

JOHNSON COUNTY, Iowa – March 1918

*(Obituary of grandfather of Mary C.
Donohoe Lyons-Mrs. William F. Lyons)*

MICHAEL DONOHUE, NATIVE OF IRELAND, CALLED TO ETERNAL REWARD

Michael Donohue of Iowa City, Iowa died at His home Monday morning March 18, 1918. With his passing, Johnson County loses another of its pioneers. Born in [Castletown Geoghegan] West Meath, Ireland in 1834, 83 years ago last September, he immigrated to the land of opportunity coming to Cincinnati in his early teens.

Feeling that the field of his activities lay yet to the West he started down the Ohio River arriving finally in New Orleans. After a temporary stay in the southern city he came north starting in to farm near Monmouth, Illinois. Here his mother died. About the time Mr. Donohue reached the age of 19, a part of the trials of the faithful sons of Old Erin in the new land of the middle west in those days is apparent in that in order that the last sacraments of Holy Catholic Church be brought to his mother, he rode horseback to Burlington, Iowa a distance of 28 miles for a priest. Upon her death he removed to Iowa City driving overland to Muscatine, Iowa where he farmed across the Mississippi river. At Iowa City he and Ellen Peters, likewise born in Ireland coming from Tipperary, were

married in the holy bonds of matrimony by Father Mitchiel April 20, 1856. He was privileged to witness during his span of years a transitory from the practically primeval forest to the splendid prosperity of the state prevailing in the waning years of his life. He was in Iowa City to welcome the entrance of what is now the C. R. I. & P. Ry.

During the time which elapsed from that epochal date in Iowa City's history and the westward extension of the same lines, he aided in the transportation of merchandise from this western limit of railroad service to Des Moines, Fort Dodge and such points, bringing back on his return, now an order of grain and again some other product of sparsely settled western Iowa. And he has said that he hauled into Cedar Rapids the first load of pine lumber that came to that city.

Upon designation of Des Moines as the capital of Iowa instead of Iowa City, he assisted in the removal of the state records to their new home. When the railroad was projected westward from Iowa City, he undertook and completed some of the grading near Oxford.

Not the least of his usefulness was contributed to the welfare and progress of Holy Church in this new country of his adoption. Like all true sons of Ireland he brought to his new home the splendid legacy of a very deep love for the "Faith of Our Fathers". In the Nolan Settlement he assisted in the building of three churches.

And his pioneer wagon assisted in the building of St. Mary's church in Iowa City, hauling much of the rock for the foundation from Solon, Iowa. It grieves us deeply as one by one, these old Catholic pioneers are taken from this "veil of tears" into eternity, for they builded well both for church and state, so well, indeed, that should we who are taking up their labors where they lay them down, do as well as they, then great indeed must be our reward.

Three children preceded Mr. Donohoe in death. They were: Ellen (Sister Mary Emma, B.V.M.), Michael, who died in infancy, and Margaret Lynch. Those surviving are **James A. [father of Mary C. Donohoe Lyons-Mrs. William F.]**, living near Yankton, South Dakota; Mrs. John Beecher, Dougherty, Iowa; Sister Mary Basilian, B.V.M., St. Joseph's Academy, Des Moines; Mrs. John J. Ryan of Monmouth, Illinois., and Mrs. Johanna Beecher, Mrs. Thomas Cusack, John H. and Katherine, all of Iowa City.

End of obituary.