

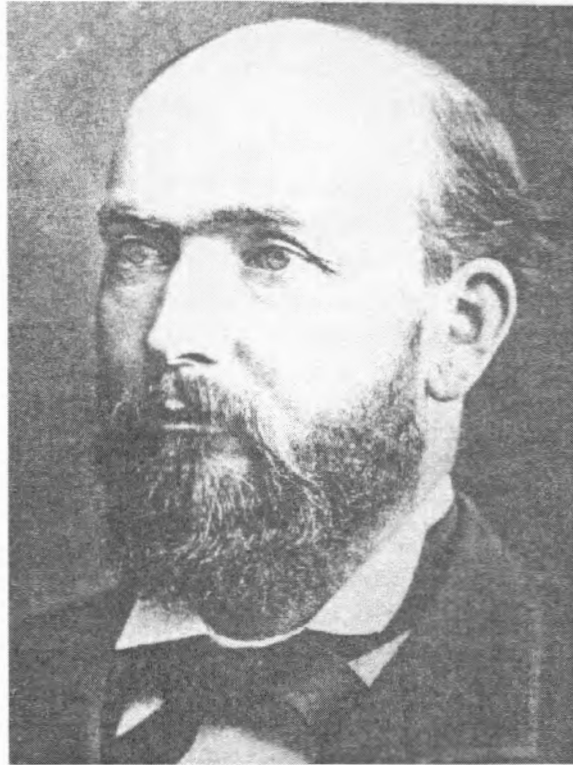
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Januarius MacGahan (Courtesy of Malissa Marolt, Perry Co. District Library)

Liberator and Hero of Two Continents: Januarius Aloysius MacGahan

by J. Michael Finn, State Historian
Ancient Order of Hibernians

One of the many interesting and exciting persons to emerge from Perry County, Ohio was Januarius Aloysius MacGahan. He is known to history as the Liberator of Bulgaria. Few, however, are familiar with how or why this title became affixed to MacGahan. This article will review that portion of MacGahan's varied life

and will attempt to put into perspective the world politics that allowed him to acquire it.

MacGahan was born on June 12, 1844, on a farm located on what was known as Pigeon Roost Ridge, three miles southwest of New Lexington in Perry County, Ohio. (For a detailed study of

his early family life see the *Bulletin*, Vol. XIV, No. 9, September, 1989.) MacGahan grew up to be well educated, with aspirations of teaching school in Perry County. When a teaching job was denied him, he left Perry County and moved to Huntington, Indiana and later to St. Louis where he worked as a bookkeeper and as a writer for local newspapers. In St. Louis, possibly through his brother William, he met General Philip Sheridan, a former resident of Perry County. Sheridan liked MacGahan and may have encouraged him to leave for Europe to study.

In 1869 MacGahan left for Belgium where he began the study of languages and law. He also became a regular foreign correspondent for the *New York Herald*. It is possible that General Sheridan may have had a hand in recommending MacGahan to the *Herald's* fiery editor, James Gordon Bennett. In 1870 MacGahan reported on the Franco-Prussian War. After the defeat of France, MacGahan found himself the only foreign correspondent in Paris, where he reported on the revolutionary government of the Paris Commune. He was imprisoned and then released with the intervention of the American ambassador. Relocating to Russia in 1871, he became the St. Petersburg correspondent for the *Herald*. In 1872 he reported on the travels of General William Tecumseh Sherman (another Ohio native) through the Caucasus Mountains.

While in Russia with General Sherman he met Varvara (Barbara) Nicholavna Elaguine and they were married in Paris on January 22, 1873 (the evidence that a marriage took place, however, is scant). In January, 1873 the Russians refused him permission to accompany their military expedition against the Asian city of Khiva in Uzbekistan. In defiance, he made a remarkable 400-mile journey across the Kyzil-Kum Desert, joining up with the Russian army at Khiva and witnessing the attack and fall of that walled city. MacGahan's perilous journey across the desert, while being chased by Cossacks, made him a

local hero among the Russian population, who called him "Molodyetz" (brave fellow).

MacGahan returned to Europe in 1874 and published a book about his experiences in Central Asia titled *Campaigning on the Oxus and the Fall of Khiva*. From July 1874 until April 1875 he was in Spain reporting on the operations of the Carlists. In June 1875 he sailed with Sir Allan Young on board the *Pandora* for the Arctic in search of the lost expedition of Sir John Franklin. MacGahan published his arctic experiences in his book *Under the Northern Lights*. MacGahan then found himself back in Europe. He also found himself in conflict with his *New York Herald* editor, James Gordon Bennett. Bennett was angry with MacGahan for, in Bennett's opinion, failing to give Bennett and the *Herald* sufficient credit in his book on Khiva. This split would help to set the stage for MacGahan's next reporting adventure in Bulgaria.

Political Background

The lingering political effects of the Crimean War in 1853 and the Franco-Prussian War in 1870 had left most European countries looking for alliances, influence, and additional territory. In 1875 England became a major shareholder in the Suez Canal. The canal gave England freer access to India and Southeast Asia via the Mediterranean.

Russia was England's chief competitor for influence and territory. Russia was worried about English encroachment on several fronts. An alliance among England, Germany, and Austria was hedging in Russian territory in Eastern Europe. In addition, Russia was watching England's advances in India. Russia feared possible encroachment on its Central Asian territories.

Russia was prepared to curb any advances by England into Central Asia. With their victory

over Khiva, Russia now controlled all of Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, which they hoped would block any possible English incursion from northern India, Afghanistan, or Persia (Iran). Russia also had serious designs on Afghanistan and India as possible territories in the event England was distracted elsewhere.

Then there was the Ottoman Empire, taking up most of southeastern Europe. Ruled by Turkey, this Islamic empire was composed of the Balkan states of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia, Albania, Macedonia, Romania, and Bulgaria. Turkish rule in these areas was harsh, particularly for members of the Slavic Christian communities. Russia was very interested in gaining influence in the Balkans with the goal of creating a Pan-Slavic nation that would be under Russian control. However, Russia feared the intervention of England and her European allies in response to any overt action against the Ottoman Empire. For the moment, at least, Russia kept its Pan-Slavic aspirations in check.

The conservative Prime Minister of England was Benjamin Disraeli. He was anxious to maintain good relations with the Ottoman Empire. England had recently defeated Russia in the Crimean War (1853) in order to preserve the Ottoman Empire. The usefulness of the Ottoman Empire to England was that it prevented Russia from having direct access to the Mediterranean. What the English feared most was the possibility of a Russian port on the Mediterranean, from which naval forces could block England's access to the Suez Canal. Disraeli's conservative government would surely intervene if Turkey or its interests were attacked.

The Bulgarian Atrocities

Turkish rule in the Balkan states was starting to unravel. The Serbians revolted and Turkey sent in troops to quell the rebellion. At the same time, a similar revolt started among the Christians in Bulgaria. Turkey formed an irregular military

unit known as the Bashi-Bazouks and sent them into Bulgaria with orders to put down the rebellion. The actions of this undisciplined force gave new meaning to the word brutality. Bulgarian men, women and children were massacred in staggering numbers and in the most horrible ways imaginable. It has been estimated that the Turkish force killed over 25,000 Bulgarians, only a small number of whom were actually involved in the rebellion.

Rumors of the atrocities by the Turks reached Europe. In England, the Disraeli government promptly labeled the reports as false. "Mere coffee house babble" was how Disraeli portrayed the rumors. Hearing the reports in Paris, MacGahan contacted James Gordon Bennett and requested the assignment to go to Bulgaria and report the facts. Bennett refused, likely due to their conflict over the *Khiva* book, and MacGahan promptly resigned his position with the *New York Herald*. MacGahan then contacted the liberal *London Daily News*. They immediately accepted his offer and in July of 1876 MacGahan left for Bulgaria. Joining him was his friend, Eugene Schuyler, the American consul in Constantinople. In going to Bulgaria, MacGahan defied a Turkish order banning all reporters and correspondents.

Upon his arrival in Bulgaria, MacGahan found that rumors of the atrocities were true. He sent dispatches to the *Daily News* that described in graphic detail the horrors he witnessed. The most horrendous reports were from the village of Batak, where he interviewed the survivors of the Turkish massacre that killed over 5,000 peasants. Ambassador Schuyler confirmed MacGahan's searing revelations in his official report.

Back in England, MacGahan's dispatches were printed in the *Daily News*. Disraeli continued to label the reports of Turkish atrocities as false. Official British reaction even implied that

MacGahan's Irish and American ancestry might have had something to do with the exaggeration of the reports. But Eugene Schuyler's confirmation of the atrocities in his official report could be neither dismissed nor discredited.

Disraeli's chief political opponent was the liberal William Gladstone. Gladstone made much of the Turkish atrocities and questioned the government's involvement with Turkey. He published a pamphlet in September 1876 called *Bulgarian Horrors of the East*. Inspired by MacGahan's articles, the pamphlet sold 50,000 copies. Gladstone wrote, "Let the Turks now carry away their abuses in the only possible manner, namely by carrying away themselves." As a result, people around the world continued to debate the Eastern Question. Public opinion in England swung to support Gladstone's anti-Turkish position. Disraeli offered to resign and dissolve his government.

All this political fuss in England did not go unnoticed in Russia. With the English government in crisis over the Turkish issue, Russia believed that now was the time to make their move into the Balkans. On the pretext of rescuing the people of Bulgaria from the Turkish oppressors, on April 24, 1877 Russia declared war on the Ottoman Empire and the Russo-Turkish War was underway. England, because of its political crisis and lack of popular support for Turkey, was forced to stand aside.

MacGahan, who had left Bulgaria for Russia, now returned with the Russian Army led by Tsar Alexander II and by Grand Duke Nicholas Nikolayevich. The Bulgarians hailed both MacGahan and Tsar Alexander as their liberators.

The war initially went well for the Russians until they reached Plevna. The Turkish Army under the command of Osman Pasha dug in at the Bulgarian city of Plevna and the Russians laid

siege to the city. Armed with American repeating rifles, the Turks beat back the Russian attackers. The first siege of Plevna proved a defeat for the Russians but during a second siege the Russians were successful in cutting the Turkish supply lines. An attempted breakout by the Turks was thwarted. After five months of fierce fighting, Plevna fell to the Russian force on December 10, 1877. Russia was now free to cross the Balkans, take Sophia and Adrianople, and threaten the city of Constantinople. In England, Disraeli's worries were now compounded by the very real possibility that the entire Ottoman Empire could fall into Russian hands.

Although it was MacGahan's articles on Turkish atrocities that caused the English to stay out of the Russo-Turkish War, it may have been reporting by MacGahan and other war correspondents on the siege of Plevna that helped to bring the English into it. The "brave Turkish defenders of Plevna" became the popular heroes in England and the horrors of the Bashi-Bazouk atrocities were forgotten. Backed by English public opinion, on February 12, 1878 Disraeli ordered the English fleet to Constantinople. Russian soldiers were quartered at San Stefano, ten miles from Constantinople, while British warships were anchored less than fifty miles away. Peace hung in the balance until Turkey and Russia signed the Treaty of San Stefano on March 3, 1878. Among many concessions by Turkey, the treaty gave political autonomy to Bulgaria and ended Turkish rule in the Balkans. However, the English, Germans, and Austrians met later in Berlin and substantially reduced Russian gains with the Treaty of Berlin. Bulgaria still gained its autonomy, although it was reduced in size. Januarius MacGahan was viewed by the Bulgarian people as their Liberator and the one primarily responsible for their independence from Turkey.

(To be concluded)

**St. Margaret Cemeteries, Hackney, Morgan County, Ohio
Tombstone Readings of 1930, 1980, and 2001**

The stones in both the larger cemetery at the village of Hackney and the little cemetery on the knoll were read on June 14, 2001. This reading has been compared with those made by C. B. Ray about 1930 and Lois Blake about 1980.

Cemetery on the Knoll

Nancy dau of John & Mary Cahill, died Dec. 8, 1857 aged 31 years

Sacred to the memory of Bridget Magher alias Kennedy, who departed this life Sept. 26, 1842 in the 31st year of her age. May her soul rest in peace. Amen.

Sacred to the memory of Patrick Toohey who departed this life Oct. 17, 1835 in the 49th year of his age. [Perhaps 19th year. The stone is broken and reassembled through this line of text.]

Small markers with initials:

J.M.
R.M.
W.C.

Read c 1930 but not found in 2001:

John Maher
James Maher
Annie Waters
Three children of Dr. Kelly

St. Margaret Cemetery at Hackney

Rows have been numbered from west to east and read from north to south.

Row 1

Mary B. Lutgen, 17__ - 1862
[Ray read the birth year as 1791; and noted that Mary was Dolph Hook's great-grandmother and died near Stockport]



Cemetery on the Knoll

Francis, son of J. & C. Mulrine, died April 16, 1850, aged 6 yrs

Ellen, wife of John Bain, a native of the county Clare: Ireland, died Sep.29, 1858, aged 37 years

Row 2

Jas. O'Neill 1844-1921, gentleman

{John O'Neill, born in Co. Cork, Ireland, June, A.D. 1811, died Nov. 19, 1873, aged 63 Yrs 5 mo.

{Honora D., wife of John O'Neill, born in Baltimore, Md., March 3, 1818, died Jan. 4, 1873, aged 54 Years, 10 Months, 1 D.

{Requiescant in pace.

[Ray notes that Mrs. O'Neill was a daughter of John Duffy.]

Row 3

Margaret A., wife of Thomas Crane, died June 6, 1852 in the 32 year of her age. [poem]

Thomas O'Neill, died Nov. 21, 1870, aged 27 years, 6 mos., 14 days

Our mother + Susannah wife of Thomas Pedicord, died Feb. 5, 1884, aged 82 years

In memory of Mary, daug'tr of Thos and Susannah Pedicord, departed this life Feb. 4, 1848, in the 16 year of her age

In memory of Joseph, son of B. & L. Lowe, died Aug. 3, 1852, aged 1 y 7 m 6 d.

Row 4

Thomas Kennedy, a native of Ireland, county of Tipperary, died Dec. 30, 1847, aged 51 years, 8 months

Sacred to the memory of Ann Kennedy Alias Sherlock, wife of P. M. Kennedy, who departed this life October 6, 1853, in the 37th

year of her age. Also her babe six hours old. She leaves a loving husband and 3 children to mourn her loss. May her soul rest in peace. Amen.

In memory of James Kennedy, born in county Tipperary, Ireland, departed this life ["Dec. 4, 1847, aged 67 years." Read c 1930, now gone.]

Row 5

Erected by Martin Kennady in memory of his wife Alice Kennady, a native of Ireland & County of Tyrone, departed this life ["Dec. 8, 1849, aged 51 years." Read c1930, now gone.]

Sacred to the memory of Edward Pilkington, born in England, who departed this life Aug. 26, 1877, aged 55 Yrs, 4 Ms, & 17d. May he rest in peace. Amen.

Hannah, wife of Edward Pilkington, born Sept. 10, 1826, died Dec. 9, 1900, aged 74 years, 3 mos. May she rest in peace.

Edward Tague, died February 11, 1842 in his 45th year. Edward Tague came to America from Ireland in the year 1829. With him came his wife Rosannah McMullen Tague, two sons Peter Michael and a daughter Mary. He had two more daughters Ellen born in Penn. 1835 and Susan born in Ohio 1838. After coming from New York City NY to Ohio they settled in Watertown, Washington County, Ohio. After Edward Tague died the family moved to Perry County, Ohio the McLuny-Crooksville area. Rosannah Tague died April 25, 1849 and is buried at St. Josephs in Somerset Ohio, Perry County. This plaque was put in place in October 1993 by Edward Tague's great-great grandson Thomas G. Tague Sr. of 14577 Poplar - Southgate, Mich. 48195. [Edward was ancestor of the Fathers Tague of the Diocese of Columbus.]



Tombstones of Edward and Dennis Ryan

Denis Ryan, a native of Westmeath, Ireland, died Feb. 20, 1845, aged 49 years

Edward Ryan, a native of Westmeath, Ireland, died Jan. 7, 1847, aged 34 years

Ann, dau of D. & C. Ryan, died Nov. 12, 1834, aged 2 Yrs 2 Mos

Catherine, daughter of D. & C. Ryan, died July 25, 1849, aged 22 y's, 4 mo's

Row 6

Sacred to the memory of Mary F. Sherlock, born in Ireland June 15, 1811, died Mar. 27, 1897, aged 85 Y. 11 M. 12 D. May she rest in peace. Amen.

Sacred to the memory of Ann wife of Patrick Sherlock, born Queens Co. Ireland June 19, 1785, died Feb. 18, 1857, aged ____

Sacred to the memory of Patrick Sherlock, born Tipperary 1785 [broken off]

Sacred to the memory of Edward Sherlock, born in Tipperary Ireland Oct. 22, 1813, died

July 15, 1859, aged 43 Y 8 M 23 D. May he rest in peace. Amen.

Mary L. daughter of ____ & ____ Sherlock, born Mar. 8?, 1845 -, died Feb. 25, 1890

{Sacred to the memory of Martin Sherlock, born in Tipperary, Ireland, Nov., 11, 1805, died Oct. 11, 1874, aged 68 yrs. 11 mo. May he rest in peace. Amen.

{Ann D. wife of Martin Sherlock, 1806-1890

a tiny stone, inscription all buried

{SHERLOCK:

{May they rest in peace.

{James F. 1819-1882

{Rose A. his wife 1836-1908

{Three infant children

Row 7

a miniature obelisk, illegible except perhaps the age of 11 years.



Thomas Edward Sherlock tombstone

Row 8
Thomas Callaghan, died Oct. 8, 1849, Aged 64
Yrs 9 Mos. May he rest in peace.

Row 9
{SHERLOCK
{John P. 1833-1884
{Mary A. his wife 1845-1928
[Ray apparently read an older stone: John
Sherlock, died Dec. 19, 1884, aged 51 years,
10 mos, 4 days]

{HOOK
{Alice L. 1874-1949
{Dolph 1870-1938
{May their souls rest in peace.

Thomas Edward Sherlock, Nov. 4, 1943

{SHERLOCK
{1877 Fred 1961
{1886 Nellie 1958

James M. Sherlock, 1869-1947 May his soul
rest in peace.

Row 10
{Robert Molyneux Sr., born May 14, 1826,
died Dec. 19, 1906
{His wife Jane Molyneux, born Nov. 10, 1834,
died May 24, 1921
{A place is vacant in our hearts which never
can be filled.
[inside small fenced area]

Catharine, wife of Peter Magers, died Sep. 13,
1845, aged 45 y, 7 m 12 d.

Row 11
[The Pilington stones are inside the small
fenced area:]
Catherine wife of Rowland Pilkington, died
May 24, 1858 in the 58th year of her age. A
native of England.

Rowland Pilkington, a native of England, died
July 30, 1852 in the 59th year of his age.

{Henry, son of R. & C. Pilkington, died Jan.
22, 1842, aged 7 yrs, 3 mos, 14 days
{Margaret died Jan. 25, 1845, Æ 1 yr, 8 mos

{SHERLOCK
{John M. 1875-1967
{M. Oma 1883-1973

J. Edward Sherlock, 1919+1975

Read c 1930, not found in 2001:
George Bell, June 20, 1849, aged six years

James Dunlavey, died April 28, 1841, aged 39
years, he was a native of Ireland, Donegal
county

Rosanna McCune, Feb. 25, 1842
Geo. W. McCune
John S. McCune

Thomas Rice, a native of county Louth,
Ireland, died Aug. 31, 1843, aged 43 years

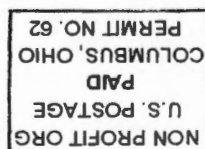
Read c 1980, not found in 2001:
Cora M. Sherlock

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