Research Brief

The Commonwealth's Official Source for Population and Economic Statistics

March 11, 2005

Irish-American Heritage Month (March) & St. Patrick's Day (March 17)

MIDDLETOWN, Pa – Although not an "official" holiday in the United States, St. Patrick's Day has a long history of being celebrated with parades and general goodwill for all things Irish. There are many parades scheduled throughout the state, including one in Harrisburg on Saturday, March 19 at 2:00 p.m.

The day commemorates St. Patrick, who introduced Christianity to Ireland in the fifth century. Because many Americans celebrate their Irish lineage on St. Patrick's Day, March was selected as Irish-American Heritage Month and proclaimed by Congress in 1995.

The Pennsylvania State Data Center at Penn State Harrisburg reports that data from Census 2000 shows that the total number of people who claimed a first ancestry of Irish in Pennsylvania was 1,241,584, or 10.1 percent of the state's population At the county level, Philadelphia County had the highest number of people who claimed a first ancestry of Irish, 150,216 while Delaware County had the highest percent of people who claimed Irish as their first ancestry, 21.4. Please note that in answering the question in regards to ancestry on the Census questionnaire, respondents were allowed to select multiple ancestries. There were also 1,595 people who claimed Celtic as their first ancestry in Pennsylvania. Table 1 provides data on those persons who reported a first ancestry of Irish or Celtic at the state and county level.

Some interesting facts about Pennsylvania and things Irish are:

- ♣ In 2002, Pennsylvania imported 16.7 million in goods from Ireland and exported 17.4 million in goods to the country.

- ♣ There are six localities in Pennsylvania named Irishtown, however the U.S. Census Bureau does not recognize these areas and no Census data is available for these geographies.

- ♣ On St. Patrick's Day, some Pennsylvania drinking establishments offer green-dyed beer to their thirsty patrons. However, the per-capita annual consumption of

PENNSTATE
1855 Harrisburg   Institute of State and Regional Affairs

beer and malt liquor among drinking-age Pennsylvania residents has declined to less than 23 gallons per person--the lowest consumption rate since 1947.

Table 1: First Ancestry Reported, Celtic and Irish, Pennsylvania Counties: 2000

County	Total Population	Total Who Reported a First Ancestry of:		Total Celtic and Irish	County	Total Population	Total Who Reported a First Ancestry of:		Total Celtic and Irish
		Celtic	Irish				Celtic	Irish	
Pennsylvania	**12,281,054**	**1,595**	**1,241,584**	**1,243,179**	Juniata	22,821	33	873	906
Adams	91,292	57	5,840	5,897	Lackawanna	213,295	27	39,309	39,336
Allegheny	1,281,666	160	137,746	137,906	Lancaster	470,658	23	26,313	26,336
Armstrong	72,392	0	4,701	4,701	Lawrence	94,643	7	7,443	7,450
Beaver	181,412	11	14,719	14,730	Lebanon	120,327	18	5,645	5,663
Bedford	49,984	2	2,629	2,631	Lehigh	312,090	18	20,472	20,490
Berks	373,638	14	21,666	21,680	Luzerne	319,250	14	37,303	37,317
Blair	129,144	0	11,758	11,758	Lycoming	120,044	38	7,806	7,844
Bradford	62,761	30	5,404	5,434	McKean	45,936	0	4,508	4,508
Bucks	597,635	148	99,179	99,327	Mercer	120,293	20	9,933	9,953
Butler	174,083	0	16,020	16,020	Mifflin	46,486	0	2,427	2,427
Cambria	152,598	2	12,230	12,232	Monroe	138,687	25	17,189	17,214
Cameron	5,974	0	516	516	Montgomery	750,097	94	107,226	107,320
Carbon	58,802	0	4,881	4,881	Montour	18,236	0	1,068	1,068
Centre	135,758	29	9,922	9,951	Northampton	267,066	81	19,775	19,856
Chester	433,501	72	66,572	66,644	Northumberland	94,556	5	5,909	5,914
Clarion	41,765	7	2,922	2,929	Perry	43,602	6	2,361	2,367
Clearfield	83,382	17	5,583	5,600	Philadelphia	1,517,550	183	150,216	150,399
Clinton	37,914	8	2,567	2,575	Pike	46,302	0	7,563	7,563
Columbia	64,151	14	4,530	4,544	Potter	18,080	0	1,277	1,277
Crawford	90,366	19	7,413	7,432	Schuylkill	150,336	16	16,871	16,887
Cumberland	213,674	11	16,514	16,525	Snyder	37,546	0	1,295	1,295
Dauphin	251,798	35	15,310	15,345	Somerset	80,023	2	3,652	3,654
Delaware	550,864	166	118,027	118,193	Sullivan	6,556	0	775	775
Elk	35,112	0	2,137	2,137	Susquehanna	42,238	7	5,053	5,060
Erie	280,843	62	22,828	22,890	Tioga	41,373	4	2,933	2,937
Fayette	148,644	6	12,503	12,509	Union	41,624	14	1,734	1,748
Forest	4,946	0	515	515	Venango	57,565	7	5,195	5,202
Franklin	129,313	0	6,893	6,893	Warren	43,863	0	3,429	3,429
Fulton	14,261	0	757	757	Washington	202,897	3	17,411	17,414
Greene	40,672	2	3,203	3,205	Wayne	47,722	0	6,306	6,306
Huntingdon	45,586	5	3,095	3,100	Westmoreland	369,993	43	28,769	28,812
Indiana	89,605	18	6,920	6,938	Wyoming	28,080	2	2,709	2,711
Jefferson	45,932	0	3,059	3,059	York	381,751	10	22,277	22,287

PENN STATE
Harrisburg 1855   Institute of State and Regional Affairs

Table 2: Foreign Born Population from Ireland, Pennsylvania Counties: 2000

County	Foreign Born Population				County	Foreign Born Population		
	Total	From Ireland	Percent from Ireland			Total	From Ireland	Percent from Ireland
Pennsylvania	**508,291**	**6,687**	**1.3**		Juniata	234	0	0.0
Adams	3,130	0	0.0		Lackawanna	4,833	126	2.6
Allegheny	48,266	591	1.2		Lancaster	15,037	129	0.9
Armstrong	492	3	0.6		Lawrence	1,261	0	0.0
Beaver	2,997	10	0.3		Lebanon	2,907	30	1.0
Bedford	291	2	0.7		Lehigh	19,331	118	0.6
Berks	16,032	126	0.8		Luzerne	6,171	75	1.2
Blair	1,310	0	0.0		Lycoming	1,407	5	0.4
Bradford	607	8	1.3		McKean	630	0	0.0
Bucks	35,442	354	1.0		Mercer	1,956	45	2.3
Butler	2,505	25	1.0		Mifflin	372	0	0.0
Cambria	1,935	2	0.1		Monroe	8,066	232	2.9
Cameron	34	0	0.0		Montgomery	52,152	764	1.5
Carbon	1,062	23	2.2		Montour	406	9	2.2
Centre	7,829	14	0.2		Northampton	12,227	115	0.9
Chester	23,770	361	1.5		Northumberland	1,056	12	1.1
Clarion	419	1	0.2		Perry	405	2	0.5
Clearfield	560	9	1.6		Philadelphia	137,205	1,359	1.0
Clinton	353	0	0.0		Pike	2,292	71	3.1
Columbia	913	7	0.8		Potter	201	0	0.0
Crawford	981	9	0.9		Schuylkill	1,500	30	2.0
Cumberland	6,923	50	0.7		Snyder	341	7	2.1
Dauphin	10,214	35	0.3		Somerset	581	0	0.0
Delaware	36,635	1,664	4.5		Sullivan	54	1	1.9
Elk	385	0	0.0		Susquehanna	543	5	0.9
Erie	7,706	40	0.5		Tioga	436	0	0.0
Fayette	837	0	0.0		Union	1,537	0	0.0
Forest	28	0	0.0		Venango	344	0	0.0
Franklin	2,632	20	0.8		Warren	378	0	0.0
Fulton	97	0	0.0		Washington	2,404	14	0.6
Greene	270	0	0.0		Wayne	1,447	49	3.4
Huntingdon	341	0	0.0		Westmoreland	5,277	54	1.0
Indiana	1,396	4	0.3		Wyoming	343	4	1.2
Jefferson	285	0	0.0		York	8,280	73	0.9

For additional information on Irish or any other ancestry within Pennsylvania, please contact the PaSDC at 717.772.2710.

PENNSTATE
1855
Harrisburg   Institute of State and Regional Affairs