

# JOHN F. KENNEDY—FREEMAN

## PROOF OF LIMERICK ANCESTRY

THERE are at least four good reasons for believing that President Kennedy's maternal great-grandfather came from Loughgur, Bruin, Co. Limerick.

The first is a statement made to a Limerick Leader reporter this week by an 80-year-old woman who had no less authority for the story than a daughter of Catherine Fitzgerald, who was the sister of the President's great-grandfather. She is Mrs. Richard Hogan, Gortnagour, Adare. Her husband, the late Richard Hogan, was the son of Mrs. Margaret Hogan (nee Sheehan), who was daughter of Mrs. Catherine Sheehan (nee Fitzgerald), a sister of Thomas Fitzgerald, the man who went to America and was the President's great-grandfather.

Mrs. Hogan told our reporter that Mrs. Margaret Hogan (her mother-in-law) often spoke about the Fitzgerald family in the States and of "Honey Fitz," who was later to be Mayor of Boston. This was long before the marriage with the Kennedy family took place. Mrs. Hogan used to say that her mother, Catherine Fitzgerald, would be addressed thus in her school-going days by other pupils: "Catherine, you have a very long name to write in your copy-book; Catherine Fitzgerald is a very long name."

This proves that Catherine Fitzgerald was, in fact, the ancestor of the Limerick families claiming relationship with President Kennedy.

A second good reason is the resemblance in among members of the Limerick families to the Kennedys and the Fitzgeralds. A fourth cousin of the President's children, 11-year-old Henry Morgan, of Clounanna, bears a striking resemblance to the Kennedys. Mr. Edmund Fitzgerald, Loughgur, a third cousin of the President and who was reared in the Fitzgerald family homestead, where the President's great-grandfather was born, is very like the American Fitzgeralds. The late Mr. Phillip Fitzgerald, of Meanus, is said to have been the drawn image of "Honey Fitz," the President's grandfather.

Another reason is the visit to Loughgur and Adare in 1938 by "Honey Fitz." When he went to Hogan's of Adare (descendants of the Fitzgeralds) he was astonished to see a picture of his own brother, who was a priest, hanging on the wall in the Hogan home.

Perhaps more remarkable still is the fact that in the course of his visit here he went alone to the site of the old family homestead at Loughgur, from which his father emigrated. He had been there before and this was his second visit. Where could he have heard of Loughgur but from his father?

During his visit he was driven to Loughgur by Mr. Denis Conway, now aged 87 years and in retirement. Mr. Conway told our reporter that "Honey Fitz" gave him a photograph of himself about which he developed a very interesting story, about which there is more in these pages. Mr. Conway showed our reporter the photograph.

Perhaps one of the strongest reasons for believing that the President's ancestors came from the Bruin area is the following letter written to an Irish newspaper in 1961 by Mrs. N. S. Hogan, of Mountcollins, Co. Limerick: "Senator John F. Kennedy's great-grandfather came from Bruin, Co. Limerick. I have this from his grandfather, Johnny Fitzgerald. I

## LIMERICK WILL HONOUR A GREAT PRESIDENT

ON to-morrow (Saturday), June 29, Mr. John F. Kennedy, President of the United States of America, will be made an Honorary Freeman of Limerick. He will be similarly honoured by Dublin, Wexford, Cork and Galway, and although the distinction so conferred does not in modern times carry any rights or privileges, at one time it was of great value to the recipients.

The first person admitted an Honorary Freeman of the City of Limerick was Isaac Butt on January 1, 1877, and the most recent was, of course, his Eminence, Cardinal Michael Browne, O.P.

But the history of the rights to Freedom goes back several hundred years, and has its roots in strict legal procedure. And, in 1812 a prolonged legal battle, costing the litigants vast sums of money, was fought to uphold the rights to the Freedom of Limerick.

The last hereditary Freeman of Limerick is probably Mr. James Gubbins, Newenham Street, who was admitted by right of birth on April 20, 1927. His father, Robert, received the hereditary Freedom in 1905, and the family name was first entered in the Roll of Freemen in 1858. In the 19th century the title was a coveted one and the decade 1823-1833 had 285 claimants. Of these, only one-third were admitted to the Freedom.

The Corporation was given power to elect honorary Freeman of the City as late as 1876. But the title of Hereditary Freeman has its origins in the ancient Charters of Limerick. The rights to the Freedom were denied or restricted for a period of about 40 years, and they were defined after lengthy legal argument in 1812. The rights of Freedom were that year found by verdict in a case of mandamus at the prosecution of Lord Glentworth against the Corporation.

According to a report on Municipal Corporations issued in the 1830's, the rights were found to be—First, every person being of the age of 21 years, and the eldest son of a Freeman; second, every person being of the age of 21 years and married to the daughter of a Freeman; third, every person who should serve as an apprentice within the city "in any art or mystery with any Freeman of the city" for a space of seven years.

This was followed by a resolution of an election committee of the House of Commons in June, 1820, confirmed by a Committee of Appeal under the Grenville Act of 1821. The resolutions of this committee were, that no person should be admitted a Freeman of the City who had not served an apprenticeship therein or who was not resident therein at the time of his admission; and, "that subject to the foregoing limitation, the sons of Freemen, the sons-in-law of Freemen and persons having served seven years apprenticeship to Freemen of the City are entitled to the Freedom of the said City."

### QUALIFICATION

The qualification of residence was enforced in the Limerick Regulation Act and by a resolution of the Common Council of the City of Limerick, passed as long ago as

who assumed, and for many years successfully, the sole discretionary power of admitting whom they pleased to Freedom. Freemen were admitted irrespective of whether they were resident or non-resident, and all claims of Freedom as of right were excluded.

This exclusion dated from 1770. No attempt to enforce the ancient right to Freedom was made until the year 1812, when the mandamus proceedings were commenced. It is very interesting to note that these proceedings were instituted by a body of the citizens of Limerick, known as "The Independents." They were strenuously resisted in every stage by the Common Council at enormous expense to both parties, until the struggle finally terminated in the House of Commons and the enactment of the 4 Geo. IV, C. 126.

The admission of Freemen was made by a select committee appointed by the Council to investigate and report to the Common Council on the titles of those applying for admission. This was a permanent committee, consisting of the Mayor, recorder, four charter justices, and some members of the Council, of whom three formed a quorum.

### PROCEEDINGS

The course of proceedings on an application for Freedom followed these lines: The claimant sent to the Council a petition stating his right. This was lodged with the Mayor, and by him submitted to the Council. The committee received on oath the evidence offered in support of the petition and reported to the next Council, by whom the claimant was admitted or rejected.

In those days, the most important branch of the Corporation revenues was the tolls. Freemen were exempted from the payment of tolls, and every Freeman admitted meant a loss to the municipal revenue. Extraordinary strictures, therefore, were enforced by the Committee of Claims as to the degree of evidence necessary to sanction the petition of a potential Freeman.

A claimant had to prove, first of all, that he was the eldest son, son-in-law or apprentice of a Freeman. Then he had to prove that the person from whom he derived his title was actually a Freeman. Not only should the name of the "alleged" Freeman appear on the books, but actual proof should be given of his having been sworn as Freeman. The books prior to 1812 did not show if Freemen were sworn, and so this great difficulty almost invariably arose.

### LEGAL PROOF.

Having established that the person under whom he claimed was a



Group of the President's third cousins and fourth cousins at Clounanna. Included are: Mrs. Morgan (centre), second cousin, and Mr. Morgan (standing centre); Mrs. Reidy and family; Mr. and Mrs. Ted Morgan and family; Mr. and Mrs. Ted O'Connell; Mrs. P. Lillis and family.

## President's cousins will greet him

AMONG the vast throng that will assemble at Greenpark Racecourse on Saturday to honour the President of the United States there will be at least 60 of his known cousins from Limerick County and many more from Limerick City who do not know that they are related to him.

The President's maternal great-grandfather, Thomas Fitzgerald, emigrated to the United States from Loughgur, Bruin, in the famine years, and there are about 60 descendants of Thomas's brother, James, and sister Catherine in various parts of the County Limerick to-day.

When Thomas Fitzgerald went to America he married and his son, John ("Honey Fitz"), who became Mayor of Boston, married a girl named Mary Hannan, who came from Limerick City. Their daughter, Rose, is President Kennedy's mother. Mary Hannan's ancestors in Limerick City have not been traced but the name Hannan is a very plentiful one in the city and some people of that name are cousins of the President but do not know it or cannot prove it.

When Thomas Fitzgerald emigrated from Loughgur, his brother, James, and sister, Catherine, remained in Limerick. Catherine, who was born in 1822, married Patrick Sheehan, a butcher, who lived in Bruin. They had two sons who went to America and two daughters, one of whom became a nun and was attached to a Convent in New Ross, Co. Wexford. Her name was Katie. The other sister, Margaret Sheehan, married David Hogan, of Bruin, and they settled in the village of Adare, where they carried on the butchering business and they also had a public house and a farm.

### RELATIONS FROM COUNTY

They had seventeen children, all of whom went to America except James and Cella, who are still living, and Richard David, who are now dead. They are second cousins

in family who are all third cousins of the President. They are: Miss Bridget Hogan, who is living at home in Gortnagour; Mr. Richard Hogan, who is married and has two small children (fourth cousins of the President's children) and is also living at Gortnagour; Rev. Cyril Hogan, who is in New Zealand; Rev. Mother Patrick, Shanklin Convent, Isle of Wight; Mr. John Hogan, who is married and living in Rathkeale and also has a young family (who are fourth cousins) of the President's children; Mr. Edward Hogan, now living in Mallow and who bears a striking resemblance to the President; and Mrs. C. Carey, Roscrea.

The late David Hogan, Adare, who was a second cousin of the President, married Mary Hayes of Croagh, and they carried on the family business in Adare. They had two sons and three daughters who are all third cousins of the President. They are: Mr. David Hogan, farmer, Rour, Adare, who is married and has two small children (who are fourth cousins of the President's children); Mr. Michael Hogan, M.R.C.V.S., Kildysart; Mrs. Joe Treacy, Killarney; Mrs. Declan Gleeson, Landscape Park, Dublin; and Mrs. John Barry, Caherconlish.

### SECOND LINE

James Fitzgerald, who was born in Loughgur in the 1820's and who was a brother of the President's maternal great-grandfather, and also of Catherine Fitzgerald (Mrs. Sheehan), married and lived at the family homestead in Loughgur. He had a son, James, who had two sons, James and Phillip, who were

### PRESIDENT'S ONLY SECOND COUSINS



Mr. Jim Hogan, Clln. Co. Limerick.



## President Kennedy 42nd Freeman

THE conferring of the Freedom of Limerick on President Kennedy makes him the 42nd person to receive the distinction since it was instituted in 1876, when the Municipal Privileges Act became law in this country.

Sir Isaac Butt, M.P., was the first of the personalities to enjoy the honour on January 1, 1877, and it was in Limerick that the Act was exercised for the first time in this country.

The Freedom of Limerick is reserved for those persons who have won high distinction in some walk of life or conferred some special favour or benefit on the city or the country, or won renown in the arts or other spheres.

The complete list of persons who have been admitted as honorary Freemen of City of Limerick is:— Isaac Butt, M.P., January 1, 1877; Mayor at the time—James Spaight. Richard O'Shaughnessy, M.P. January 1, 1877—(do.). Charles Stewart Parnell, M.P., July 14, 1880—(Michael O'Gorman). Michael Davitt, April 14, 1884—(Maurice Lenihan). Edward Dwyer Gray, M.P., for Co. Carlow, April 14, 1884—(do.). Charles Dawson, M.P., for Carlow, April 14, 1884—(do.). The Right Hon. William E. Gladstone, M.P., for Midlothian, October 4, 1886—(Stephen O'Mara). William O'Brien, M.P., for the South-East Division of Cork, June 13, 1887—(Francis A. O'Keefe). The Most Noble Geo. Fredk. Samuel, Marquis of Ripon, K.G., February 3, 1888—(do.). The Right Hon. John Morley, M.P., for Newcastle-on-Tyne, February 3, 1888—(do.). The Right Revd. James F. Corbett, D.D., Roman Catholic Bishop of Sale, Australia, December 23, 1889—(do.). The Hon. Ishbel Maria Countess of Aberdeen, wife of his Excellency the Earl of Aberdeen, Governor-General of Canada, June 8, 1894—(Bryan O'Donnell). His Eminence Cardinal Logue, Cardinal Bishop of Armagh, Primate of All-Ireland, June 14, 1894—(do.). Thomas J. Clarke, March 2, 1889—(John Daly). James F. Egan, May 10, 1900—(do.). Thomas Myles, M.D., F.R.S.I., President of the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland, June 16, 1900—(do.). Miss Maude Gonne, December 13, 1900—(do.). Andrew Carnegie, October 20, 1903—(M. Donnelly). Joseph O'Mara, October 2, 1908—(T. Donnellan).

Douglas Hyde, LL.D., DR.LIT., President of Gaelic League, June 5, 1909—(do.). Capt. Edward O'Meagher-Condon, September 13, 1909—(do.). Most Rev. Dr. O'Dwyer, Lord Bishop of Limerick, August 3, 1916—(Stephen Quin).

Mrs. Thomas Clarke, Eoin MacNeill, E. de Valera, September 5, 1918—(A. O'Meadhra). Michael P. Ryan, Edward S. Dunne, Frank P. Walsh (members of Irish-American Delegation to Peace Conference), May 7, 1919—(do.). His Grace Most Rev. Dr. Mannix, Archbishop of Melbourne, August 5, 1925—Paul A. O'Brien. His Eminence Cardinal Van Rossum, C.S.S.R., Cardinal Prefect of Propaganda, Rome, July 21, 1928—M. J. Keyes.

The Superior General of Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, Rome, Most Rev. Dr. Patrick Murray, July 21, 1928—do. His Excellency Most Rev. Monsignor Paschal Robinson, O.F.M., Nuncio Apostolic, Irish Free State, Dublin, July 21, 1928—do. His Grace Most Revd. Dr. Richard Downey, Ph.D., Lord Archbishop of Liverpool, England, April 21, 1932—P. Donnellan. Dermot O'Brien, Esq., Hon. President, Royal Hibernian Academy, February 27, 1936—J. M. Casey. William Griffin, Editor and Publisher of the New York Enquiry, January 14, 1937—Dan Burke, T.D. Joseph Mary Flood, B.L., March 23, 1948—Patrick O'Connell. John Keating, R.H.A., March 22, 1948—do. His Excellency Sean T. O'Ceallaigh, Uachtaran na h-Eireann, March 24, 1948—do. His Eminence John Cardinal Dalton, D.D., Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All-Ireland—September 25, 1953—John Carew. His Excellency Most Revd. Gerald Patrick O'Hara, D.D., J.U.D., Archbishop, Bishop of Savannah, Atlanta, U.S.A. Apostolic Nuncio, June 25, 1954—do. His Eminence Cardinal Michael Browne, O.P., of the Roman Curia, August 15, 1962—Mrs. Condell.

## County Council to join