

***History of «Blackrock» College
as part of the Irish History***

Project

9 «A»

Gymnasium «Radonezh»

Zbarskaya Lina

In Ireland, as in some other countries, there are many schools, colleges, and universities.

Furthermore, what role can they play in the history of the country, and in general, can schools, colleges, and universities have any significant impact on the history of the country? In this matter, we will try to understand, using one fascinating example.

Last July, I went to this country to improve my spoken English. Children of all ages from different countries, such as Russia, the Arab Emirates, Italy, the Czech Republic, China and Korea, come to Ireland to make new friends and also improve their English. Every day we spent two hours in the classrooms, studying the language. Irish teachers came to us from real schools and told us about the country, its history, myths, and traditional sports. Teachers did everything possible to mix children of the same nationality with children from other countries.

In addition to the classes, we had a lot of exciting excursions and activities, such as sports and workshops. I visited the “Butlers” factory and got to know how Irish chocolate is made; I went to the Cliffs of Moher (there were filming “Harry Potter”) and The Glendalough valley. There were the most beautiful mountains I have ever seen and a lake with very clear and transparent water.

All classes and activities organized in the college called” Blackrock college.” At usual times, Irish boys study there, and in summer, the college welcomes guests from abroad. This college was founded in 1860 by Pere Jules Leman. It occupies a vast territory, on which there are several educational buildings, a hostel, a football pitch, a dining room, and a church.

I became interested in the history of this college, and during the process of studying, I learned that many famous people had studied in Blackrock, and I wondered how one school, college, or university can influence the whole country.

About Blackrock college

The college is located 7 kilometres from Dublin city centre, near the sea.

Blackrock College first opened its doors on September 5th, 1860. The school was founded by Fr. Père Leman and the Congregation of the Holy Ghost Fathers.



Leman arrived in Ireland in 1859 to find candidates for the missions in Africa. Soon after arriving, Leman realised that it would be extremely difficult. At that time, Ireland and Irish people were still recovering from the impact of the famine, had little interest in what was happening abroad. Leman also found himself disappointed with the standard of education of those school leavers that put themselves forward.

In one of his early letters back to France, Leman wrote:

"Many have presented themselves, but few are suitable...the standard of studies in Ireland is low, and things are badly organised"

He quickly concluded that, if they sent Irish candidates abroad for missionary work, they would take the responsibility of educating them from an early age.

For the first time, Leman's idea of setting up a new school was opposed to Paris. They felt that the order had neither the money nor the men for that. Eventually, though, they gave an agreement to the founding of a college. Leman also had to convince the Archbishop of Dublin, Cardinal Cullen, to give his permission for the opening of a school. Cullen was generally opposed to foreign congregations opening houses in Dublin.

Leman and his colleagues struggled to find a suitable property and finally found Castledawson's house in the Blackrock area.

Firstly, the curriculum in Blackrock was to be similar to other Irish Catholic Schools at the time. So, the future college requested a copy of the curriculum in some of the best schools in Ireland. The own curriculum of the college declared:

*"The course of instructions will embrace the Latin, Greek, English, French, German and Italian languages, Ancient and Modern History and Geography, Cosmography, Mathematics, Book-Keeping and Commercial Correspondence, Botany, Zoology, Mineralogy, Music, Drawing and the various other branches of a liberal education."*¹

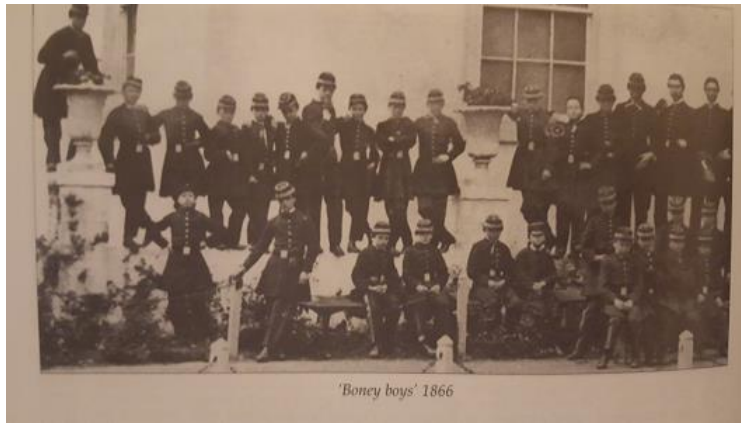
Leman's school was unique because it was a French college. Almost all the teachers there were French, and French was the language in daily use.

Boney boys

During the early days, Leman found that the discipline of the students was bad. He said:

"In France, all our habits smack of the military discipline that is part and parcel of the French character. Here all that is lacking and so it has to be formed."

¹ A History of Blackrock College. <https://blackrockcollegehistoryblog.wordpress.com/the-french-college/>



Leman introduced a French type of military uniform that people wore during the period of Napoleon III.

Locals called students in this uniform Boney Boys.

Despite the bad habits of the students, physical punishment was forbidden.

In Leman's time, there was no national system of education and public examination and French fathers needed to create rewards and motivation for students. Prize day was a grand event, which all the students were waiting.



Heraldry



The current school crest was first introduced in 1936 by the then President of the school, Dr. John Charles McQuaid. The crest shows an azure cross, on which is displayed the symbol of the Holy Ghost, the dove. There are seven golden rays near the dove, which typify the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost. In the left upper corner, there is a lion, which is a sign of faith. The white and blue coloring of the Arms is in devotion to Our Lady.

The Crest was designed by a heraldic artist Ms. Berthon Watters. It was immediately popular. The crest and the lion, in particular, is still a hugely valued symbol for today's students.



Pere Leman was committing the College to the care of Our Lady.

Fides et Robur

The college slogan: "Fides et Robur," meaning "Faith and Strength," was created by the president of the college, Fr. Edward Leen.

Schools anthem

*Rock boys are we,
Our title is our glory!
Fearless and bold,
Whatever the danger be.
Onward we go, to flinch or falter never.
Rock boys together,
The blue and white forever!*

Blackrock college now

Blackrock college now is run by the Congregation of the Holy Ghost.

All students in the college are divided into six houses - DeValera, Duff, Ebenrecht, Leman, McQuaid, and Shanahan - that compete through each of the years in house competitions and a points system².

The curriculum is covering all common subjects in the State Examinations, including Latin, German, Art, Music, Business, Materials Technology Wood, Science, and History. The Irish Times placed the College in the "Top Ten" schools in the state, based on the proportion of students who accept a place in Higher or Further Education³.

Also, students take part in many sports competitions, like swimming, rugby, Gaelic football, basketball, tennis, and cricket.

Many famous Irish people studied in Blackrock college. One of them was Eamon de Valera.

² Blackrock College – Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blackrock_College

³ Blackrock College – Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blackrock_College

Short History of Ireland

Ireland, Celts, and Christianity

The ancient Celts appeared in Ireland in the X-IX centuries BC. Already in the VII century BC, the island of Ireland lived according to the code of Celtic laws, which was called "Bregon." In some areas of Ireland, these laws were in force until the eighteenth century.

As a result of the conquest of Britain from the Romans, there was a Romanization of the Celts, as well as their first contact with Christianity. The first missionaries came to Ireland in the IV-V century. Among them was St. Patrick.

Ireland was a decentralized country, with a lot of local fights between the most influential clans in the country. Because of this essential feature, foreigners could not conquer it. The territory was divided into many parts that saved the country during the Viking attack.

Vikings (795-950)

The first Viking landing was in 796. They robbed settlements and destroyed monasteries. After several such raids, the Vikings headed inland, where their settlements soon appeared. The threat of the conquest of Ireland hung, but its fragmentation saved the country. The Irish people gave a severe rebuff to the Vikings. In 925, the barbarians captured Dublin. The Vikings ruled the country for the next several decades. After 950, the Vikings gradually stop their raids.

Modern historians argue about the influence of the Vikings on Ireland. Most of them believe that their invasion had an adverse effect on society and the church.

Not all Irish people humbled to Ireland's fragmentation. Many of the noblest families fought for the unification of the country under their leadership. Closest to the unification of Ireland came the O'Neil dynasty, which rose in Ulster. However, it did not do this as well good as the ancestor of the O'Brian dynasty, Brian Boru.

Brian Boru (951-1014)

Brian Boru rose to power during the times of traditional civil fights in the Irish kingdoms. The strifes did not stop even during the Viking raids. Boru's father died in 951, and after his death, Briand could call himself "the king of North Munster. Dynastic wars broke out between 940 and 970 years. The main rival of Boru was the O'Neil Dynasty. Boru ascended to the throne in typical for those times conditions. His brother was killed, and Brian's first action was revenge on the killers.

He accused Vikings of Limerick in this crime. King of Limerick and his sons (all of them were Christians) were forced to escape in the monastery. Despite the recognised right of any person who could be safe from pursuit in the church, Brian killed them and, moreover, he set fire to the church, where the fugitives escaped. In the legends about Boru, this story usually does not mention.

In the next few years, Bohr fought a lot with the O'Neil dynasty, conquering more and more new lands of Ireland. In 1014, in the battle of Clontarf, Brian Boru was killed, but his army won. After the death of Boru, Ireland could not exist as a united state, and in 1169-1300 the country was under British rule during the Norman Conquest.

Oliver Cromwell in Ireland

The fate of Catholic Ireland was decided by events in England in 1642-1649. Oliver Cromwell, Lord Protector of England, paid attention to Ireland. He set himself the task of introducing Protestantism throughout Ireland and restoring order.

Cromwell had an army of 20,000 warriors. At that time, it was perhaps the best European army. This army was expected to flood Ireland with blood. The country never forgot and did not forgive Cromwell's campaign. His army went through many cities in Ireland, killing people and robbing them. Catholics had to serve their new Protestant masters. The accession to the throne of King Charles II did not improve the situation of Irish Catholics.

Famine (1845-1849)

In the years 1845-1849, the country was embraced by a terrible famine. Ireland in the XIX century was the most densely populated country in Europe. Nevertheless, most people existed in conditions of incredible poverty. The reasons for this were rooted in dependency on potato crops. In western counties, people did not eat anything else. Other vegetables went on sale at the expense of rent. The Irish authorities saw the danger.

In 1817, a disease attacked potatoes. Thousands of people died of starvation. In 1844, another epidemic hit the potato, half of the crop died, and only the unique resistance of the Irish peasants helped them survive. According to some estimates, about one million people died during this famine.

War of Independence in Ireland (1919-1921)

At the beginning of the 20th century, in Ireland, there was an active struggle for independence, *Home Rule*. The cause of the revolution was the uncompromising and cruel policy of the British government in Ireland, which took extreme forms after the suppression of the 1916 Irish uprising.

Eamon de Valera(1882-1975)

Eamon de Valera was one of the most influential politicians of the 20th century. He was born in 1882 in New York, in the family of an Irish and a Spaniard⁴.

For the first time, the name de Valera became widely known in 1916, when Ireland was shocked by the famous Easter Uprising. By this time, the protracted debate about whether Ireland should have the right to self-government had reached an impasse. Besides, Ireland itself was split - the inhabitants of the six counties of Ulster were strongly opposed to independence. Religious

⁴ Eamon de Valera – An Irish Leader. <https://www.ego4u.de/de/read-on/countries/ireland/eamon-devalera>

contradictions aggravated the political split - the Ulsterians were Protestants, the majority of the Irish were conservative Catholics. Against this background, in April 1916, *the Easter uprising* broke out. It was surprisingly poorly organized and coordinated. Its organizers sought to take advantage of the difficulties of Britain, bogged down in the First World War, and achieve the long-awaited independence for their homeland. Ordinary Irish did not support the rebels. Not surprisingly, the uprising was crushed within six days. The leaders of the Easter rebellion were arrested. The British authorities decided to act severely: 16 leaders of the uprising were executed, which caused a wave of sympathy from the ordinary Irish people.

On the wave of these moods, there was a rise of popularity of de Valera, who commanded one of the detachments during the Easter uprising. In December 1918, there were regular elections to the Irish Parliament. At that time, De Valera was already leading the most powerful party of supporters of independence of Ireland - "*Sinn Féin*." In January 1919, its deputies announced the creation of a new state, the Republic of Ireland, headed by Eamon de Valera. Britain did not recognize the republic. Thus began the war of independence between Britain and Ireland, which lasted until 1921⁵.

It was a terrible time for the country. However, de Valera was not in the republic then. He was in America and negotiated financial support for the young republic. And quite successfully. He managed to raise 5 million dollars. In 1921, Britain and Ireland were tired of fighting and began to negotiate. Prime Minister Lloyd George represented Britain. The Irish leaders were de Valera and Michael Collins (leader of the IRA-Irish Republican Army). The British were ready to recognize Ireland as another dominion of the crown. Nevertheless, this did not suit de Valera. He insisted that Ireland should be proclaimed as a republic.

Eventually, the members of the Irish delegation agreed to the treaty, according to which the head of the Irish government took the oath of allegiance to the English crown. Everyone agreed, but not de Valera. Also, this year, Northern Ireland separated from Southern and became part of the dominions of Britain, because the majority of the population of these lands were Protestants. They did not want to join Ireland and chose to join the UK.

Irish Civil War (1922-1923)

The civil war in Ireland is considered crueler and bloodier than the war of independence. Eventually, de Valera ordered the IRA fighters to lay down their arms.

His new party, "*Fianna Fáil*", won the election, but refused to join the parliament. The reason was that the same oath of allegiance to the English crown. In 1926, Eamon figured out how to get around this oath. He pushed aside the Bible and signed on the list of deputies who had sworn an oath. No one argued with this trick because the country needed a strong leader and parliament.

Since 1932, de Valera served as Prime Minister of Ireland and continued to defend its independence, but only without explosions and shootings. Hatred of Britain and everything connected with it was a hallmark of his character. Sometimes this led to curious incidents.

Ireland maintained strict neutrality during World War II, but when Hitler committed suicide, Eamon visited the German embassy and expressed condolences on this occasion. Because of this

⁵ Eamon de Valera – An Irish Leader. <https://www.ego4u.de/de/read-on/countries/ireland/eamon-devalera>

incident, Ireland did not receive loans from America for many years, although many people who knew de Valera well understood that they were driven not by sympathy for the Nazis, but by a desire to annoy Britain in everything.

Soon, de Valera became the most influential politician in the country. In 1959 he was elected President of Ireland, and in 1966 he was re-elected for a second term. By the end of the second term, Eamon was almost blind but continued to fulfill his powers. He left the presidency only in 1973, is the oldest head of state in the world. He was 90 years old. Eamon de Valera died in 1975⁶.

All in all, Ireland is a modern country with an incredible history and culture. Early, when Ireland was under British rule, it was almost closed from the world. British kings, during their reign, could never be in the country and usually were not interested in what was happening there. Ireland survived Norman Conquest, the terror of Cromwell, and made many attempts in its history to become independent. Poor people suffered. However, now, Ireland is independent and open to the world.

Famous Graduates from Blackrock college

The most famous and influential historical figure studying in this college was **Eamon de Valera**. He made a considerable contribution to history by making Ireland independent.



Eamon studied very well in the College and also participated in many rugby school competitions.

⁶ Éamon de Valera - Simple English Wikipedia, the free
https://simple.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C3%89amon_de_Valera

Among graduates from Blackrock College, there are also politicians and businessmen.



Ruairi Michael Quinn (born 2 April 1946) is a former Irish Labor Party politician who served as Minister of Education and Skills and Minister of Finance. Also, he was a Senator from 1976 to 1977⁷.



David J. O'Reilly is the former chairman and CEO of Chevron Corporation. Chevron Corporation is an American multinational energy corporation⁸.

O'Reilly began his career with Chevron Research Co. as a process engineer in 1968. On January 1, 2000, he became CEO of Chevron.

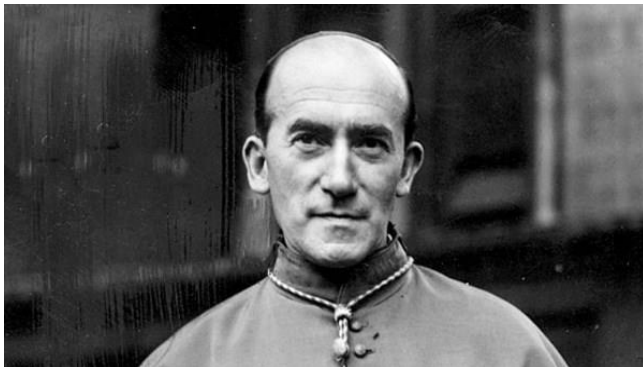
⁷ John Bruton – Unionpedia. https://en.unionpedia.org/John_Bruton

⁸ Chevron Corporation – Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chevron_Corporation



Frank Duff. This person is famous for founding Legion of Mary. He also attended Blackrock College. The Legion of Mary is an international association of members of the Roman Catholic Church who serve it voluntarily. The members of this legion visited hospitals and helped women with cancer, but then they started helping alcoholics and drug-addicted people. Also, they saved babies from abortion. Legion's activity soon became very popular and successful. Now it counts over 10 million members⁹.

An interesting fact that relationships between Legion and Orthodox churches are amicable.



John McQuaid was the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin. John not only studied in Blackrock college, but he was also President of the College from 1931–1939. McQuaid also met de Valera. There were friendships between them, and John was a good guest in Eamon's house. When de Valera became president of Ireland, he asked McQuaid to help him with drafting a new constitution for the country. As a result, John was a co-creator of the new constitution of Ireland¹⁰.

⁹ Frank Duff – Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frank_Duff

¹⁰ Archbishop of Dublin (Roman Catholic) – Wikipedia.
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Archbishop_of_Dublin_\(Roman_Catholic\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Archbishop_of_Dublin_(Roman_Catholic))



Michael Cusac. Michael Cusac made a massive contribution to Irish sport. He founded GAA- Gaelic Athletic Association. He also was a professor at Blackrock college. GAA- is an international sporting association, which is focused on promoting Irish traditional sports, like Gaelic football and Hurling. Now the organization has over 500 000 members.



There are also some students from Russia, who graduated from Blackrock, but the most famous is **Vasily Grigorievich Artemyev**. He is a rugby player. He came to Ireland and studied, played rugby there. However, later, Artemyev returned to Russia and participated in Rugby World Cup.

The above-presented leaders are a small part of all famous graduates from this college. Many Irish writers, designers and rugby players studied in Blackrock, for example, Robert Ballagh, Pauric Sweeney (designers), Brian O'Driscoll (rugby player), and Flann O'Brien (writer).

Conclusion

It is hard to believe that one college in two centuries managed to release so many talented, educated, and successful people, some of whom devoted their whole life serving their country. Many well-known college graduates set high noble goals and believed that everything was in their hands. They were able to change a lot in the country - achieve independence, adopt a constitution, and carry out reforms. The desire of Blackrock graduates to change their country for the better is an index of the availability of quality education and upbringing, strong teachers who help to direct the student's skills and reveal their best qualities.

Thus, we can definitely say that Blackrock College had a significant impact on the history of Ireland. Its graduates forged independence and sovereignty, statehood in the difficult period of stranger's domination in their home country.

References

1. Blackrock College official site. <https://www.blackrockcollege.com/>
2. A History of Blackrock College. <https://blackrockcollegehistoryblog.wordpress.com/the-french-college/>
3. Blackrock College – Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blackrock_College
4. Eamon de Valera – An Irish Leader. <https://www.ego4u.de/de/read-on/countries/ireland/eamon-devalera>
5. Éamon de Valera - Simple English Wikipedia, the free
https://simple.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C3%89amon_de_Valera
6. John Bruton – Unionpedia. https://en.unionpedia.org/John_Bruton
7. Chevron Corporation – Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chevron_Corporation
8. Frank Duff – Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frank_Duff
9. Archbishop of Dublin (Roman Catholic) – Wikipedia.
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Archbishop_of_Dublin_\(Roman_Catholic\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Archbishop_of_Dublin_(Roman_Catholic))