

St. Patrick's Boulevard

The suggestion made by Rev. Joseph C. Lenihan that the name of Central ave. be changed to St. Patrick's boulevard, is a good one. And no better day could be found for officially announcing the change, and for changing the street signs, than next Sunday, when 100,000 Irish march up Broad st. in honor of their patron saint.

Central ave. long ago ceased being what its name implies. It is now just another important street, an important thoroughfare, but by no means a central one. Changes in traffic, changes in the industrial picture of the city have changed the avenue.

Furthermore, St. Patrick is by no means the exclusive property of one section of the population. He is the patron saint of all people. The annual St. Patrick's Day parades are civic celebrations participated in by all. The Wearing of the Green is not confined to the sons and daughters of those men and women who were hanged for the wearin' of the green.

The feeling for the change is by no means confined to the Irish population of the city, nor to the coreligionists of most of them. Men and women of every race and religion respect the Irish, honor them for their great and enduring contributions to our civilizations, love them for their personal qualities, admire them for their sturdy patriotism.

There were many Irish in the country at the time of Independence, most of whom were valiant fighters for freedom. But the real Irish immigration did not start until after the great potato famine of 1848 which caused the death of millions by starvation, and drove millions more overseas.

The Irish who came here were mostly laborers, and laborers they became here. They were met at first with the vilest abuse. "No Irish Need Apply" was a motto that sprang from the "American" Party, the Know-Nothing Party. But the Irish faced down the abuse, the discrimination, the persecution, and won out. They fought on both sides in the Civil War. Meagher's Irish Brigade—now known as the Fighting Sixty-Ninth—showed that once convinced of the justice of a cause there are no better fighters on earth than the Irish.

The Irish built our cities, and policed them. They built the great structures that are the marvel of the world and the pride of America. They were—and still are—leaders in religion, giving America many of its greatest and best loved clergymen, leaders in civic life and morality.

The Irish became business men, writers, professionals of all kinds. They became teachers, and they occupy a place in the schools of every city that the whole country is proud of.

By all means, St. Patrick's boulevard; it passes by St. Patrick's Cathedral. And in that name, every Murphy, every Byrne, every Keenan and Kelley and Kelly, every Noonan and O'Brien, every Sullivan and O'Sullivan, every Hurley and Costello, every Connor and O'Connor, and every other Irishman in Newark will be honored—as he should be.