



## Irish Chicago (Images of America: Illinois)

*John McLaughlin*

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## **Irish Chicago (Images of America: Illinois)** John McLaughlin

The history of the Irish in Chicago goes back to the days when the city was little more than an outpost on the prairie shores of Lake Michigan. Drawn by opportunities in the growing frontier town, Irish men and women who were fleeing economic hardship and famine in Ireland were quick to make their mark on Chicago's political, religious, and economic life. The unique position of the Irish among immigrant groups-English speaking and more culturally attuned to Anglo-American institutions, yet Catholic-allowed them to flourish in occupations and social positions for which they have become known. Most notably, the Irish in Chicago have produced eight mayors and many bishops. But Irish Chicago is also the story of those who built and enlivened the city: the policemen, firemen, priests, nuns and brothers, tavern owners, educators, transit workers, musicians, and ward politicians made good, and the north, south, and west side neighborhoods and parishes they inhabited.

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