

O'RUDY AT OHEV YISRAEL

by Michael Rudolph
Great Grandson of Michael Patrick O'Rudy

In the mid-Eighteen Hundreds, many Irish men and women flocked to the port of New York to escape the potato *latkis* famine of 1840 that overtook their beloved homeland.*

Their new life in this country was very hard, as they were forced to take the lowest paying jobs in the *matzah* factories of the Lower East Side. Try as they would, they could not get hired in the new immigrant industry sweeping New York, for all over town, signs were displayed that said: "Rabbi positions available. No Irish Catholics need apply."

Among the applicants was my Great Grandfather, Michael Patrick O'Rudy, a former caretaker of Blarney Castle in County Cork, Ireland. He and his family were Catholics, but they converted to Orthodox Judaism so Mike could qualify for Rabbinic employment. Unfortunately, the Rabbinical Board found out that he still believed in Jesus, and he was told: "In this town you will never be a Rabbi."

After many months of unemployment, Mike finally got hired to lay track for the new trans-continental railroad. All was going well for him until the railroad bosses discovered that he was a Jew. Unable to fire him because of threats from the JDL, they transferred him to Washington, DC, and assigned him to clean the public facilities at Union Station.

Mike worked the toilets with a good and willing attitude. Over the next year he met and befriended three co-workers who, like himself, were Catholic converts to Judaism and, like himself, believed in Jesus. Needing a *minyan*, they found six other Irish believers that looked "kind of Jewish," and began to meet on the Sabbath. They called their fellowship *Ohev Erin v'Yisrael*, which was later shortened to *Ohev Yisrael*, and Mike O'Rudy became its rabbi.

As a testimonial of thanksgiving to how far God brought my Great Grandfather Mike O'Rudy (i.e. from caretaker of Blarney Castle to rabbi of *Ohev Yisrael*), I wrote the following lyrics and set them to the tune of "Paddy on The Railway." I call my song "O'Rudy at Ohev Yisrael." Here it is:

In eighteen hundred forty-one
I put me *tallit* and *kippah* on,
And found that me new life had begun
At *Ohev Yisrae-el*.

* The *latkas* famine preceded Ireland's potato crop failure of 1845 and 1846.

Chorus:

Filamee-uree-airee-ey
Filamee-uree-airee-ey
Filamee-uree-airee-ey
At *Ohev Yisrae-el*.

In eighteen hundred forty-two
God's Spirit He spoke right out of the blue
To tell me that I had much to do
At *Ohev Yisrae-el*.

Chorus

In eighteen hundred forty-three
Messiah He ups and says to me,
To tell the world His Gospel's free
At *Ohev Yisrae-el*.

Chorus

In eighteen hundred forty-four
Messiah told me that there was more,
To get to it just open the door
At *Ohev Yisrae-el*.

Chorus

In eighteen hundred forty-five
In God's direction I did strive,
To tell how His Word makes men alive
At *Ohev Yisrae-el*.

Chorus

In eighteen hundred forty-six
I got me poor self in a fix,
For Jewish and Irish I did mix
At *Ohev Yisrae-el*.

Chorus

O'Rudy at Ahavat Yeshua composed, April 16, 2002
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