

Irish Milwaukee

WORD FOR THE DAY: BONUS: something given that is more than what is expected.

1. Note that Patrick's friend mentions that his family wants him to get involved in politics. This was the pathway to success among the Irish in most American cities. Even today you see the Irish holding the major political offices. Those Irish that moved to Merrill Park really dominated politics in Milwaukee for about 100 years.
2. The story about James Foley and the *Cataract* fire boat is true. However, the nephew Patrick and his story is fiction.
3. This is a good time to get students into a discussion about the meaning of social class. In America, social class is measured by a combination of a person's income, educational level, and job status. This story is dealing with all of that. A fireman would get a modest income, would not have to go to college, and would have a working class job status. On the other hand, a lawyer or political leader or judge would have high income, very high educational level, and very high job status. Patrick was not cheered in his classroom because he was aiming for a working class future. But the story stresses that working class goals can be just as wonderful as professional class goals.
4. You might tell the students that there really was this terrible shipwreck that killed hundreds of Irish visiting their relatives. The ship was name the Lady Elgin. There really was the Third Ward fire in 1892 and there really was the Jones Island pest house.
5. *Samhain* had been a holiday of the ancient Druids in Ireland. It was later made into a Christian holiday and known as Halloween.

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