waterford, and several smaller mining communities in County Tipperary, Ballingarry and Silvermines, by the early 1860s Hancock across Portage Lake (a long, narrow body of water) from Houghton, had a large and rapidly growing Irish population.¹⁵ Hancock was a community in which ethnicity was important – Ryan's business rivals were native born, German, English, and later 'Austrian' merchants.¹⁶ Interestingly, each store had clerks from a variety of ethnic groups judging from the manuscript population schedules.

The 1865 discovery of the Calumet conglomerate lode, about twelve miles north of Hancock, resulted in the development of extensive mines and the growth of a sizeable population there. Taking advantage of a new opportunity, three years later Ryan opened a second general merchandise store in Red Jacket Village. As in Hancock, a member of each of Calumet's major ethnic groups operated a general store. Ryan's was one of the largest, if not the largest.¹⁷

Ryan's business career was not without serious reverses and challenges. In 1869, a devastating fire destroyed his Hancock store. Within days he was back in business in St. Patrick's Hall, the building erected by the benevolent society formed by Hancock's Irish community in 1860. Ryan quickly rebuilt his store on the town's main business street.¹⁸ In 1870, another fire levelled his Calumet store. It too was quickly rebuilt. In 1898, Ryan hired the architect Charles K. Strand to design an impressive commercial block on Sixth Street in Calumet.

Judging from advertisements in the *Mining Gazette* and other Copper Country papers and publications, Ryan's stores carried a wide range of goods – groceries and liquor, clothing, boots and shoes, house wares, and general merchandise. By the 1870 he was already one of the

wealthiest men in Hancock.¹⁹ He and his wife had a servant (Irish-born) and his fifteen-year-old sister and her seventeen-year-old brother were living in the household with them. An 1883 biographical sketch account refers to his inventory as averaging \$120,000 and refers to him as the "leading merchant" in the copper regions.²⁰ His travels, whether on business or pleasure, and his wife's were regularly noted in the *Portage Lake Mining Gazette* and other papers' columns. His children attended Catholic boarding schools after elementary school in Hancock; his daughters were educated at convent schools in St. Louis and South Bend, Indiana. His sons attended Notre Dame.²¹

With the success of his general stores, Ryan sought investments in other ventures. In 1865, when his mentor Ransom Sheldon organised the First National Bank of Houghton, he named Ryan a director. In 1880 Ryan organised the Lake Superior Native Copper Works, which smelted copper and rolled sheet copper. Also in 1880, he created the Hancock Copper Mining Company, arranging for eastern capital to help underwrite the venture, and operated the mine with his brother, John C. Ryan, as mine superintendent until 1885. By that time the declining price of copper made it unprofitable. John C. Ryan died in 1890 and the mine was still listed as an asset in the inventory of Edward's estate in probate in 1900.

In 1886 Edward Ryan founded the First National Bank of Calumet and served as its president until his death. He remained a director of the First National Bank of Houghton and was a shareholder, from its beginning, in the Superior Savings Bank, later the Superior National Bank and Trust Company. He co-founded and served as Vice President of the Peninsular Electric Light & Power Company. James R. Dee, the American-born son of an Irish immigrant miner who had come to the Copper Country very early in its development, established and ran the Power Company.²²

In 1883, Ryan, Capt. Nathan Moore and others, including John C. Ryan, conducted explorations on the Gogebic Iron Range and operated several successful iron mines there. They were among the pioneers in opening iron mines in that part of Michigan. A significant number of Irish miners from the Copper Country went to the Gogebic Range and worked in Ryan's mines. At the time of his death, the inventory of his estate indicates that Ryan also had a substantial number of shares in the Quincy Mining Company, known as "Old Reliable" for the regularity of its dividend payments. Over the course of his business career Ryan had diversified his economic interests while also helping develop the Copper Country economy.

Ryan did not devote all of his energy to his multiple business ventures. He served on the Houghton County board of supervisors from Hancock Township for nine years, most of them as chairman, and after Hancock became a village in 1867 served nine consecutive terms as president, after two briefer terms in the same office. Beginning in 1871 he was a member of the Hancock School board and remained prominent in Hancock community school affairs for 28 years. A public elementary school built in Hancock in 1897 bears his name. He was a member and leader by 1863, of the St. Patrick's Benevolent Society, a mutual benefit society organised by Hancock's Irish community in 1860, and later of the Ancient Order of Hibernians, when the Hancock Division was organised in 1881, as well.

Ryan was a devout and active Catholic, first in Hancock's St. Anne's parish. Later it was renamed and rededicated as St. Patrick's after the French-Canadian and German parishioners established their own parish.²³ He and his wife were known as generous financial supporters of the Catholic Church, community charities, and needy Irish families. The Bishop travelled nearly one hundred miles in December – and Upper Peninsula Decembers can be formidable – to preside at Ryan's funeral Mass. His eldest daughter, Margaret, became a nun in the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, which staffed the parish schools in Hancock as well as the

hospital.²⁴ Several accounts of Ryan's life mention his providing open accounts at his store to striking miners during an 1872 strike in Calumet.

After he was sheriff, Ryan never sought elected office outside the village of Hancock, but remained active in Democratic Party politics. His influence in the party extended well beyond the Copper Country. He developed a reputation as a forceful and effective stump speaker for Democratic candidates, frequently debating with Jay Hubbell, a Republican who was elected to Congress from the Upper Peninsula.²⁵ Their political rivalry did not prevent Hubbell and Ryan from working together in business, however. Hubbell served for many years as president of the Peninsular Electric Light & Power Company, while Ryan was vice president. In 1876 Ryan was elected as a delegate to the Democratic national convention and served as a delegate again in 1892.

In 1865 he married Alice Cuddihy of Houghton, with whom he had ten children, nine of whom survived him. His eldest daughter, Margaret, and his wife, died within months of one another in 1896.²⁶ His own health began to decline shortly thereafter.

Mrs. Ryan was the daughter of Capt. Thomas Cuddihy who had come to the Copper Country from near Tipperary (probably Ballingarry) around 1854 and was widely known and respected in the Michigan Copper Country as a mining captain during the pioneer period of the Copper Country. The common origins of the Ryans and the Cuddihys in County Tipperary, and Ryan's mother being a Cuddihy, suggest the timing of the two families' moving to the Copper Country was probably not coincidental, but part of the migration of a large extended family group, probably extending beyond the range of first cousins, given Edward and Alice's marriage. Over a number of years, Alice's brother, John Donnell Cuddihy, was associated with her husband in several of his business ventures, including managing his Calumet store and serving as cashier of the First National Bank in Calumet. Cuddihy was also active in Democratic politics at the local, state, and national level. He and Auguste Mette, manager of Ryan's Hancock store, served as executors of Ryan's estate after his death in 1900 and Cuddihy continued as vice president and later president of the bank in Calumet. Settlement of Ryan's estate, which had gross assets of \$922,000, was not completed until 1909. The net value passed to his surviving children was \$652,402.⁵³, a very considerable sum in those times.²⁷

Edward Ryan died in Hancock early in the morning on December 14, 1900 at the age of 60, of acute gastritis. He had been in poor health for several years, cutting back on first his public, and then his business, activities. As he was withdrawing from public life, the local papers featured articles extolling his multifaceted community service over many years. He was widely respected, not only for his economic success, but for his community service and his (and his wife's) generosity to their church, the local Irish, and to the people of Hancock and Calumet. The personable, likeable young man who had worked in Sheldon's store when the Copper Country was young did not change much, apparently, as he accumulated wealth and honours over the years.

His nephew, John D. Ryan, (a younger son of brother John C.) who had begun his business career as a clerk in Ryan's Hancock store, became head of the Anaconda Company shortly after the death of Marcus Daly and not only reorganised and led that firm, but organised and guided the Montana Power Company.²⁸ He was one of the most powerful businessmen in the United States until his own death in New York City in 1933. John D. Ryan remained interested in the Copper Country, visiting frequently and spending time reminiscing with friends from his youth. On a more substantial level he was a major benefactor when the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet built a new hospital, St. Joseph's, in Hancock in 1904 and again when a residence and chapel were built in 1929.²⁹ During his career, according to local tradition in Butte, the state

of Montana was run from his office on the sixth floor of the Hennessy Building, not from the state capitol in Helena. John D. Ryan really deserves a full-scale biography, not the mere mention in passing in works focused on others he usually receives. Ironically, the man who built the Anaconda to its largest size and greatest power and founded Montana Power is not listed among the Montana Copper Kings and was ranked several places below them when the 100 most influential Montanans were listed at the end of the twentieth century. John D. Ryan may be the least known economic giant of the age when so many great fortunes came into existence, perhaps because the 1929 stock market collapse so severely reduced his, much like the equally neglected William C. Durant.

None of Edward Ryan's own children, however, achieved the level of economic or political success of their cousin. At the time of his death one of his sons, Edward Jr., was "in business" with him, working as assistant manager of the Calumet store, but did not serve as an executor of the estate.³⁰ His other three sons were still in school: Thomas J. and William J. at Notre Dame in Indiana and John C. in Hancock. His daughters, Mary and Katherine, had already married. Mary lived in Chicago, Catherine at the Wyandotte mine location. Alice and Agnes attended a girls' boarding academy; both married while the estate was in probate. Gertrude was still in school in Hancock when her father died; she died while the estate was in probate.³¹ As mentioned previously, Margaret, or Sister Mary Aloysius, died in Arizona in 1896. Ryan's position, both economic and political, in the Copper Country does not seem to have been passed on to his children.

Ryan's Hancock store closed some time between 1907 and 1910, when it disappeared from the city directory. The Calumet store became the Glass Block Store, with none of Ryan's children apparently involved, although brother-in-law John D. Cuddihy was treasurer of the new corporation. Cuddihy became president of the First National Bank of Calumet, with his brother Edward F., joining the bank as assistant cashier. Cuddihy was also president of the Hancock Mine, known after a 1906 reorganisation as the Hancock Consolidated Mining company, with Ryan's son-in-law, John H. Hickock (also spelled Hicok) as secretary-treasurer. Hickock, the husband of Katherine Ryan, was also general manager of the Portage Coal and Dock Company. After his father's passing only Ryan's son Edward appears in the local directories as a businessman. He organised the Edward Ryan Company in 1906 during the settlement of his father's estate and sold real estate in both Hancock and Calumet. Six of the eight surviving Ryan children held 3,568 shares each in the company.³² The 1916-17 directory does not list Edward Ryan as an officer of the firm. John D. Cuddihy is president and John H. Hickock, husband of Katherine, secretary-treasurer.

So, who is Edward Ryan, really, after all, and why should we, one hundred one years after his death be interested in his life? Ryan's success exemplifies the Copper Country Irish immigrant accommodation to their new homes and lives. Their achievement, in which he participated, was the foundation of his economic and social mobility. Ryan, with the other members of the core leadership group of the Copper Country Irish, demonstrated that the United States provided opportunities to immigrants eager and ready to seize them. Not everyone in the community could succeed as Edward Ryan did, or Jeremiah Finnegan, James Scallon, etc. But, without the general, if lower level, economic gains of the community they could not have enjoyed spectacular economic success.³³ That Ryan's children did not continue to succeed in the Copper Country is more related to the decline of the Irish community numerically than to their personal abilities or choices. Their cousins, first William and then John D., sought their fortunes in more favourable situations.

The size, and political and economic power, of the Copper Country Irish community had been

in decline for nearly a decade before Edward Ryan's death. Fearing their loyalty to the labour movement, especially the Knights of Labor, the Quincy Mining Company, the largest employer in Hancock, had begun hiring fewer Irish in the late 1880s.³⁴ Many from the community migrated west to hard rock mining towns, especially to Butte, Montana where first Marcus Daly from County Cavan and later John D. Ryan, Edward Ryan's nephew, headed the Anaconda Company. So, in the end, the atypical experience of Edward Ryan helps us to understand the dynamics of the communities immigrants formed, as well as providing insight into why for those who came here with very little, the promise of a chance for success was perhaps more important than success for themselves itself. For many, Edward Ryan represented the dream they shared and which he, if not they, had fully achieved.

Notes

1. *Daily Mining Gazette* (Houghton, MI), December 14, 15, 18, 19, 1900; *Copper Country Evening News* (Calumet, MI), December 14, 17, 18, 1900.
2. In addition to his obituaries there is a short biography of Ryan in *Men of Progress: Embracing Biographical Sketches of Representative Michigan Men with an Outline History of the State* (Detroit: Evening News Association, 1900), p. 193.
3. See Tamara K. Hareven, ed., *Anonymous Americas: Explorations in Nineteenth-Century Social History* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1971) and Hareven, *Family Time & Industrial Time* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982).
4. Polk's directories for the Houghton area.
5. Irish emigration does not begin with *An Gorta Mór*, but there is an entirely new scale and character to emigration during the catastrophe and afterwards when compared with earlier emigration. The Ryan family was actually part of a transitional period of emigration as the main source of emigrants moved from northern Ireland (not today's Northern Ireland, but the northern part of the island) to the southern and became more Catholic.
6. On the Cuddihy family, see the biographical sketch of John D. Cuddihy in *Men of Progress*, p. 333.
7. John C. Ryan was born in Ireland June 22, 1829 and migrated to Wiota, Wisconsin with his family in 1844. He worked at a number of Lake Superior copper mines including the Quincy and Grand Portage before becoming captain at the Pewabic, a position he held for seven years before moving to the Hancock as captain for one year. He opened the Hecla Mine and served as captain there for five years before taking on the job of opening the Osceola Mine and serving as its captain for five years. After some time in Colorado and the Black Hills of the Dakota Territory he returned to the Copper Country as agent for the Hancock Mine, by then owned by his younger brother Edward. He died in 1890. (*History of the Upper Peninsula of Michigan*, 297.)
8. William is the hardest of the Ryan brothers to gather information on. He served as Hancock Village president from 1864 to 1865. He was Head Mining Captain when the South Pewabic mine was opened in 1865 and played a similar role when the nearby Adams mine was opened in 1866. He served as township supervisor for Adams Township from its organisation in 1867 until 1870. In 1870 he took charge of gold mining operation in Vestel, Montana for the same investors who operated the South Pewabic and Atlantic mines. Unlike his brother John C. he does not appear to have returned to the Copper Country once he left.
9. Like many Irish families the Ryans used a limited number of first names for their children, making keeping the members of the extended family straight – since middle initials are used irregularly – somewhat difficult. To complicate matters there were several apparently unrelated Ryan families in the Copper Country, including one that operated a livery stable (and later a funeral parlour, still in business) in Calumet and had members who held local office, including president of Calumet Village.
10. Shelden had moved to Houghton from Wisconsin in 1847.
11. The *Portage Lake Mining Gazette's* negative attitude towards the Irish in the 1860s and 1870s is

- discussed in William H. Mulligan, Jr., 'Irish Immigrants in Michigan's Copper Country: Assimilation on a Northern Frontier,' *New Hibernia Review*, 5 (2001).
12. *Portage Lake Mining Gazette* (Houghton, MI), January 17, 1863.
 13. Item 1492, Roy Drier Collection (MS-020) Michigan Technological University Archives and Copper Country Historical Collections, Houghton, Michigan.
 14. Edward Ryan to Mr. R[ansom] Sheldon, March 20, 1863, Item 1299, Roy Drier collection (MS-020) Michigan Technological University Archives and Copper Country Historical Collections.
 15. The connections between copper mining areas in Ireland and Upper Michigan is discussed in William H. Mulligan, Jr., 'Irish Immigrants in the Early Keweenaw Mines: A Research Note,' *The Superior Signal* 15, no. 2 (May 2000) and 'From the Beara to the Keweenaw: the Migration of Irish Miners from Allihies, County Cork to the Keweenaw Peninsula, Michigan, USA, 1845 – 1880,' *Journal of the Mining Heritage Trust of Ireland*, 1 (2001).
 16. 'Austrians' were generally Slovenes or others from the Austro-Hungarian Empire confusingly lumped together. This designation applied throughout the Upper Peninsula not just on the copper range, but also on the iron range and in lumbering areas as well.
 17. Calumet was, and is, the name of both an incorporated village and a township. Red Jacket, Blue Jacket, Osceola, Swedetown, etc. were names of 'locations' within Calumet township. From an early date Laurium was a separate incorporated village. Ryan's store was in Red Jacket, but is usually referred to as the Calumet store. Calumet was (and is) the general name given to the vicinity.
 18. Ironically, announcement of the closing of St. Patrick's Hall and its sale – because the society no longer had enough members to sustain itself – was in the newspaper on the same day as Ryan's funeral. The last living trustee who had signed the initial deed was Ryan's brother, William, then 'living in the west.' (*Daily Mining Gazette*, December 18, 1900).
 19. Comparison of his real and personal property as noted in the Manuscript Census of Population with others in Hancock.
 20. [Andreas], *History of the Upper Peninsula of Michigan containing a full account of its early settlement . . .* (Chicago: Western Historical Company, 1883), 296-297.
 21. *Portage Lake Mining Gazette* and its successor the *Daily Mining Gazette*, passim.
 22. On James R. Dee see *Men of Progress*, p. 175. Dee's father was a copper miner who emigrated from Ireland to the Keweenaw in 1850. James was born near Eagle River in 1855. He went to work as a messenger for the Western Union Telegraph Company at age twelve, becoming a telegrapher and, ultimately, a manager. In 1872 he established the first telephone exchange in the Upper Peninsula and in 1885 organised the Peninsular Electric Light and Power Company, which he served as general manager. His business interests came to include several commercial blocks in Houghton, the Douglass House Hotel, and interests in several copper mines.
 23. Ethnicity is, of course, important in the Catholic Church at the local level. The 'Irish parish' in Hancock was briefly under an interdict because of its opposition to the appointment of a priest who was not Irish as pastor. The Diocese of Marquette had very few Irish priests and apparently made no effort to recruit priests from Ireland. (Correspondence with archivists at Irish seminaries indicates that there was no correspondence between the seminary directors and the bishops of the Marquette diocese).
 The Diocese of Marquette, originally the Diocese of Sault Ste. Marie, was established before there was a significant 'American' population in the Upper Peninsula. It was a missionary diocese focused on missions to the Ojibwa Indians and a French Canadian and Métis population. The pioneer bishop, Frederic Baraga, was primarily a missionary to the Indians and he recruited priests from Slovenia, Austria, and southern German states. Many, if not most, priests in the diocese spoke several languages, including Ojibwa, but few had a good command of English when the Irish began arriving.
 24. After her death, but before Ryan's, her order established and staffed a hospital in Hancock. While I have not had time to research this possible connection, it appears unlikely to be a coincidence, given the many visits Ryan and his wife made to St. Louis when their daughter was at the mother house there and his other daughters were students in a boarding school there. In addition one of Ryan's nieces, a daughter of his brother John C., served as Superior General of the order from 1905 to her death

25. Hubbell had died shortly before Ryan in October 1900, a point noted in Ryan's obituaries as a sign of a 'changing of the guard' in the region's economic leadership. For a brief biography of Hubbell, see: <http://bioguide.congress.gov/scripts/biodisplay.pl?index=H000894>. In the flowery language, common to the period: 'This death, following so closely upon that of another political pillar and influential pioneer of the copper country, Hon., Jay A. Hubbell, removes another link between the present and those early days when men who were men, rugged, strong and enduring in all things, laid broad and deep the foundations of the present social fabric of the copper country and of the present greatness of its greatest industry.' (*Daily Mining Gazette*, December 15, 1900).
26. Alice Ryan's obituary is in the *Copper Country Evening News*, June 13, 1896. Other articles about her death appeared June 12 and 16, 1896.
27. Case number 1166, Probate Records, Houghton County Courthouse, Houghton, MI
28. On John D. Ryan see, Carrie Johnson, 'Electrical Power, Copper, and John D. Ryan,' *Montana: The Magazine of Western History* Vol. 38, number 4 (Autumn 1988), pp. 24-37. Ryan's key contact in meeting Marcus Daly, and again slightly later, after his death, Daly's widow, was Daly's attorney, William Scallon. Joseph E. Scallon was the physician in Hancock's Irish community and an associate of Edward Ryan's in several Irish fraternal organisations and on the Hancock school board and the county Democratic committee for a number of years. William Scallon is frequently mentioned in the Copper Country newspapers' social columns as visiting family in Hancock. The two men appear to have been brothers, Joseph the elder.
29. Sister Dolorita Marie Dougherty, C.S.J., et al., *Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet* (St. Louis: B. Herder Book Co., 1966), 130 and passim. John D. Ryan's support for the order extended beyond its work in the Copper Country. His sister, Mother Agnes Gonzaga, was superior general of the order from 1905 through 1917.
30. John Donnell Cuddihy, Ryan's brother-in-law, and M. Auguste Mette were named executors of the estate. They were the managers of his Calumet and Hancock stores, respectively. Cuddihy was also cashier of the First National Bank of Calumet. Mette is an example of the interesting Copper Country phenomenon in which merchants of one ethnic group hired clerks of the other groups to work in their stores. Many examples of this can be found in the manuscript census schedules.
31. *Copper Country Evening News*, December 14, 1900. There is some confusion (or better contradiction) in the various accounts of Ryan's personal life about the dates of key events. Here, as elsewhere in the paper, I have tried to balance the information in the various accounts, the Copper Country newspapers, and the federal census manuscripts, and other sources in determining what the truth actually is.
32. Case #1166, Houghton County Probate Court Records.
33. On the community life of the Irish in the Copper Country, see Mulligan, 'Irish Immigrants in Michigan's Copper Country;' 'Irish Immigrants in the Early Keweenaw Mines;' 'From the Beara to the Keweenaw;' 'Building New Lives, Maintaining Identity: Social, Fraternal, and Literary Organizations of Irish Immigrants in Michigan's Copper Country, 1860-1890,' at Ireland and America: Past, Present, and Future, Drew University, Madison, NJ, March 12-14, 2001; and 'Irish Miners in the Michigan Copper Country: New Home or Way Station on the Way West?' at annual meeting of the Mining History Association, June 14-18, 2001, Butte, Montana.
34. See Thomas F. Mason [President of the Quincy Mining Company] to Capt. S.B. Harris [Mine manager], April 20, 1887 (Folder 015, Box 336 Quincy Mining Company Collection. Michigan Technological University Archives and Copper Country Historical Collections.)