

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF

Daniel Cohalan 1865-1946



INTRODUCTION



Timothy Cohalan and Ellen O'Leary in the early 1900s.
SOURCE: COHALAN FAMILY RECORDS.

Daniel Cohalan was born in Middletown in Orange County, New York in December 1865 to Irish-born parents Timothy Cohalan and Ellen O' Leary. He spent all of his adult life in New York City and died there in November 1946. In the early decades of the twentieth century, Cohalan became a pivotal figure in New York politics and served as a State Supreme Court Justice from 1911 to 1924 and from 1934 to 1946.

Though a life-long member of the Democratic Party and a leading figure in New York Tammany Hall politics, Cohalan stridently opposed the more internationalist policies of Democratic Presidents Woodrow Wilson and Franklin Delano Roosevelt. He also formed close alliances with leading isolationist Republican Party Senators such as William Borah of Idaho. Daniel Cohalan was first and foremost an American but his Irish Catholic heritage impacted on his political activities. After the First World War, he became a recognized spokesman for Irish-America in the United States and played a leading role in several Irish-American cultural organizations. As a leader of the New York-based Friends of Irish Freedom, he also became heavily involved in the Irish-American nationalist movement during Ireland's revolutionary decade 1912-1922.

After the establishment of the Irish state in 1922, Cohalan became friendly with leading members of the new Irish government such as Executive President William T. Cosgrave and Minister for Industry and Commerce Joseph McGrath. He continued to visit his beloved holiday home in Glandore, County Cork from 1909 until the mid-1930s.

In Ireland, Daniel Cohalan is best remembered for his bitter clash with Irish nationalist leader Éamon de Valera who spent eighteen months in the United States from June 1919 until 1920 seeking funds and official American recognition for Irish independence. However, there is much more to Cohalan's life than his dispute with de Valera and a study of his life not only illustrates the complex relationship between Ireland and the United States but also the rich Irish contribution to the history of New York.



Glandore House, Cork.

SOURCE: PHOTO TAKEN BY MICHAEL DOORLEY IN 2012.



Justice Daniel Cohalan, Éamon de Valera, Justice John Goff. Photograph taken shortly after the arrival of de Valera in the United States in June 1919.

SOURCE: LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.



Daniel Cohalan.

SOURCE: AMERICAN IRISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

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1848 Departure of John P. Cohalan, Daniel's grandfather, from the port of Cobh (then Queenstown) during the Great Irish Famine (1845-1850). John sailed to America with his five children including Timothy (aged 12). Timothy would later become Daniel's father.

1865 Timothy Cohalan marries Ellen O'Leary in 1861. Birth of Daniel Cohalan their first child in 1865. Daniel attends the local Walkill Free Academy in Middletown and then Manhattan College in New York.

1883 Cohalan joins the Clan na Gael, a secret Irish-American revolutionary organization dedicated to the establishment of an Irish Republic. He later becomes Chairman of the New York branch of the Clan.

1885 Cohalan graduates from Manhattan College. Admitted to the New York Bar in 1888 and sets up his own legal practice.

1889 The entire Cohalan family move to New York.

1899 Daniel Cohalan marries Hanna (Hannah) O'Leary from County Cork. The marriage takes place in Cork City. The couple later buy a large house on the Upper East Side of Manhattan.

1902 Cohalan joins the Democratic Party organization in New York City known as 'Tammany Hall'. He becomes an adviser to Tammany 'Boss' Charlie Murphy and in 1908 is appointed chief or so-called 'Grand Sachem' of the Tammany Society.

1903 Along with Clan leader John Devoy, Cohalan establishes the *Gaelic American* newspaper.

1909 Buys a summer home in Glandore, County Cork which the Cohalan family visit until the 1930s. Daniel's father Timothy Cohalan dies.

1911 Cohalan appointed New York State Supreme Court Justice. Death of Hanna O'Leary in childbirth. The baby also dies.

1914 The outbreak of the Great War in Europe. Cohalan campaigns to maintain American neutrality.

1915 Cohalan marries Hanna's sister Madge O'Leary. Death of his son Dermot.

1916 Cohalan becomes leader of the New York-based Friends of Irish Freedom organization (FOIF). Involved in preparations for the 1916 Irish Rising against British rule in Ireland.

1917 April
United States entry into the First World War. Cohalan declares support for the American war effort.

1917 September
Cohalan accused by media of disloyalty after release of documents which reveal his contacts with Germany in 1916. Escapes prosecution.

1918 November
End of the war in Europe. Cohalan attempts to link President Woodrow Wilson's call for 'self-determination for oppressed nationalities' to the cause of Irish independence. Triumph of the republican Sinn Féin party in Irish elections.

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THE LIFE AND TIMES OF DANIEL COHALAN (1865-1946)

1919 January

Post-war peace conference begins in Paris. Irish War of Independence between the Irish Republican Army (IRA) led by Michael Collins and British forces. Campaign supported in the United States by Cohalan and Friends of Irish Freedom.

1919 March

Irish Race Convention meets in Philadelphia. Cohalan, as chairman of the Convention, requests President Wilson to plead for Irish self-determination at the Paris Peace Conference.

1919 June

Arrival of President of the Irish Dáil, Éamon de Valera in the United States seeking funds and American recognition of the Irish Republic.

1919 November

American Senate rejects Treaty of Versailles which would have ensured United States membership of the League of Nations. Cohalan campaigns against the League.

1920 November

Simmering hostilities between de Valera and Cohalan over tactics and strategy leads to a bitter split between both men which becomes public. Cohalan later restores communication with IRA leader Michael Collins.

1921 December

Anglo-Irish Treaty signed, bringing War of Independence to an end. Terms of the Treaty causes division within Sinn Féin. De Valera opposes the Treaty believing the Irish Republic has been betrayed. Michael Collins supports the Treaty as a stepping stone to full independence. Cohalan and the Friends of Irish Freedom reluctantly endorse the Treaty.

1922 June

Irish Civil War begins between pro and anti-Treaty forces. Michael Collins killed in an ambush in West Cork in August 1922. Cohalan continues to support the pro-Treaty side.

1923 Civil War ends in April. Death of Cohalan's mother Ellen Cohalan aged 81. Cohalan visits Ireland to lend support to pro-Treaty election campaign of William Cosgrave.

1924 Resigns from New York Supreme Court citing a desire to return to private practice. Death of daughter Joan, Madge's only daughter with Daniel.

1928 Supports Al Smith's failed presidential election bid in 1928. Republican candidate Herbert Hoover is elected President.

1929 Cohalan appointed as an advisor to Tammany Hall leader John F. Curry.

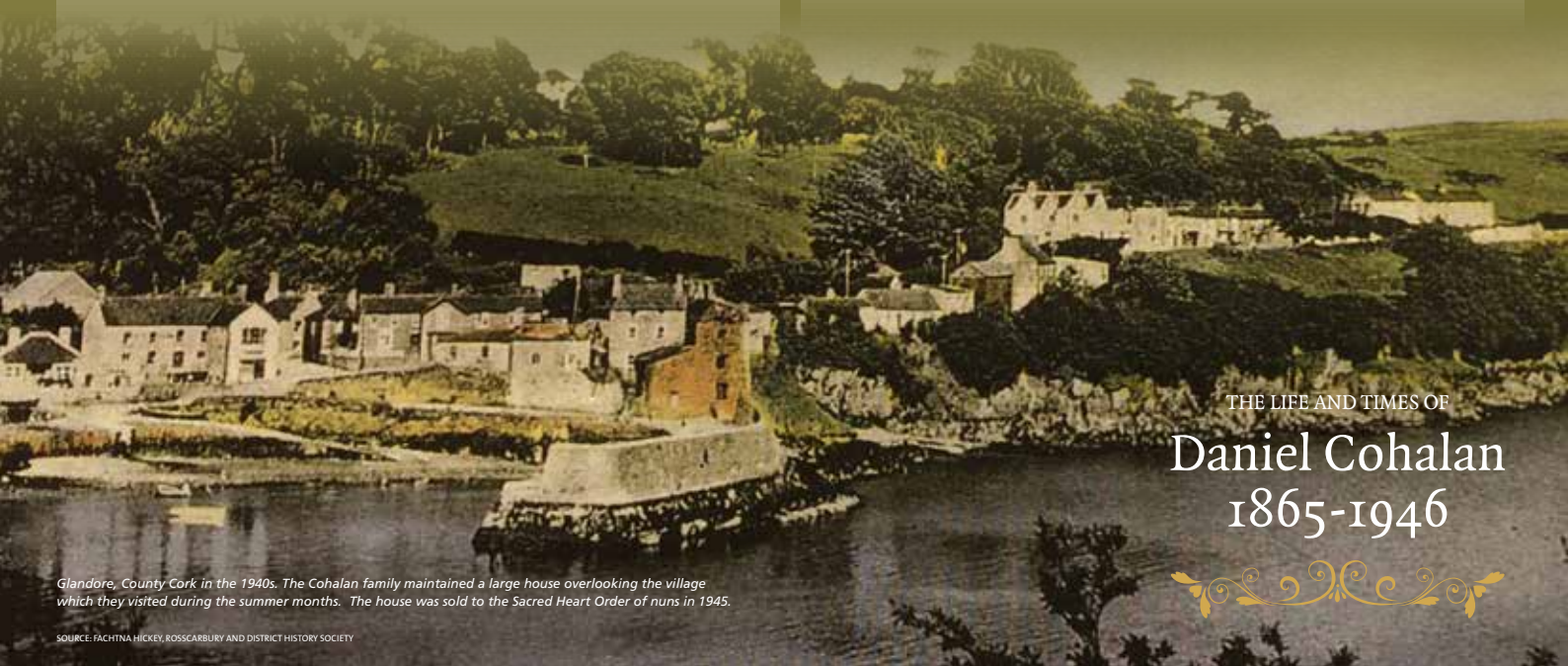
1934 Cohalan is appointed State Supreme Court Judicial Referee. Cohalan makes several speeches critical of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal. Daniel's brother John P. Cohalan supports Roosevelt.

1936 June
At the Democratic Convention in Philadelphia, Cohalan, along with Al Smith, tries to prevent the re-nomination of Roosevelt for the presidency. Attempt fails.

1938 As international tensions increase in Europe, Cohalan makes several speeches warning against American involvement in 'Europe's ever-recurring wars'.

1941 The United States enter the Second World War after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. Cohalan and *Gaelic American* supportive of the war effort.

1946 November
Daniel Cohalan dies.



Glandore, County Cork in the 1940s. The Cohalan family maintained a large house overlooking the village which they visited during the summer months. The house was sold to the Sacred Heart Order of nuns in 1945.

SOURCE: FACHINA HICKEY, ROSSCARRBURY AND DISTRICT HISTORY SOCIETY

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Daniel Cohalan

AND HIS IRISH WORLD OF ORIGIN

Though born in New York State, Daniel Cohalan had strong family ties to Ireland. In 1848, at the height of the Great Irish Famine (1845-1850), his grandfather John P. Cohalan, from Lislevane, Courtmacsherry, in County Cork, left the port of Queenstown (now Cobh) for the United States. The Irish Famine led to the deaths of over one million people out of a population of about eight million but John P. Cohalan was a relatively prosperous farmer and could afford the passage to America. John P. Cohalan was accompanied by his five children, Ellen, Julia, Anna, Mary and Timothy. This boy Timothy, then aged 12, would later become Daniel Cohalan's father.



Emigration from Ireland continued in the decades after the Famine and the United States became the most popular destination. Emigrants often felt a strong emotional attachment to the land of their birth and this was passed on to the next generation.

SOURCE: ENGRAVING BY HENRY DOYLE IN MARY FRANCES CUSACK, EMIGRANTS LEAVING IRELAND, 1868. WIKIMEDIA COMMONS.

In 1861 Timothy married Ellen O'Leary. Ellen was from the same townland in Ireland and was a distant cousin. Born in 1842, she had arrived in the United States as an orphan in 1853. According to an article in the *Gaelic American* newspaper (May 12, 1923), Ellen stayed with her uncle, the Reverend John McCarthy of Greenpoint, Long Island.

Father McCarthy was the first priest to establish a parish in Suffolk County which extended from Greenpoint to Greenport. Ellen graduated from Holy Cross Academy in 1859. Daniel, born in 1865, was their eldest child and six of their other children lived to adulthood: Michael, John P., Timothy, Denis, Mary, and Aileen.

The Cohalan family formed part of the large wave of mainly Irish Catholic emigrants who emigrated to the United States in the second half of the nineteenth century. The family settled in Middletown, Orange County, then a growing town in New York's Hudson Valley region. The 1860 American census records John Cohalan's trade as a grocer. Meanwhile, his son Timothy, then aged 25, like many of his fellow Irish immigrants, had entered the construction trade. Later newspaper reports indicate that he established a thriving glass business.



Ellen O'Leary (1842-1923), Daniel Cohalan's mother. Born Lislevane, Courtmacsherry, County Cork, Ireland. Died New York City.

SOURCE: COHALAN FAMILY RECORDS.

John P. Cohalan (1788-1871), Daniel Cohalan's grandfather. Born Lislevane, Courtmacsherry, County Cork, Ireland. Died Middletown, New York.

SOURCE: COHALAN FAMILY RECORDS.

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Timothy E. Cohalan (1835-1909), Daniel Cohalan's father.

Born Lislevane, Courtmacsherry, County Cork, Ireland. Died New York City.

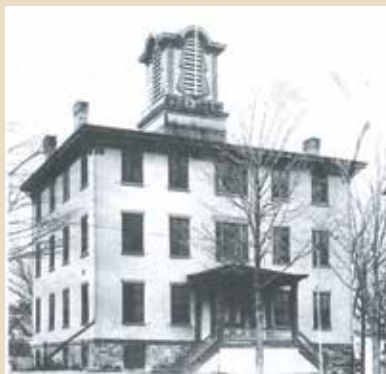
SOURCE: COHALAN FAMILY RECORDS.

From Walkill Academy

TO MANHATTAN COLLEGE

The Catholic Irish who arrived in the United States in such large numbers in the second half of the nineteenth century encountered many obstacles. The United States was still a largely Protestant country and the majority of the new arrivals from Ireland were both poor and Catholic.

American newspapers frequently portrayed Irish Catholics in negative stereotypical ways and accused them of being subservient to Rome and incapable of being absorbed into American society. Opposition to Catholics was especially virulent in the 1850s with the rise of the so-called 'Know Nothing' movement. The heroic Irish contribution to the Union Army during the Civil War helped to ease sectarian tensions though religious prejudice against Catholics lingered until well into the twentieth century.



Walkill Free Academy in Middletown. The school was built in 1842 and continued to function as a school until 1895. Daniel Cohalan excelled as a student in this academy before attending Manhattan College in 1881.

SOURCE: HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF MIDDLETOWN AND WALKILL PRECINCT.

In an indication of the social mobility that was increasingly possible for wealthy Irish immigrants, Timothy sent his son Daniel and his four brothers to the local Walkill Free Academy. Daniel proved to be an exceptional scholar and went on to complete a Bachelor

Local records indicate that Timothy Cohalan became a leading figure in the growing Catholic community in Middletown in the 1860s and served on the building committee for St. Joseph's Church. The church was completed in 1884 and replaced an earlier structure that had been built in 1867.

Early photograph of Daniel Cohalan from Manhattan College archives. The photograph is undated but likely to be early 1900s. Cohalan served as President of the Alumni Association after his graduation and completed a post-graduate degree in law in 1911.

SOURCE: MANHATTAN COLLEGE ARCHIVES.



of Arts degree at Manhattan College in 1885. The young Cohalan enjoyed college life and even earned a place on the college baseball team known as the 'Jaspers'. However, the attractions of a legal profession beckoned and after a short apprenticeship in a law firm, he was called to the Bar in 1888. Daniel's four brothers also attended Manhattan College and again all became lawyers. This marked the beginning of the strong bond between the Cohalan family and New York's legal community which would continue down through the generations. Career opportunities for women were limited at this time. Daniel's sister Mary married Jim Dyer while his other sister Aileen, who never married, lived with her brother Timothy.

The choice of Manhattan College, a Catholic institution, would not have been unusual for an upwardly mobile Irish-American family such as the Cohalans. Historians have described how the Catholic Irish founded 'parallel institutions' and associations to further their own interests in what could often be a hostile Protestant environment. By way of illustration, the Sisters of St. Joseph Congregation founded St. Joseph's College in Brooklyn to educate Catholic girls who often felt isolated in other non-Catholic institutions. (Oral History Project, St. Joseph's College, 2017). Likewise, Manhattan College, though founded in 1853 by a French Catholic order, became popular with young middle-class Irish such as the Cohalan brothers.



Manhattan College, Boulevard and West 131st Street, in the early 1890s.

SOURCE: THE BRITISH LIBRARY/MECHANICAL CURATOR COLLECTION, WIKIMEDIA COMMONS



The illustrator Thomas Nast was well known for his anti-Catholic illustrations. 'The American River Ganges' appeared in Harper's Weekly, New York: September 30, 1871. It depicts the American school system under threat from a Catholic invasion. A triumphant Tammany Hall is portrayed in the background.

SOURCE: CATHOLIC HISTORICAL RESEARCH CENTER OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF PHILADELPHIA.

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DANIEL COHALAN AND

Irish Nationalism

In 1889, the entire Cohalan family moved to New York City which offered a greater choice of professional opportunities for Daniel and his brothers who all become lawyers. Of the city's 1.5 million residents in 1890, over a third were either Irish or second-generation Irish who were more likely to turn to an Irish lawyer for assistance rather than a lawyer of another nationality.



Romantic depiction of the battle of Ridgeway, Ontario, June 2, 1866. In this battle the invading Fenians defeated British forces though the 'invasion' ultimately failed. The Fenians in Ireland staged an uprising in 1867 which was also defeated by British forces. These events illustrate the growing links between Irish nationalism and Irish-American nationalism in the second half of the nineteenth century.

SOURCE: LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.

Thus far, Daniel Cohalan's life would have been far removed from that of his grandfather John who left an economically ruined Ireland in 1848. Yet Daniel still strongly identified with his Irish heritage. In the 1860s, his father Timothy had joined an Irish-American nationalist organization known as the Fenians which was closely linked to an organization of the same name in Ireland. Timothy became known as an important financial contributor to the American Fenian movement though he did not participate in their ill-fated invasions of Canada.

Like his father Timothy, Daniel bore a hostility towards the British Empire who he blamed for the Famine and the poor economic condition of Ireland. Drawing on the example of America's own successful revolution (1775-1783), he came to believe that Ireland could only achieve economic prosperity by establishing complete independence from Britain. Though born in the United States, he, like thousands of other Americans of Irish descent, stood ready to help those in Ireland achieve this objective.

While still a student in Manhattan College, Cohalan joined the Clan na Gael movement which in 1914 numbered around 10,000 members across the United States. This organization was closely linked to the Irish Republican Brotherhood in Ireland (IRB) which plotted to bring about an armed uprising in Ireland. By 1902, Cohalan had become Chairman of the Clan in New York and a close ally of Clan na Gael leader John Devoy.



A 1907 letter from Daniel Cohalan to Joseph McGarrity (1874-1940) a Clan leader in Philadelphia. The term 'Brother' was used among Clan members.

SOURCE: JOSEPH MCGARRITY COLLECTION, DIGITAL LIBRARY @VILLANOVA UNIVERSITY.



Gaelic American Share certificate 1903 listing Daniel Cohalan as President of the company.

SOURCE: MCGARRITY PAPERS, NATIONAL LIBRARY OF IRELAND. ALSO AVAILABLE IN JOSEPH MCGARRITY COLLECTION, DIGITAL LIBRARY@VILLANOVA UNIVERSITY.

In 1903, Cohalan and Devoy worked together to launch the *Gaelic American* newspaper. Cohalan's name appeared on the share certificates for the paper indicating his role as company president while Devoy served as editor. Not surprisingly, the paper put forward the cause of revolutionary nationalism. However, until the outbreak of the war in Europe in 1914, this was still a minority view among Irish nationalists who believed that a limited form of Irish independence known as Home Rule could be achieved by peaceful constitutional means. The then leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party in the British House of Commons, John Redmond, supported this policy and had his own American support organization known as the United Irish League of America (UILA).



Daniel Cohalan on front page of *Gaelic American*, November 18, 1905

SOURCE: JOSEPH MCGARRITY COLLECTION, DIGITAL LIBRARY@VILLANOVA UNIVERSITY.

County Kildare-born John Devoy (1842-1928), was arrested before the Fenian rebellion in Ireland in 1867. He was released in an amnesty in 1871 and then made his way to the United States to become leader of the Clan na Gael.

SOURCE: LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.

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DANIEL COHALAN AND

Tammany Hall

Cohalan was fascinated by American politics. His father Timothy had been an activist for the Republican Party in Middletown, Orange County at a time when most Irish Catholics supported the Democratic Party. However, Timothy believed that the influence of the Irish vote in the United States was limited by being too identified with the Democratic Party. Timothy sought to impress a more bipartisan view of American politics on his sons and this impacted on Daniel's own outlook on politics. In later life he formed alliances with prominent Republicans and Democrats to defend what he perceived as the interests of the 'Irish Race' in America.

As was typical for many young Irish-American lawyers in New York, Daniel Cohalan initially became an active member of the Democratic Party organization, better known at this time as Tammany Hall. The Irish domination of Tammany aroused criticism from progressive reformers who denounced it for its known corruption and nepotism. Such criticism was often justified but in the absence of a functioning welfare system, the Tammany system provided much needed jobs and other benefits to working class New Yorkers, albeit in return for votes. Tammany Boss Charles (Charlie) Murphy soon spotted Cohalan's talents and in 1908 he appointed him 'Grand Sachem' or chief of Tammany Hall. This was a prestigious position which undoubtedly favored Cohalan's legal practice and that of his brothers. According to a report in the *New York Times* in 1911, the city paid \$113,195 in contracts to the Cohalan brothers over the previous three years. (*New York Times*, May 19, 1911).

In 1911, Murphy also sought to reward Cohalan by putting his name forward to the New York State legislature in Albany for nomination as a senator for New York state. Daniel's brother John had earlier served as a state senator in 1907 and 1908. However, Murphy's proposal was blocked by a group of 'insurgent' democratic senators led by a young Franklin Delano Roosevelt. According to a later report in the *New York Times* (November 26, 1946), Cohalan never forgot this slight to his career. Nonetheless, Murphy found an alternative way of rewarding Cohalan by persuading Governor John Dix to appoint him as a State Supreme Court Justice for New York State. Cohalan's long career as a State Supreme Court Justice had begun.



Puck Magazine published this cartoon in 1883 and entitled it: 'The Irish declaration of independence that we are all familiar with'. The cartoon depicts a muscular Irish cook berating her employer and feeds stereotypical views of the Irish as prone to fighting and disorder.

SOURCE: LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.



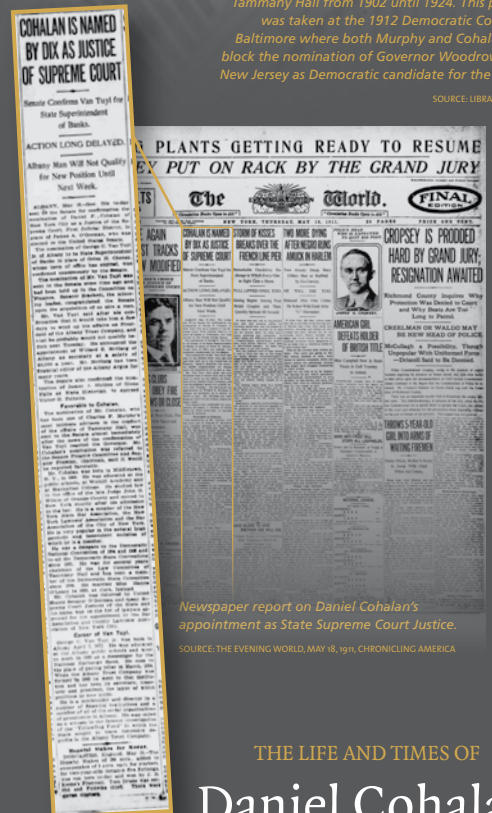
Charles Murphy (Boss Murphy) was the leader of Tammany Hall from 1902 until 1924. This photograph was taken at the 1912 Democratic Convention in Baltimore where both Murphy and Cohalan failed to block the nomination of Governor Woodrow Wilson of New Jersey as Democratic candidate for the presidency.

SOURCE: LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.



The Democratic Party Organization in New York, or Tammany Hall as it became known, was located on 14th Street (1875 to 1927).

SOURCE: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS.



Newspaper report on Daniel Cohalan's appointment as State Supreme Court Justice.

SOURCE: THE EVENING WORLD, MAY 18, 1911, CHRONICLING AMERICA

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DANIEL COHALAN AND

Hanna O'Leary

Daniel Cohalan's connection to Ireland was reinforced when he met and married Hanna O'Leary in 1899. Hanna, from West Cork, was a second cousin on his mother's side and had been educated at the Loreto Convent in Killarney. Cohalan's daughter Aileen, who became a nun in 1930, describes in her memoirs how Hanna was the intellectual equal of her husband and could converse at length about American and Irish political affairs. Cohalan's income enabled the couple to purchase a large house in Glandore, County Cork and the family visited the property almost every summer.

Cohalan used such visits to Ireland to make contact with Irish revolutionaries and Irish police records indicate the well-grounded suspicion that he was bringing over American funds to the Irish Republican Brotherhood. However, given his status in New York politics and his social connections in Ireland, the police made no move to arrest him. By 1911, Daniel and Hanna's family had grown to include seven children. In May 1911, the *Gaelic*

American published an illustration of the family celebrating his recent appointment to the State Supreme Court. Yet tragically, within a month of this photograph's publication, Hanna died giving birth to baby Gerard who also died. As Aileen's unpublished memoir indicates, this caused untold grief in the Cohalan household.



Glandore in the 1930s. The Cohalan family summer home is located on the hill overlooking the bay.

SOURCE: JOHN HAMILTON, SOUTHERN STAR.

The following summer the family paid their yearly visit to Glandore and the local *Southern Star* (August 12, 1912) newspaper commented on Cohalan's continued sadness over his wife's death and also on his reputation for hospitality in the local area.

A hospitable man, for though the shadow of an unforgotten sorrow has clouded his life, though he yearns for the vanished hand and longs to hear the voice that is still, yet he likes to see others relishing the joys of life and making a harvest of the day...



Daniel Cohalan in 1911. Photo taken after his appointment as New York State Supreme Court Justice.

SOURCE: LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.



The Cohalan Family as portrayed in the *Gaelic American* shortly after Daniel Cohalan's appointment as New York State Supreme Court Justice in May 1911.

SOURCE: GAELIC AMERICAN, MAY 22, 1911. JOSEPH MCGARRITY COLLECTION. DIGITAL LIBRARY@VILLANOVA UNIVERSITY.

In 1915, Daniel Cohalan married Hanna's sister Madge who had come to New York to look after his distraught children after Hanna's death. This year also witnessed further tragedy for the family with the death of his six-year-old son Dermot from complications arising from appendicitis. Such deaths, from what are today preventable illnesses were all too frequent during this era even among wealthy families like the Cohalans. According to Aileen Cohalan's memoirs, the family's deep religious faith appears to have been a consolation during this difficult period.

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Hanna, Patrick, Daniel Junior and Conn (standing). Circa late 1910 or early 1911.

SOURCE: COHALAN FAMILY RECORDS.

New York Times report of Daniel Cohalan's wedding to Madge. This report also highlights Cohalan's close connection to Glandore.

SOURCE: NEW YORK TIMES, FEBRUARY 14, 1915.

COHALAN AS DEFENDER OF THE

Irish Race

While deeply connected to events in Ireland, Daniel Cohalan also sought to defend the interests of the growing Irish community in the United States. According to the US census of 1900, there were 4,826,904 Americans who were either Irish-born or had Irish parents. This closely matched the population of Ireland at this time. The Irish in the United States had made great strides since their degraded status during the Famine period yet anti-Irish sentiment still remained. As Daniel Cohalan pointed out to his son Florence in a 1924 letter:

We are not truly free until all citizens stand upon an actual as well as a theoretical equality in the public life of the country...

Cohalan believed that the Irish ethnic group should take pride in their own cultural heritage and identity rather than conform to what he saw as an Anglo-Saxon melting pot. This perspective was partly influenced by his own strong Irish cultural heritage but also by the nature of American society at that time. Though American-born, he grew up in a household where the Irish language was freely spoken and according to newspaper reports, he too was fluent in the language. (*New York Times*, November 13, 1946).



Pádraig Pearse (1879-1916) was an Irish teacher, poet, and Irish nationalist. He was one of the leaders of the 1916 Rising and was executed by firing squad after the rebellion.

SOURCE: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS.

Due to his close friendship to Cork-native Diarmuid Lynch, Cohalan became Chairman of the New York branch of the Gaelic League, an organization which promoted the use of the Irish language as well as Irish music and dancing among Irish-Americans. Meanwhile, visiting Irish nationalists from Ireland were always assured of a warm welcome in his lavish home on the Upper East Side.

Pádraig Pearse, one of the key leaders of the 1916 Irish rebellion, visited Cohalan in 1914 asking for funds for his struggling Irish language school, St. Enda's in Dublin. Cohalan's papers in the American Irish Historical Society (AIHS) contains a deeply appreciative letter from Pearse who thanked him 'for his generous subscriptions' and for his 'unceasing and successful efforts to put me in touch with other good friends'.

Cohalan's ideas about the standing of the 'Irish Race' in America can also be gleaned from the pages of the *Gaelic American*. In numerous articles the paper constantly argued that a White Anglo-Saxon Protestant (WASP) elite dominated American society and influenced the foreign policy of the United States in support of Britain.

In an effort to enhance the standing of the Irish in the United States, Cohalan also joined the American Irish Historical Society, an organization devoted to highlighting the Irish contribution to American history, especially during the American revolution. Cohalan and his son Monsignor Florence Cohalan took an active part in the society until his death in 1946 while his daughter Kathleen served as the society's librarian for many years. In 1941, the medal of the society, awarded annually to a distinguished American of Irish origin, was presented to Daniel Cohalan.



This invitation to the Annual Dinner of the American Irish Historical Society in 1915, features a portrait of Irish-born General Andrew Jackson who defeated the British at the Battle of New Orleans in the war of 1812.

SOURCE: NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY.



Letter from Pearse to Daniel Cohalan, August 12, 1915. In his letter, Pearse asks Cohalan for help in obtaining promised funding for St. Enda's school from a Mr. Garvan. Clearly, Pearse believe that a letter from a New York Supreme Court Judge would carry more weight than a letter from a Dublin teacher.

SOURCE: AMERICAN IRISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

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Kathleen O'Leary Cohalan (1903-1979) was the Head Librarian at St. John's University, NYC and also the Librarian and Secretary of the American Irish Historical Society for many years.

SOURCE: COHALAN FAMILY RECORDS.

DANIEL COHALAN AND THE

1916 Irish Rising

Cohalan believed that the outbreak of war in 1914 between Britain and Germany brought forward the prospect of revolution in Ireland. Meanwhile, in Ireland itself, Irish nationalist leader John Redmond was convinced that Irish Home Rule would soon be granted. Redmond supported the British war effort and called on Irish nationalists to join the army in support of Catholic Belgium. There was already a strong tradition of Irish service in the British Army and Redmond's call was initially popular in Ireland. Indeed, Hanna's brother John O'Leary served as a surgeon in the British Army where he died in an accident in Egypt.



Victor Herbert was a renowned composer best known for composing successful operettas for the Broadway stage. He was a close friend of Daniel Cohalan and according to some reports, his comic opera Eileen was named after Cohalan's daughter Aileen.

SOURCE: NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY.

Hostility to Britain seemed stronger among Irish-Americans and Redmond's actions disillusioned many of his supporters. This opened the way for Daniel Cohalan and Clan leader John Devoy to launch the Friends of Irish Freedom (FOIF) organization at an Irish Race Convention at the Hotel Astor in New York in March 1916. Victor Herbert, the renowned opera singer and a close friend of Cohalan, became the organization's president, but Daniel Cohalan was the acknowledged leader.

Cohalan also became involved in the preparations for the 1916 Rising. Irish nationalist revolutionaries had traditionally looked to Britain's enemies for support and Cohalan was no exception. Along with other Clan na Gael leaders, he facilitated the mission of Irish nationalist and former British diplomat, Roger Casement to Germany. Casement sought to enlist German support for an Irish rebellion. Just prior to the outbreak of the Easter Rising, Cohalan relayed a coded telegram to the German war department calling for the landing of troops and munitions in Ireland and even suggested that some German officers could be landed by airship.



Destruction in Dublin city center after 1916 Rising.

SOURCE: DÚN LAOGHAIRE RATHDOWN LOCAL STUDIES, DLR LEXICON LIBRARY, DÚN LAOGHAIRE.



A Gaelic American photograph of the Irish Race Convention in the Hotel Astor, New York in March 1916. Over 4,000 delegates from across the United States attended.

SOURCE: GAELIC AMERICAN, MARCH 11, 1916, JOSEPH MCGARRITY COLLECTION, DIGITAL LIBRARY @ VILLANOVA UNIVERSITY.

Well before Cohalan's message, Germany had ruled out sending troops in response to earlier Clan na Gael appeals. They had already despatched a ship named the Aud loaded with weapons but this was intercepted by the Royal Navy. Meanwhile, the Rising in Dublin was suppressed by British forces after a week of heavy fighting. Nevertheless, the forces of revolutionary nationalism won an important political victory. The execution of the rebel leaders by the British authorities following the Rising helped to harden Irish nationalist sentiment both in Ireland and the United States. To Cohalan's delight, a new Sinn Féin party with a republican agenda came to dominate Irish politics while Redmond's Irish Parliamentary Party went into decline. In the United States, Cohalan, as leader of the Friends of Irish Freedom, successfully exploited Irish-American anger at the executions and staged large demonstrations in New York in support of the Irish cause.

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Roger Casement with Clan na Gael leader John Devoy in New York in 1914. With the help of Cohalan and the Clan, Casement successfully made his way to Germany on a false identity. He was later arrested in Ireland prior to the 1916 Rising. He was then taken to London where he was found guilty of treason and executed.

SOURCE: SOURCE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.



United States at war

Once the war in Europe had begun in 1914, Daniel Cohalan called for continued American neutrality. He feared that Democratic President Woodrow Wilson, because of his known sympathies for Britain, would plunge the United States into the European war. In the 1916 presidential election, Cohalan campaigned for the Republican candidate Charles Evans Hughes believing him to be more supportive of a neutral policy. This campaign failed and Wilson was elected for a second term.

In April 1917, America entered the war on Britain's side and Germany now became an enemy of the United States. Cohalan and other Irish American nationalists had always prided themselves on their loyalty to the United States and his response was never in doubt. In an interview with the Catholic newspaper *The Brooklyn Tablet* (April 21, 1917), he argued that Irish-Americans would always be 'present in defense of the flag and support of American institutions'.

Aileen Cohalan records in her memoirs how the Cohalans, like many other New York Upper East Side families, held large dinner parties where guests had to pay for dinner tickets. The proceeds from these

parties were then donated to the war effort. The Clan na Gael also supported the war and the exploits of the New York-based Fighting 69th Regiment featured in a fund-raising poster for the Friends of Irish Freedom after the war.

Despite his protestations of loyalty to the United States, Cohalan's early support for Germany came back to haunt him. In September 1917, the Federal Committee on Public Information released to the press his message to the German government calling for German intervention in the Irish rebellion in 1916. There were calls for his impeachment but no action was taken. The fact that Cohalan's message had been sent while the United States was still neutral and that Cohalan still had influential friends in Tammany Hall may account for this.



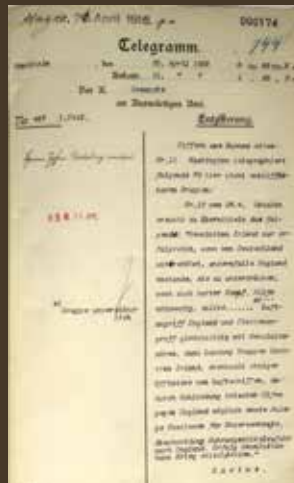
This First World War United States recruitment poster appealed to the long Irish tradition of service in the American armed forces. The mainly Irish-American 69th Regiment served with distinction in France.

SOURCE: LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



The publication of Cohalan's message to Germany requesting aid for the 1916 Rising led to a media outcry as this edition of the *Boston Globe* illustrates. However, Cohalan's message had been sent while the United States was still neutral.

SOURCE: BOSTON GLOBE, SEPTEMBER 23, 1917

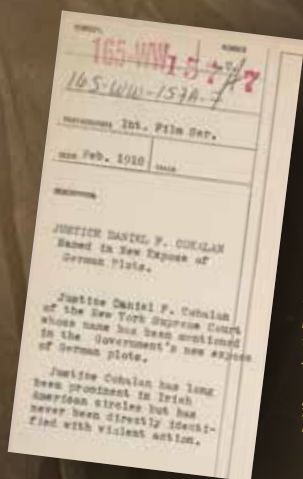


Cohalan's message to Berlin of April 18, requesting German help for the 1916 Rising was sent by a German diplomat in New York, Wolf von Igel. The translation, which appeared in the American press in September 1917 roughly translated as follows:

The Irish revolt can only succeed if assisted by Germany; otherwise, England will be able to crush it, although only after a severe struggle. Assistance required. There would be an air raid on England and a naval attack timed to coincide with the Rising; followed by a landing of troops and munitions and also of some officers, perhaps from an airship. It might then be possible to close the Irish harbours against England, set up bases for submarines and cut off food exports to England. A successful rising may decide the war.

SOURCE: POLITISCHES ARCHIV DES AUSWÄRTIGEN AMTS (DIPLOMATIC ARCHIVE OF THE GERMAN MINISTRY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS, BERLIN)

After the war, Cohalan could once again campaign more actively in support of the Irish cause. In several speeches, he sought to link President Wilson's war aim of 'self-determination for oppressed nationalities' to the cause of Irish independence. During the week of December 8-15, 1918, the Friends of Irish Freedom held 'Self-Determination for Ireland' rallies across the United States. One of the largest took place in New York's Madison Square Garden which was attended by over 25,000 people. At this event, Daniel Cohalan shared the same platform as Cardinal William O'Connell of Boston and Republican Governor Charles Whitman of New York.



This document was compiled by the War Department after the media revelations about Justice Cohalan in September 1917.

SOURCE: RECORDS OF THE WAR DEPARTMENT, 1917-1918; RECORD GROUP 165; NATIONAL ARCHIVES AT COLLEGE PARK, MD.

This photograph of Daniel Cohalan in his judicial robes was taken from US War Department files.

SOURCE: RECORDS OF THE WAR DEPARTMENT 1917-1918; RECORD GROUP 165; NATIONAL ARCHIVES AT COLLEGE PARK, MD.

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF

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DANIEL COHALAN AND

President Woodrow Wilson

As part of his strategy to promote the Irish cause in the United States, Cohalan and other leading Irish-American nationalists organized an Irish Race Convention in Philadelphia in March 1919. Over 5,000 delegates from Irish organizations across the United States attended including the influential Cardinal James Gibbons of Baltimore who spoke in support of Irish self-determination. The presence of Gibbons ensured that the Convention attracted national and international attention.



Cardinal James Gibbons of Baltimore and Daniel Cohalan at the Irish Race Convention in Philadelphia, March 1919.

(SOURCE: GAELIC AMERICAN, MARCH 1, 1919, JOSEPH MCCARRITY COLLECTION, DIGITAL LIBRARY@VILLANOVA UNIVERSITY).

Cohalan, as chairman of the Convention, appointed a delegation to meet with a reluctant President Woodrow Wilson who disliked Cohalan for his perceived disloyalty during the war. The President's Irish-American Secretary Joseph Tumulty pressed him to agree to the meeting. As Tumulty put it: 'Regardless of what we may think of Cohalan and his crowd, there is a deep desire on the part of the American people to see the Irish question settled...'

On March 4, 1919, Wilson met the delegation in the New York Metropolitan Opera House but just before the scheduled session, the President let it be known, through a secret service agent, that Cohalan had five minutes to remove himself before the meeting could go ahead. Cohalan readily agreed but the meeting achieved little as Wilson was unwilling to offend Britain by pleading Ireland's case at the peace conference. In June 1919, Cohalan's congressional allies from both main parties in the American Senate passed a resolution expressing sympathy with Irish demands for self-determination.

President Woodrow Wilson campaigning during the 1916 Presidential election. Wilson was aware that Cohalan had campaigned against him in 1916 and had also attempted to block his nomination at the 1912 Democratic Convention.

(SOURCE: LIBRARY OF CONGRESS).

Henry Cabot Lodge, Republican Chairman of the powerful Senate Foreign Relations Committee, later praised Cohalan as: 'one of the ablest men who ever came to Washington to plead a cause. The citizens of Irish blood are fortunate in having him as their leader'. While Wilson chose to ignore such resolutions, these events nevertheless illustrate Cohalan's significant influence in Congress at this point in his career.

Cohalan also distrusted President Wilson's plans for a League of Nations. Describing it as 'a league for the preservation of the British Empire' he drew on the resources of the Friends of Irish Freedom to campaign vociferously against the proposal. In this campaign, Cohalan formed a close alliance with isolationist Republican, Senator William Borah of Idaho. Wilson's plan was defeated in Congress in November 1919 and Irish ethnic opposition, orchestrated by Cohalan, was undoubtedly a factor in this defeat.



1. Friends of Irish Freedom Victory Fund poster depicting Irish-American soldiers from the 69th Regiment in action on the Western Front during the war. An Irish Victory Fund was launched at the Third Irish Race Convention.

(SOURCE: AMERICAN IRISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY).

2. Poster advertising a Friends of Irish Freedom meeting in California in 1917. Though the organization had its headquarters in New York, it had branches in most areas of Irish settlement. The organization grew rapidly in the post-war period.

(SOURCE: CALIFORNIA HISTORY SOCIETY AND WIKIMEDIA COMMONS).

Information leaflet on the League of Nations:

(SOURCE: WOODROW WILSON HOUSE AND WIKIMEDIA COMMONS).



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President de Valera

In June 1919, Éamon de Valera, President of the Irish Dáil (parliament), began an eighteen-month mission to the United States. De Valera was the leader of the Sinn Féin party which had won a majority of parliamentary seats in Ireland at the British general election of 1918. The party refused to take their seats in the House of Commons and in January 1919 formed a Dáil (parliament) not recognized by other states. Sinn Féin shared the same Irish republican objectives of Cohalan's Friends of Irish Freedom movement which then numbered 100,000 regular members (275,000 if associate members are included).



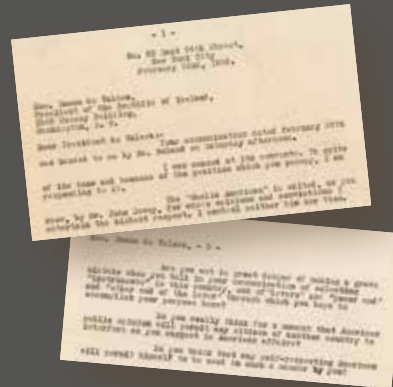
Following the public split between de Valera and Cohalan the Friends of Irish Freedom organization went into decline. Other factors influenced this decline such as the conclusion of the War of Independence in 1921 and then the bitter Civil War over the terms of the Treaty.

SOURCE: AMERICAN IRISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

De Valera looked to Cohalan to support his efforts to raise funds for the ongoing insurgency then taking place in Ireland between the Irish Republican Army (IRA) and British forces. He also wanted Cohalan's help in mobilizing Irish-American opinion to pressure the American government

into recognizing the Irish Republic. This Republic had been proclaimed during the 1916 Rising and declared by the newly-established Dáil in January 1919.

Relations between de Valera and Cohalan were initially good but soon deteriorated. The reasons for this dispute were complex but in summary, a bitter conflict arose over who should direct the Irish-American movement. Should it be the Irish leader Éamon de Valera or should it be Daniel Cohalan who was well versed in the workings of the political system of the United States? De Valera's famous remark about Cohalan: 'Big as the country is, it was not



Extracts from a letter from Cohalan to de Valera, February 22, 1920. In his letter, Cohalan responds to de Valera's charges of disloyalty and highlights his American allegiance.

SOURCE: AMERICAN IRISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

enough to hold the Judge and myself', sums up the power struggle that subsequently developed between both men over tactics and strategy. Cohalan, and many other Irish-American leaders were also wary of being seen to take orders from de Valera since this would lend credence to WASP allegations that Irish-Americans

were subservient to a foreign leader. In February 1920, de Valera reacted badly to criticism in the *Gaelic American* newspaper edited by Cohalan's close ally John Devoy. In a letter to Cohalan, he demanded to know if he could count on his support. Having first defended Devoy, Cohalan accused de Valera of trying to dictate to the Irish-American movement. Finally, a very public rift developed between both men in November 1920. De Valera returned to Ireland in December 1920.



Diarmuid Lynch, Justice Hendricks, Justice John Goff, Justice Daniel Cohalan, Éamon de Valera, John Devoy, and Justice Gavigan. At the Waldorf Astoria Hotel, New York, in June 1919, after de Valera's arrival in the United States.

SOURCE: LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.

With the help of Cohalan and his organization, de Valera succeeded in raising over \$5,000,000 dollars for the Irish cause through the sale of Bond certificates. However, he failed to obtain American recognition for the Irish Republic. This was an unrealistic aim since American recognition would have led to a serious rupture within Anglo-American relations at a time when Wilson desperately sought British help in constructing a post-war peace settlement.

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Éamon de Valera was one of the most important Irish leaders of the twentieth century and served several times as leader of the Irish government. De Valera was born in New York to an Irish mother and Spanish father which added to his popularity in the United States.

SOURCE: LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.

DANIEL COHALAN AND Anglo-Irish Treaty and Civil War

One might have expected Daniel Cohalan to turn his back on Ireland following his bitter clash with de Valera in 1920. However, this was not the case and he followed Irish developments with intense interest. In the summer of 1921, the British Prime Minister Lloyd George held talks with representatives of the Sinn Féin party following a truce between both sides in the conflict. Instead of an Irish Republic, the British government offered Canadian style Dominion Status requiring elected members of the Irish Dáil (parliament) to take an Oath of Allegiance to the British Crown. The treaty proposal also excluded the six mainly unionist and Protestant northern counties which would remain within the United Kingdom. The terms of the Treaty provoked a split within Sinn Féin ranks. A majority pro-Treaty faction, headed by IRA leader Michael Collins, signed the Treaty and established the new so-called Irish Free State. Meanwhile, an opposition faction led by Éamon de Valera opposed the Treaty seeing it as a betrayal of the Irish Republic. Soon fighting broke out between the pro-Treaty Free State Army and anti-Treaty forces known as the 'Irregulars'. The Irish Civil War had begun.

Like most Irish-Americans and the American Catholic Church, Cohalan supported the Treaty, believing that it was the best deal that could be obtained. He also denounced de Valera for his opposition describing him as a 'jealous and disappointed egotist'. The pro-Treaty side ultimately achieved victory by the spring of 1923. After the killing of Michael Collins in an Irregular ambush at Béal na Bláth, County Cork on August 22, 1922, Cohalan wrote a heartfelt obituary of the dead general for *Pearson's Magazine* (September 1922):

Shot down in his early thirties at the very moment of victory he has left behind him an inheritance that will steady and stabilize his people...

In speeches and newspaper interviews, Cohalan supported the new Irish Free State. This was warmly appreciated by Free State leaders including the new 'President of the Executive Council'



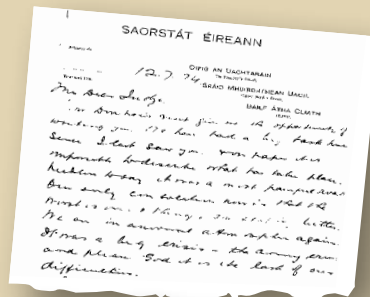
PHOTOGRAPH BY THE NEW YORK TRIBUNE. DANIEL COHALAN (CENTRE) WITH THE I.R.A. PRESIDENT COSGRAVE (TO HIS RIGHT), JAMES COHAN (TO HIS LEFT) AND OTHERS. FROM AN AIRSHIP MEETING AT CARLOW IN 1923.

Daniel Cohalan accompanied Cosgrave on a tour of the country by airplane during the 1923 election campaign. Here the pair, surrounded by Free State troops, were photographed by an American reporter after they landed at a small airstrip in Carlow. (New York Tribune, August 30, 1923).

SOURCE: DUN LAOGHAIRE RATHDOWN LOCAL STUDIES

William T. Cosgrave. In August 1923, Cohalan sailed to Ireland to assist Cosgrave in the election campaign of that year. Upon his arrival in Dún Laoghaire Harbour (formally known as Kingstown), Desmond Fitzgerald, the Irish Minister for External Affairs formed part of the official welcoming party. After Cohalan and his family had checked into the nearby prestigious Royal Marine Hotel,

President Cosgrave paid a courtesy visit. General Richard Mulcahy, the Irish Minister for Defence and Attorney General Hugh Kennedy also visited the hotel, thus underlining Cohalan's importance in the eyes of the Free State government.



Extracts from Cosgrave's letter to Cohalan, July 12, 1924. President Cosgrave's letter refers to the recent Army Crisis which threatened the stability of the new state. This involved a mutiny by Irish Army officers complaining about rapid army demobilization after the Civil War. Minister Joe McGrath resigned in support of the officers. Cohalan, who was friendly with McGrath, unsuccessfully tried to mediate in the dispute and later criticized Cosgrave's actions. However, he still maintained his support for the Free State and helped to facilitate Cosgrave's official visit to New York in 1928.

SOURCE: AMERICAN IRISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The letter reads:

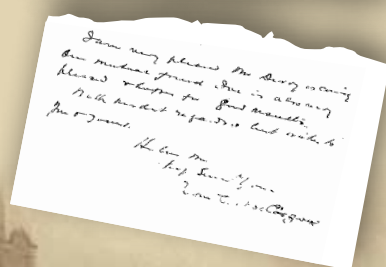
My Dear Judge,

Mr Dunhois (?) visit gave me the opportunity of writing you. We have had a big task here since I last saw you. On paper it is impossible to describe what has taken place. Needless to say, it was a most painful road. Our only consolation now is that the worst is over and things are shaping better. We are in a normal atmosphere again. It was a big crisis - the army crisis and please God it is the last of our difficulties.

I am very pleased Mr Devoy is coming. Our mutual friend Joe [Joseph McGrath] is also very pleased and hopes for good results.

Very Sincerely Yours

Wm T. Cosgrave



FOR WIRELESS SEND TO THE EDITOR, 'ELECTION TIMES', 10, WINDMILL LANE, DUBLIN.

ELECTION ITEMS.

Mr. de Valera will appear at Ennis on Wednesday. The hours of polling will be from 9 a.m. till 7 p.m.

The Labour Party hope to secure about 20 or 30 seats.

Mr. de Valera will speak at a public meeting on Sunday next in Rockville street, Dublin.

Saturday, August 25, is the last day for the nomination. Polling takes place on Monday, 27th August.

The Republican Party's agents say they are confident that at least the majority of their candidates will be returned.

It is quite possible that an candidate whose name are being published in the newspapers were not to be returned.

The candidates' nomination paper shows most of the names of the returning officers of the Dáil.

It is announced that five or six women candidates are standing in the Dáil for the North Dublin, and the name of Mrs. Noel O'Donovan who has received good service as a member of the Dublin Board of Guardians, is mentioned.

The presence of Judge Cohalan, of the New York Supreme Court, at the meeting of College Green on Sunday last strength to the cause for which the Government of the Free State are contending, for he is a man of considerable influence in Anglo-American politics.

The Public Business Meeting and public meeting in support of their Free candidates for the next election took place last Thursday afternoon in the Engineers Institute Hall, Edward street. The attendance was so large as the room could accommodate, and the representatives of every side of city business.

Some excitement was caused at a meeting at St. Peter's, addressed by Dr. Eoin MacNeill, when an interrupter, who was previously warned by the Chairman, was approached by a man in the crowd, who produced a revolver. Words were exchanged, and the interrupter was removed by two members of the Civil Guard.

JUDGE COHALAN'S VISIT TO IRELAND.

Judge D. F. Cohalan, of the New York Supreme Court, arrived at Kingstown by the mail boat on Saturday evening. Judge Cohalan was officially received on the Curlew Pier on behalf of the Government by Mr. Desmond Fitzgerald, Minister for External Affairs, and by Mr. Desmond Lynch.

They accompanied him to the Royal Marine Hotel, at Kingstown, where Judge Cohalan and Mrs. Cohalan and their daughter and two sons, who have accompanied him, will stay for the present.

At the hotel Judge and Mrs. Cohalan were met by a party of courtesy by President Cosgrave, General Mulcahy, and Mr. Hugh Kennedy, Attorney-General.

Irish Times report on Daniel Cohalan's visit to Dun Laoghaire in August 1923. In its other report, 'Election Times', the paper notes the presence of Cohalan at a pro-government election rally in Dublin's College Green.

SOURCE: IRISH TIMES, AUGUST 18, 1923

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The Roaring 20s

In August 1924 the family visited Ireland for their usual summer vacation in Glandore but this time the journey was tinged with great sadness. Madge's only daughter Joan, who was six years old, had died from diphtheria just a few months earlier. As Cohalan, pointed out in a letter to Cosgrave prior to his departure to Ireland, Joan's death 'was a great blow to us'.



The Cohalan family on board the ship Adriatic bound for Ireland in August 1924.

Left to right: Conn, Kathleen, Daniel, Madge, Dan Junior, and Florence.

SOURCE: LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.

From the mid-1920s Cohalan focused more and more of his attention on American affairs. In an interview for the *Cork Examiner* (July 28, 1926) he noted 'How Ireland had completely disappeared from the newspapers and in a large way from the public thought of America'. Nonetheless, he still maintained an interest in the economic development of Ireland and he continually pressed Cosgrave and his contacts in Ireland including former minister Joe McGrath, to develop a tourist trade.

In his professional life, Cohalan resigned from his State Supreme Court judicial position in 1924 citing a desire to return to private practice. Given the booming economy, his practice prospered during the roaring 20s. Cohalan also submitted articles to the press on a variety of current social topics. In an article which he submitted to the *American Monthly* magazine (March 1930), Cohalan, though a teetotaler himself, condemned the impact of the Eighteenth Amendment which had introduced prohibition ten years earlier. Cohalan asked:



New York Deputy Police Commissioner John A. Leach watches prohibition agents pour 'hard liquor' into a sewer following a raid during the prohibition era of the 1920s. Cohalan spoke out against prohibition.

SOURCE: LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

Is it an exaggeration to say that it has set the country by the ears; clogged the courts; filled the jails and diverted from the public revenue, into the pockets of bootleggers and high-jackers colossal sums almost equal to the entire Federal income tax.

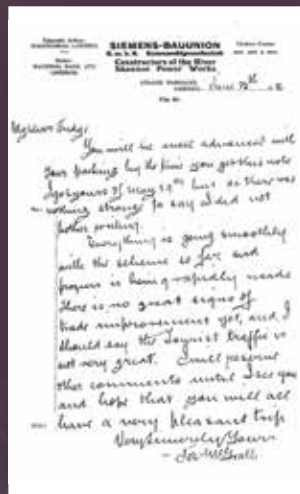
Daniel Cohalan supported Democratic candidate New York Governor Al Smith in the campaign for the presidency in 1928. Smith was the first American Catholic to run for the Presidency and Cohalan condemned the anti-Catholic religious bigotry that surfaced during the campaign. This was undoubtedly a factor in Smith's defeat though the buoyant American economy of the 1920s also favored another Republican victory.

Paradoxically, Smith's defeat in the 1928 election created an unexpected opportunity for Cohalan. According to the *New York World-Telegram* (August 21, 1931), Smith's presidential defeat undermined his standing in local New York politics and paved the way for Cohalan to 'mastermind' the rise of Irish-born John F. Curry to the leadership of Tammany in 1929. Once in office, Curry selected Cohalan as his special advisor and strategist and according to this newspaper report: 'The Cohalan sign was up again at Tammany after sixteen years'.



Al Smith, the Democratic Party candidate during the election campaign of 1928.

SOURCE: LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.



Letter from Joseph McGrath to Cohalan, June 23, 1926. After his resignation from government, McGrath was employed as an advisor by the German Siemens Company who were then engaged in building a massive hydroelectric plant on the Shannon River at Ardnacrusha in County Clare. This scheme was lauded in the *Gaelic American* as an illustration of the benefits of self-government. At this time, Cohalan continually pressed the Irish government to develop a tourist 'traffic' though with little success.

SOURCE: AMERICAN IRISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY. SOME OF JOE MCGRATH'S PAPERS ARE ALSO MAINTAINED DÚN LAOGHAIRE RATHDOWN LOCAL STUDIES, DLR LEXICON LIBRARY, DÚN LAOGHAIRE.

The letter reads as follows:

My dear Judge,

You will be well advanced with your packing by the time you get this note. I got yours of May 19th but as there was nothing strange to say I did not bother writing. Everything is going fine with the scheme so far and progress is being rapidly made. There are no great signs of trade improvement yet and I should say the tourist traffic is not very great.

I will preserve other comments until I see you and hope that you have a pleasant trip.

Very Sincerely Yours,

Joe McGrath

Crowds gather outside the New York Stock Exchange in 1929 following the collapse in share prices. This signalled the beginning of the Great Depression which would continue until the late 1930s.

SOURCE: LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

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THE GREAT DEPRESSION AND

President Roosevelt



Daniel Cohalan's legal practice took on some high-profile cases in the 1920s. In 1929 Cohalan acted as an attorney for William B. Shearer, a lobbyist for American shipbuilders who was called before the Senate to answer corruption charges.

SOURCE: LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.

In 1934, John F. Curry's term ended as Tammany Hall leader thus terminating Cohalan's advisory role. Cohalan still had political connections and in 1934 he secured an appointment as a Judicial Referee on the New York State Supreme Court. This position had less responsibility than that of a Supreme Court justice. It still ensured an adequate income during the years of the Great Depression though not to the same

level as he would have earned in private practice during the prosperous 1920s. Reflecting this fall in income, the Cohalans moved house to an apartment on East 82nd Street in 1935.

Despite his lifelong membership of the Democratic Party, Cohalan was deeply critical of President Franklin Roosevelt who took office in 1932. In this regard, Daniel Cohalan seemed out of step with most Irish-American New Yorkers who supported Roosevelt in vast numbers. This included members of his family. His brother John P. Cohalan sometimes visited the Roosevelt residence in Hyde Park, New York.

Cohalan's criticism partly stemmed from Roosevelt's successful attempt to block Cohalan's nomination to the State senate in 1911. However, there were other factors behind Cohalan's opposition. He opposed Roosevelt's popular New Deal response to the Great Depression which then ravaged the United States. In a WZB radio interview in 1936, he compared Roosevelt's public works projects to the 'collectivist policies' pursued by some of the European dictators of the time. (Reported in *New York Herald Tribune*, June 22, 1936). Cohalan also allied with Al Smith at the 1936 Democratic Convention in an appeal to delegates to stop Roosevelt's re-nomination as a Presidential candidate. This attempt failed.



Cohalan maintained a close friendship with Republican Senator William Borah of Idaho who was chairman of the powerful Senate Foreign Relations Committee during President Hoover's administration, 1928-1932. Borah was a well-known isolationist.

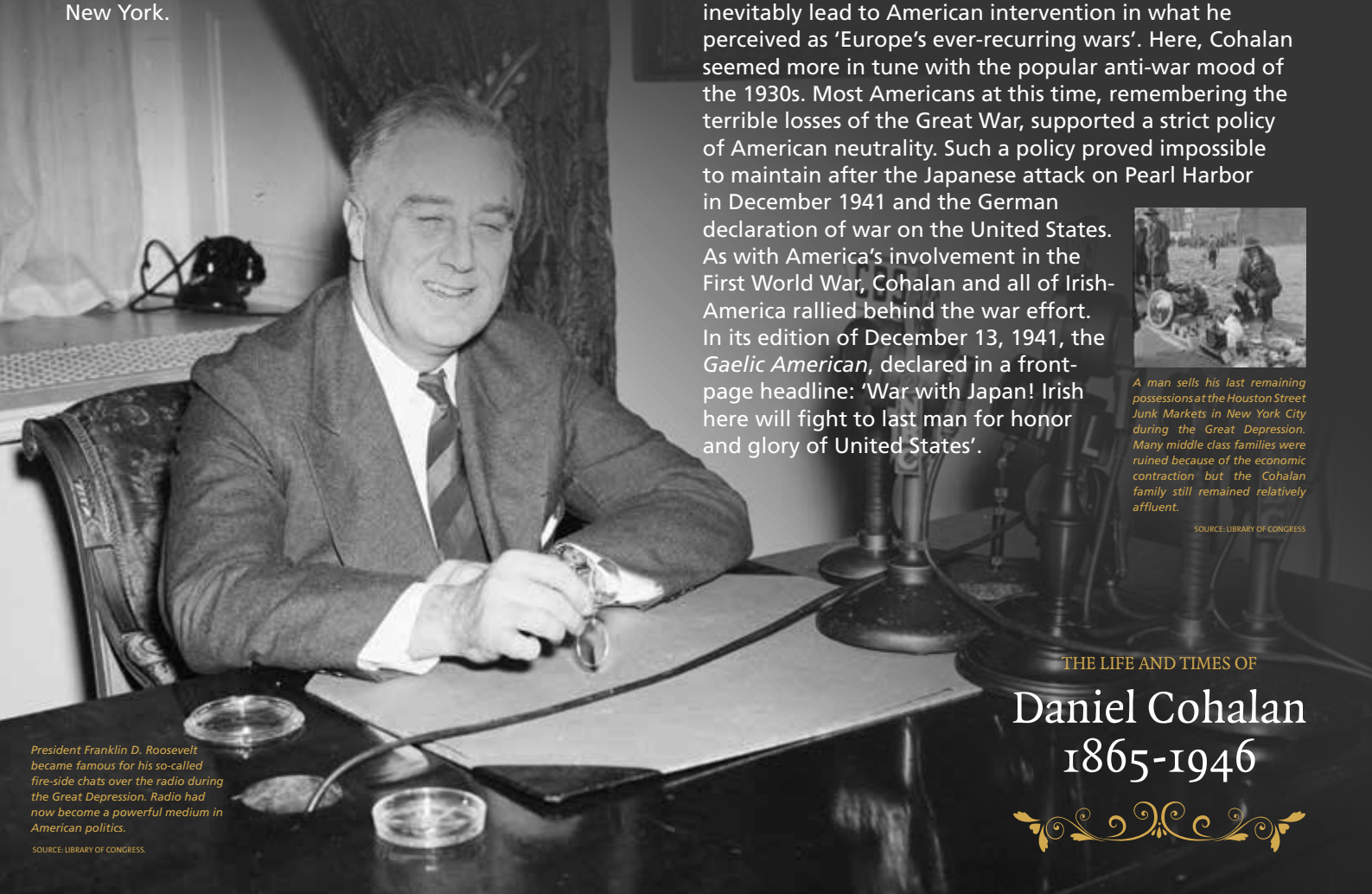
SOURCE: LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.

Daniel Cohalan also opposed Roosevelt's pro-British foreign policy in the 1930s. He believed that this would inevitably lead to American intervention in what he perceived as 'Europe's ever-recurring wars'. Here, Cohalan seemed more in tune with the popular anti-war mood of the 1930s. Most Americans at this time, remembering the terrible losses of the Great War, supported a strict policy of American neutrality. Such a policy proved impossible to maintain after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941 and the German declaration of war on the United States. As with America's involvement in the First World War, Cohalan and all of Irish-America rallied behind the war effort. In its edition of December 13, 1941, the *Gaelic American*, declared in a front-page headline: 'War with Japan! Irish here will fight to last man for honor and glory of United States'.



A man sells his last remaining possessions at the Houston Street Junk Markets in New York City during the Great Depression. Many middle class families were ruined because of the economic contraction but the Cohalan family still remained relatively affluent.

SOURCE: LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.



President Franklin D. Roosevelt became famous for his so-called fire-side chats over the radio during the Great Depression. Radio had now become a powerful medium in American politics.

SOURCE: LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF

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THE SQUIRE OF

Glandore

Despite the demands on his time as both a professional lawyer and Tammany politician, Daniel and his family still found time to visit their beloved summer home in Glandore. These trips continued into the late 1930s. This suggests that the Cohalan family lived a relatively comfortable lifestyle during the Great Depression when most New Yorkers struggled to make ends meet. Cohalan's long absences away from New York drew comment from the New York media. Forrest Davis, writing for the *New York World-Telegram* (August 21, 1931), amusingly referred to Cohalan as 'The Squire of Glandore', and waxed lyrical about Cohalan's 'yearly pilgrimages' to Ireland.

Cohalan who helped fight an Empire with plot and counter-plot, manifestoes, smuggled arms, liberty funds and all the purple trappings of revolution, meditates in his semi-tropical gardens high on a headland outside the thatched town of Skibbereen.



In 1930, Aileen Cohalan, known to the family as Coco, joined the Sacred Heart Order in Kenwood, Albany in upstate New York. She inherited her father's love of Ireland and taught languages in Dublin in Mount Anville Convent and in a nearby school in Monkstown from 1953 to 1959. She then returned to the United States. SOURCE: COHALAN FAMILY RECORDS.

While in Ireland, Cohalan refrained from commenting on Irish politics. His old adversary, Éamon de Valera had become the leader of the Irish government in 1932 and his advice would not have been appreciated. He was, in any case, more preoccupied by American and international affairs at this point in his life.

In his final years, Cohalan maintained a deep attachment to the Catholic faith. He attended the Eucharistic Congress in Dublin in 1932 and in 1938, Pope Pius XI granted him an audience at Castel Gandolfo in Rome in recognition of his work in defending the Catholic Church in the United States. His daughter Aileen became a Sacred Heart nun in 1930 and his sons Patrick and Florence became priests in the 1930s. Florence became a Monsignor and later wrote *A Popular History of the Archdiocese of New York* (1983).



Taken from the files of the Southern Star newspaper. Daniel Cohalan, Jim Burke, then editor of the Southern Star, and Florence Cohalan in the grounds of Glandore House in the summer of 1933. In January 1933, Burke had been elected as a Cumann na nGaedheal TD (Teachta Dála) to the Irish Dáil representing the constituency of Cork West.

SOURCE: THE SOUTHERN STAR CENTENARY EDITION 1989.

In the mid-1930s, Cohalan and his family ceased their visits to Ireland and his health appeared to have deteriorated at this time. After the Second World War had ended, his wife handled the negotiations for the sale of Glandore House which was an indication of his failing health. This ended the family's legal link to Ireland though the emotional links remained for succeeding

generations. The house was sold to the Sacred Heart Order and according to the *Southern Star*, functioned as a Novitiate for the training of Catholic nuns until its sale to a private buyer in 1999. Daniel Cohalan's final years were wracked with illness and he spent his last months in St Luke's Hospital in New York City. He died on November 12, 1946 surrounded by family and friends and was buried in Calvary Cemetery in Queens County, New York.



Daniel, Madge, Bishop Daniel Cohalan of Cork and Florence. Glandore House. Bishop Cohalan was Daniel's cousin.

SOURCE: THE SOUTHERN STAR CENTENARY EDITION 1989.



Cohalan family in the late 1920s. Back row, left to right: Conn, Dan junior, Daniel, Patrick, and Florence. Front row: Aileen, Madge and Kathleen.

SOURCE: COHALAN FAMILY RECORDS

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF

Daniel Cohalan
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Irish-American Legacy



The American Irish Historical Society on 5th Avenue opposite the 'Met'. Cohalan's voluminous set of papers are stored here and they continue to provide a rich source of information for scholars and historians.

SOURCE: THE AMERICAN IRISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

Daniel Cohalan spent most of his adult life in New York City and he was deeply immersed in the city's politics and society. Yet he always

retained a keen interest in the welfare of Ireland and the Irish community in the United States. This was noted in his obituary in the *New York Times* (November 26, 1946) shortly after his death:

It may come as a surprise to some who knew that Daniel Cohalan visited Ireland as often as he could, spoke Gaelic and was a leader of the Irish in this country, that he was born not in the 'Ould Sod' but in Middletown, Orange County, N.Y., the son of an Irish born-citizen.



In this 1941 photograph, Daniel is flanked by Justice John P. Cohalan (1873-1950) left, and Justice Denis O'Leary Cohalan (1883-1957) on his right. This is the only time in New York history that three brothers served together on the New York State Supreme Court.

SOURCE: COHALAN FAMILY RECORDS.

A study of the life and times of Daniel Cohalan is important in its own right, given his prominence in Irish, Irish-American and New York history. Yet the story of the life of any individual should be more than an account of his or her achievements or failures. It can also tell us much about the society in which that individual lived.

At the time of Cohalan's birth in 1865 in Middletown, the United States had just emerged from a devastating Civil War and was regarded by the other great powers of Europe as somewhat of a backwater in terms of its influence on international affairs. The United States was culturally Protestant and slowly adjusting to the vast influx of Catholic Irish immigrants which would dramatically alter the ethnic and religious composition of cities such as New York.



Peter Fox Cohalan and his son Pierce Cohalan. Peter Fox is a great nephew of Daniel Cohalan and has assisted greatly with this exhibition. Since the early twentieth century down to the present day, the Cohalan family have made a remarkable contribution to New York's judiciary and New York's legal profession Peter Fox Cohalan born in 1938, served as a New York State Supreme Court Justice during the period 1987-2012 while his son Pierce Fox Cohalan born in 1967, is currently a Suffolk County District Court Judge since 2015. Peter Fox's father, John P. Cohalan, Jr. (1907-1988) also served as a NYS Supreme Court Justice, 1963-83. There have been thirteen lawyers named Cohalan in New York State over four generations since the 1890s.

SOURCE: COHALAN FAMILY RECORDS

By the time of Daniel Cohalan's death in 1946, the 'American Century' (a phrase coined by publisher Henry Luce of *Time-Life-Magazine* in 1941), was well underway. The United States, having secured victory in the Second World War, had become a global superpower and was in no mood to return to its isolationist past. The Catholic Irish ethnic group was also much more accepted within American Society though it would be another fourteen years before America elected its first Irish Catholic President, John F. Kennedy.

Daniel Cohalan, ever a man of action, sometimes challenged and sometimes encouraged these developments. However, there is no doubting the significant role he played in the history of the Irish community in New York during a critical phase in both Irish and American history. Long after his death, later generations of the Cohalan family would continue to play a vital role in the religious, political and judicial life of the city.



This photograph of US warships in New York Harbor, on Navy Day, October 27, 1945, symbolized American global power in 1945.

SOURCE: NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE US NAVY, WIKIMEDIA COMMONS.