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### Another Irish Story in the Civil War Era

Ireland is known as the "Land of Saints and Scholars". For my great grandparents, saints maybe, but scholar's no-way. They were typical tenant farmers who starved-out during the potato famine while the British exported food from Ireland at the same time in the early 1800's

My story involves my mother's side of the family, the Lamb's. They somehow managed to get to New York and to St Louis by either a dirt trail somewhat North of the Ohio River, or through the Appalachian Area. They signed papers in St. Louis to the Homestead Act. As you remember it granted 40 acres of land for free, if you lived on the land and built a house on it. They did so, sight unseen. Well they did not get there first. The area in the foot hills of the Missouri Ozarks. The better land in this area was along a creek where fields in the valley were of 6-7 acres in size and owned by slave owners. The late comer Lamb's had signed for wooded hill land where it would be difficult to find a spot for a good vegetable garden.

But, it was not difficult to find trees to make a log house. I have seen the old foundation rocks for their house. Rocks were plentiful too. The length of the house was limited to the length of an oak tree. I envision two rooms, a kitchen and a bedroom, and sleeping areas in the unheated attic. This small house raised 11 boys and 3 girls in the mid-1800.

For income they attempted to raise tobacco as a cash crop. I do not understand why tobacco? They farmed around the tree stumps with a new ground plow. Such a plow has a knife blade attached to the plow beam to cut through tree roots. Before they arrived the land only produced deer and squirrels. Today the land produces only deer and squirrels.. Survival had to be tough. The father, Owen, died when the youngest girl was in diapers. The mother, Mary, somehow managed to raise this large family.

The Civil War ended which freed the slaves in the valley. In a short few years the slave owners were gone. Stories vary as to why. But, it is known that in this area land values dropped sharply. My belief is that the slaves like a tractor and combines today were purchased with loans/mortgages from the banks. When the war was over the slaves were gone, but not the loans/mortgages. The Banks did not forgive the mortgages. So in bankruptcy the land had to be sold usually in auctions at the court house. I believed the land must have sold for a little as 10 cents of dollar and that the slave owners were unwilling to labor themselves or get their hands dirty. In any case the 11 Irish brothers were able to buy auctioned farms in the valley which would seem to be with little or no down payment. The eleven brothers raised families of 6-7 children. Outside the valley others nearby who was not well acquainted with them, just knew they were all Lamb's.

Another grandfather of French decent was a son of a farmer who purchased a farm at a court house auction after the Civil War. He was shot and killed at the local one room school after the Christmas Pageant ended by the son of a slave owner who had lost his farm to the Frenchman at auction. The logic of the shooter was if nobody offered to buy the farm they would have been able to keep it. The shooter was hunted for two weeks in a wooded area and found by a posse, found guilty, hung from the gallows as the last person to be hung in the County of Osage.