

RAMSEY COUNTY
History
A Publication of the Ramsey County Historical Society

A Novelist Remembers:
Memoirs of Grace Flandrau

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Winter, 2004

Volume 38, Number 4

'He Loved a Tall Tale'

The Life and Times of I. A. O'Shaughnessy—
The Man Who Happily Gave His Money Away

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Portrait of I. A. O'Shaughnessy painted by artist Frank Bensing. From the University of St. Thomas Special Collections.

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RAMSEY COUNTY History

Volume 38, Number 4

Winter, 2004

THE MISSION STATEMENT OF THE RAMSEY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
ADOPTED BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS IN JULY 2003:

The Ramsey County Historical Society shall discover, collect, preserve and interpret the history of the county for the general public, recreate the historical context in which we live and work, and make available the historical resources of the county. The Society's major responsibility is its stewardship over this history.

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Message from the President of Ramsey County Historical Society

Anyone who has spent some time in St. Paul has probably come across the name O'Shaughnessy. It may have been on the facade of a building at the University of St. Thomas, or on the campus of the College of St. Catherine, or perhaps somewhere else in the local area. Many who have seen the O'Shaughnessy name in our capital city have a vague awareness that he was a generous benefactor, especially of educational institutions. Yet if you were to ask any number of individuals who O'Shaughnessy was, in all likelihood few would be able to tell you more about the man than his initials: I. A.

I. A. O'Shaughnessy was born in Stillwater, Minnesota, in 1885, but beginning in 1928, he and his wife, Lillian, made their home and raised their family in St. Paul. I. A., however, made his fortune in the oil refining business outside Minnesota. Consequently he was often away from their Summit Avenue residence tending to his many business activities in Oklahoma, Kansas, Illinois, or Washington, D.C. Thus I. A. O'Shaughnessy was less well known in his home community than he deserved.

In this issue, authors John M. Lindley and Virginia Brainard Kunz have combined their talents to provide the first wide-ranging biographical profile of I. A. O'Shaughnessy's life, business career, and personal and institutional philanthropy. They have used many documentary, business, family, and institutional records as well as extensive interviews with O'Shaughnessy family members and others who knew I. A. in writing this profile. The Ramsey County Historical Society hopes that the readers of our history quarterly will find that these authors have not only shed much light on the little-known career of the man who was once honored with the title of "Mr. St. Paul—A Great St. Paulite," but have also heightened local awareness of his great generosity to people and institutions in St. Paul and around the nation.

Marlene Marschall, President, Ramsey County Historical Society

‘He Loved a Tall Story’

The Life and Times of I. A. O’Shaughnessy, The Man Who Happily Gave His Money Away

John M. Lindley

Virginia Brainard Kunz

I. A. O’Shaughnessy liked to tell a story of how he acquired his very Irish, very Catholic name, Ignatius Aloysius. “I was the youngest of thirteen children,” he would say. “My mother ran out of names, so she turned to the Calendar of Saints and discovered St. Ignatius Loyola, whose feast day, happily, was the day I was born. So I became Ignatius.”

Although it was a name he disliked, he would deliver the probably apocryphal and perhaps slightly inaccurate story with a smile. Creating his own mythology was typical, friends and family remember, of a genial, sometimes crusty, Irishman who rose from a small town boyhood to become a legend among the independent oil refiners of the world and a man of great wealth that he enjoyed giving away.

As for “Aloysius,” that was his own choice, made, as was customary, at the time of his confirmation in St. Michael’s Church in Stillwater, Minnesota. St. Aloysius was the patron saint of boys, a nun at St. Michael’s grade school told him, so he became Ignatius Aloysius. His family and close friends called him “Nashe;” his peers “I. A.”

He was born on July 31, 1885, in Stillwater, the son of John and Mary Ann Milan O’Shaughnessy who had moved west from Massachusetts to Minnesota in 1861 or 1862.

The O’Shaughnessys’ early history is riddled with confusion as to dates and places. (Even the exact date of I. A. O’Shaughnessy’s birth is questioned by some family members because his baptismal certificate states July 30th, not the 31st). The O’Shaughnessys were from County Clare and County Galway in Ireland, although some sources trace them to Limerick. John’s father, also a



I.A. O’Shaughnessy in the library he built for the University of St. Thomas, St. Paul. For him, a library was “the heart of any campus.” University of St. Thomas Special Collections.

John O’Shaughnessy, was a bootmaker in County Clare, and the stories of O’Shaughnessy ancestors in Ireland are entangled in legends that stretch back through centuries of internecine warfare, tribal feuds, shifting alliances and struggles against the English. Some of the O’Shaughnessys (O’Seachnasaih in Gaelic) were kings or chieftains. There were at least two O’Shaughnessy castles,

one in Gort, County Galway, and another in County Clare, according to one writer, and an O’Shaughnessy was knighted by Henry VIII, according to another, who noted,

“Letters patent dated 3 December 1543 granted Sir Dermot O’Shaughnessy, knight, captain of his nation, in consideration of his submission . . .” In other words, Sir Dermot relinquished his lands



View looking north on Main Street in Stillwater in 1885, the year I. A. O'Shaughnessy was born. John Runk Collection, photo from the Minnesota Historical Society.

in Ireland to the crown, only to have Cromwell confiscate them a century later, but he did not give up his "old faith," as did other chieftains at that time. ("He must have been one of our reprobates," a descendent observed recently).

As the centuries wore on, religious violence, high birthrates, desperate poverty, lack of jobs, crop failures, typhus epidemics, and the shackles of British rule created great despair in the land of the O'Shaughnessys' birth. The 1840s marked the height of the Irish potato famine. I. A. O'Shaughnessy's grandfather, John O'Shaughnessy, gathered his family together to join the great waves of his countrymen and women who emigrated to the United States and Canada. Embarking from Limerick, they arrived in Boston in 1848 (some sources say 1849).

Although Boston was a major point of entry for immigrants at that time, it's possible that the O'Shaughnessys moved on quickly. They might have learned

that Milford, southwest of Boston, had two Catholic churches, Sacred Heart of Jesus and St. Mary of the Assumption. A substantial Irish community organized a cemetery there in 1830, began Masses in 1836, and built their first church in 1848. Many of the Irish worked in the railroad yards, or in the nearby stone quarries, but for a bootmaker, O'Shaughnessy had chosen well. Water power had made Massachusetts a national center for the manufacture of leather goods and Milford, at the headwaters of the Charles River, was turning out boots worn by lumberjacks working the New England forests.

I. A.'s father, another John O'Shaughnessy, was about twelve years old when he left Ireland with his family, but, again, there is confusion over the year of his birth. It generally is given as 1835, although it also is listed as 1838. Family members suspect that he added three years to his age in order to get work in Massachusetts' thriving boot-and-shoe industry.

In any event, he learned his trade there and evidently he prospered. He married Mary Ann Milan in Milford in 1859. They might have met there. Mary Ann was born in Massachusetts in 1838.

Just why John and Mary Ann O'Shaughnessy decided to strike out for Minnesota when they were in their mid-twenties is unknown, but Stillwater, with a population of 2,380 in 1860, was the center of the Weyerhaeuser operation in the St. Croix Valley, and one of the three major lumbering centers in Minnesota. Word might have reached O'Shaughnessy in far-off Massachusetts that the lumberjacks industriously clearing the St. Croix pineries of the logs that fed the sawmills would be good customers for his boots.

The Valley's roots had been formed in the nationwide pre-Civil War push to carve territories and states out of the fertile, forested lands along the Mississippi and its tributaries. When white settlers first arrived, the region was part of the

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J. O'SHAUGHNESSY,
St. Croix House, Main street, Stillwater.

The largest and most complete stock of

LADIES, MISSES & CHILDREN'S
BOOTS, SHOES, GAITERS & SLIPPERS

In the city, and

THE ONLY PLACE IN
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BURT'S SHOES,
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A GOOD ASSORTMENT
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MEN & BOYS'
BOOTS, SHOES, PACKS, MOCCASINS, OVER SHOES, SLIPPERS, AND GAITERS,

All of the latest styles in fashion. Boots and Shoes

MADE TO ORDER
SEWED OR PEGGED.

REGISTERED IN

John O'Shaughnessy's ad for his Boot & Shoe store. From the December 21, 1869, issue of the Stillwater Republican. Minnesota Historical Society collections.

Territory of Iowa. When Iowa became a state in 1846, the region was included in the Territory of Wisconsin. When Wisconsin became a state in 1848, the Valley's eastern boundary was redrawn to follow the St. Louis and St. Croix rivers, and the land west of the rivers was left in limbo, without officers or a government of its own. Two years later, the maneuvering in Washington to establish the Territory of Minnesota and rescue the "disenfranchised" dwellers grew so fierce, that in 1849 the Territory of Minnesota was established with Alexander Ramsey as its governor. Its eastern boundary also

lay along the St. Louis and the St. Croix. The land west of the rivers became Washington County, the land across the river in Wisconsin St. Croix County.

The lumber industry that was to dominate the region for the next seventy years and provide the O'Shaughnessy family with its livelihood had begun to develop ten years earlier, even before Minnesota became a territory. In 1839, a group of enterprising lumbermen built the first commercial sawmill in what would become Minnesota on the falls of the St. Croix. They established the first white settlement on the St. Croix, twenty miles below, some five years after Henry Sibley arrived in St. Peter (later called Mendota), on October 28, 1834. They named it Marine, known later as Marine-on-the-St. Croix. In 1840, another lumberman, John McKusick from Stillwater, Maine, picked up land on the west bank of the river some thirty-five miles above its junction with the Mississippi, named his settlement for his New England home, and in 1844 established the Stillwater Lumber Company.

Ten years later, Stillwater had grown into a robust community with a population of 1,200, most of whom came to work in lumbering, or to provide supplies for those who didn't, such as John O'Shaughnessy and his boots. In 1854, Isaac Staples, who had arrived a year earlier, and his partner, Samuel Hersey, founded the Hersey-Staples Lumber Company. Neither man, nor those who followed them in the 1850s, came with cash in hand. Money was scarce after the Panic of 1857, and most of those wily entrepreneurs were financed entirely by eastern investors. While their sawmills were the source of the lumber that built St. Paul, their main market was down the Mississippi in Illinois, Iowa, Missouri, and St. Louis, the gateway to the west. By the 1870s, Schulenburg and Boeckler had become Stillwater's largest producer of lumber, cutting 25,086,386 feet. In 1874 Stillwater had nine sawmills, whose combined capacity totaled 82 million feet annually.

There are stories that John and Mary Ann O'Shaughnessy traveled by steamboat up the Mississippi from Galena, Illinois, in the early 1860s. In the classic

pattern of western migration, extended family members came later to visit, or to settle in a region less hostile to the Irish than Boston. They encountered a state that had organized itself, built a university, a prison, written a constitution, and developed an industry that was booming as waves of immigrants seeking homes and land and jobs flooded into the state. In 1861, 140 million feet of lumber were harvested in Minnesota, and fortunes were being made.

The O'Shaughnessys' arrival in Stillwater was greeted by a well-established Irish community. Stillwater was incorporated in 1854, but the parish of the Church of St. Michael, with 350 communicants, had been formed a year earlier, in 1853, and it was growing. Its membership was 650 in 1855, when the population of Stillwater itself was 1,482. Many of the Irish among them, nearly all of them Catholics, came from Maine and the Mirimachi region of New Brunswick, Canada, where logging was a major industry. Others, like the O'Shaughnesses, came from Massachusetts.

At a time when people clung to their ethnic origins and traditions, two other Catholic churches ministered to the town's inhabitants: St. Mary's Church was established for German Catholics and St. Joseph's for French Canadians.



The "golden boot" sign in Stillwater's Hospes Block where O'Shaughnessy and Ford advertised their trade as boot and shoemakers. From the Stillwater Gazette's "100 Years Ago" column by Anita Buck, March 9, 1973.



The almost completed Church of St. Michael, as it appeared in 1874. Runk Collection, Minnesota Historical Society.

Irish Catholics heard Mass conducted in their homes by visiting priests until they built the first St. Michael's Church on North Hill, a frame structure north of the northwest corner of Fourth and Mulberry Street, with thirty families comprising the parish. Perhaps they chose North Hill because it loomed large on the bluffs above the town's Main Street. A cemetery known as the North Bury-

ing Ground served the church for more than ten years. Then it was moved to a site in Bayport that was thought to have been the earlier location of Stillwater's "potter's field."

Father Daniel Fisher, who claimed Irish descent, was pastor and he was followed in the next decades by priests with impeccable Irish credentials and names: Father Thomas Murray, who built a rec-

tory and a school; Father Maurice E. Murphy, who enlarged the parish and moved the church to South Hill, across from the Washington County Courthouse, and Father Charles Corcoran, whose fifty-two years at St. Michael's encompassed I. A. O'Shaughnessy's boyhood and was the second longest pastorate in the history of the St. Paul Archdiocese.

Almost immediately after arriving, John O'Shaughnessy, despite modest means, opened a small store on Main Street, announcing himself as "J. O'Shaughnessy, Manufacturer of and Dealer in Boots and Shoes." He had one other workman besides himself, but he had a potentially huge market. In 1860 alone, more than 2,500 men had jobs in Stillwater's lumbering industry. Presumably, all of them needed boots. In 1866 O'Shaughnessy moved to larger quarters in Nelson's block on Lower Main Street, and added a stock of ready-made shoes. Progress was steady, as was true of many of Minnesota's settlers at that time.

Several years later, I. A.'s father John moved to the St. Croix building. Then, in 1870, he erected "quite a tastefully built house" with a wide porch at 703 Third Avenue South, one block south of St. Michael's Church. The house had thirteen rooms but even so, Ignatius O'Shaughnessy was born into a crowded household. Two young sisters helped with the housework. A boy who was orphaned lived with them. (He later became a successful New York stock broker.) A young woman who was blind and deaf also lived with them and sewed for the entire family. The O'Shaughnessys were charitable people who took care of the needy, a hallmark of nineteenth-century immigrant life that seems to have rubbed off on their youngest child, Ignatius. He remembered that a group of men would meet in the O'Shaughnessy home to determine which families needed aid. He was proud of the way their identities were shielded. "Not even my mother knew who was being helped," he remembered.

The early years of the 1870s were a time of speculation and inflation, even as it also was a time of material progress. Stillwater was growing, with a population of 4,124 in 1870 that was almost evenly divided between native born and foreign



Lumberjacks at the Bronson & Folsom Company's log landing at Stillwater, ca. 1903. I. A. O'Shaughnessy loved to spin tall tales of the lumberjacks he saw in his youth. Runk Collection, Minnesota Historical Society.

born. In 1870, the communicants of St. Michael's, now numbering 900, began construction of their new church that still stands on South Hill and on Third Street, which the *Stillwater Messenger* observed in 1871, "should have been named church street. On Third we have the First Presbyterian, Methodist, Universalist, German Catholic and Lutheran edifices."

Beginning in 1871 and lasting until around 1883, gala fundraising affairs held for several days were organized to raise money for the church. In *Church of St. Michael, Stillwater, Minnesota, 1853-2003*, a history written by Rita Lammers and published by the church in 2002, she describes one such gala:

"The 1871 fair included four days of food, entertainment, raffles craft sales and balloting for the most popular lady, housekeeper, state senator, river pilot, lumberman, merchant, etc. The event,

held at the Hersey-Staples Hall netted over \$4,000. Admission was a dime."

The *Gazette* was enthusiastic about the food. "The tables were tastefully arranged and covered with the choicest viands. Beautiful girls, flitting like fairies from point to point, gracefully attended to the wants of all who chose to indulge in the luxuries with which the tables were so bountifully spread." Dinner and supper were served "at a moments notice," the newspaper observed, and "oysters, cooked or raw, and ice cream, at low rates, were ready at all times."

The new St. Michael's was designed by St. Paul architect E. P. Bassford at a cost of \$75,000 (some sources say \$80,000, but that very likely included the land) and it was one of his earlier important buildings in Minnesota. Plans and specifications, the church announced, were on display in the architect's office and in O'Shaughnessy

and Ford's Boot and Shoe Store. Bassford used native stone and Kasota stone for the 140- by 180-foot structure, and topped it with the slender, 190-foot spire that still pierces the city's skyline. The cornerstone was laid in 1873 and the church dedicated in 1875 by Bishop Thomas L. Grace, the second bishop of St. Paul. Both events were lavishly and colorfully celebrated with parades that included a dozen or more marching units and thousands of marchers. Special trains carried them from Minneapolis and St. Paul at 75 cents a person for the round trip. When St. Michael's added its famous chimes in 1883, they were greeted with similar enthusiasm. Everyone who contributed to the bell fund was invited to strike the largest bell with a wooden hammer. The result was that the bell rang for five hours straight, giving parishioners and city residents alike far more, perhaps, than they intended.

Many changes were made in church, school, and rectory as the parish grew. There were 1,160 baptisms between 1885 and 1895, but the number dropped to 753 during the following decade in step with the sawmills' long decline that began around 1885, the year of I. A. O'Shaughnessy's birth. Even so, St. Michael's was the center of community life for the Irish and a meeting place for a score of organizations: the Father Mathew Total Abstinence Society, the Ladies Total Abstinence Society, the St. Vincent de Paul Society, the Holy Rosary Society, the Young Ladies Sodality, the Children of Mary, and the St. Aloysius Cadets.

It's ironic, as one historian has observed, that O'Shaughnessy built his house and St. Michael's parish began work on a new church just as a depression began in 1871 and lasted until 1878. The Panic of 1873, set off by the collapse

of the Jay Cooke Banking House in New York, took its toll throughout the United States. On July 1, 1871, the *Stillwater Messenger* announced that:

"J. O'Shaughnessy and Thos. Francis have been compelled by the continued depression to make assignments during the past week, the former to Sam Mathews and the latter to August Buth. It is hoped they will be able to resume business ere long." A week later Mathews issued a public notice:

"I now offer for sale at cost or below the entire stock of boots and shoes lately belonging to John O'Shaughnessy in Holcomb's new block. Terms strictly cash. The stock is large, first class, and the price about 35% less than is charged by retail dealers."

Then disaster struck. O'Shaughnessy's building burned down. As Ignatius's father rebuilt his business, he occupied a room in the Hospes block. He became an

"Agent for Singer Sewing Machines" and he acquired a horse and buggy. In 1879 he opened up shop again on Chestnut Street where with three employees he conducted both a custom and a ready-made business. Boots for lumberjacks were manufactured in a shop behind the store. In 1885 there seems to have been a shift in ownership. As the *Stillwater Gazette* reported it, "Tom Burke has purchased the remaining stock of goods lately belonging to John O'Shaughnessy and, having added largely thereto, has placed Mr. O'Shaughnessy in charge as manager."

John O'Shaughnessy, remembered as a quiet man with a white goatee, was an important man and a leader of his community. In 1871 he helped found the Stillwater Board of Trade and was a longtime member. He served as president of the St. Vincent de Paul Conference, an organization that helped the needy. A



The famous St. Croix Boom in 1886. The lumber industry was Stillwater's lifeblood during the years I. A. grew up there. This would have been a familiar sight for him. Runk Collection, Minnesota Historical Society.



Father John F. Dolphin, fifth president of the College of St. Thomas from 1899 to 1903 and the young O'Shaughnessy's mentor. From Special Collections, University of St. Thomas.

man who never used alcohol or tobacco, he was secretary, then president of the Father Mathew (Murphy) Total Abstinence Society, the Stillwater branch of the Catholic Total Abstinence Union founded by the future Archbishop John Ireland (initiation fees \$1 and ten cents a month thereafter). In addition to older men, the Society included young men and adolescents in confronting a problem that was pervasive. In 1887 Stillwater, with a population of 16,500, had forty-two saloons, one for every 400 people (and one church for every 1,000). O'Shaughnessy marched in temperance parades for the Society wearing a green (for Ireland) and black (for death) badge and over-the-shoulder regalia that crossed at the knee. An all-day St. Patrick's Day celebration in 1874, including a parade with 200 marchers, and a Mass and sermon at St. Michael's, netted nearly \$400. When the St. Patrick's Day banquet and program was held in 1877 in the new Hersey-Staples hall, he presented a "beautiful green flag of grosgrainsilk with appropriate emblems" to St. Michael's parish.

He served on the Stillwater Board of Trade, organized in January, 1871. As alderman from the first ward, he was a member of the Stillwater City Council

from 1877 to 1879. He joined the Ancient Order of Hibernians. For many years, he taught St. Michael's Sunday School.

Following the nineteenth-century pattern of westward migration, extended family members had joined the O'Shaughnessys. A half-nephew, John F. Burke, fourteen, arrived from Milford, Massachusetts, to live with the O'Shaughnessys and "industriously study Greek under Thomas Lecky," as the *Stillwater Gazette* noted. It was an age when people were seeking out the "salubrious" Minnesota as a cure for lung diseases, and his doctor had recommended a change of climate to relieve his asthma. John Burke's mother was John O'Shaughnessy's half sister; both of Burke's parents had been born in County Galway, his father, Patrick in Loughrea and his mother, Margaret Welch, in Gort. They were married in Milford in 1852. Margaret's own mother had been married three times; the elder John O'Shaughnessy was her third husband, so Margaret Welch and John O'Shaughnessy had the same mother. The families were close, even to the point where Mary Ann O'Shaughnessy invested \$3,900 in the Burke Clothing Store in Stillwater. She thought it was a good investment. It wasn't, but she did get her money back.

John Burke worked for five years as a salesman in John O'Shaughnessy's store, and then returned to New England to complete his education at Harvard. In 1874 he wrote that he had applied for a school in Milford "that I could easily teach and which pays \$1,000 a year but bigotry is too abundant in this state [Massachusetts] for a young fellow with so much Irish blood in his veins to think of obtaining any such position." John O'Shaughnessy found him a job teaching school in Stillwater at \$60 a month. John Burke's brother Tom also lived with the O'Shaughnessys from 1877, when he was nineteen, until 1882 when the rest of the Burke family left Milford to settle in Stillwater. The O'Shaughnessys celebrated Tom's twenty-first birthday with a surprise party at their home. "Tom played a coronet in the band at that time," the *Gazette* noted, "and the evening was spent in the playing of musical numbers by members of the band."

The lives of I. A. O'Shaughnessy's family members in Stillwater reveal the

strong ties within the city's Irish Catholic community. Besides Burkes, their neighbors were O'Briens and Raney's. Across the street lived David Tozer, the wealthiest man in the St. Croix Valley, whose fortune came from lumbering. There were McCarthys and McGarrys, Gillespies and Daileys and Slaughters. The Pennington family lived behind the O'Shaughnessys on Second Street. Howard Pennington was I. A. O'Shaughnessy's closest friend. Socializing was lively. Anne McGarry remembered "many parties in the O'Shaughnessy home" when she was a girl. "As the youngsters never knew when it was time to go home, Mrs. O'Shaughnessy would put their hats in the middle of the floor when it got late." The *Gazette* noted that O'Shaughnessys were part of a family picnic at Wildwood amusement park in White Bear Lake.

The O'Shaughnessy children and their friends attended St. Michael's Parochial School after it opened in 1877. The school's history traces back to 1856 when Father Murray organized a parish school on the North Hill property. Beginning in 1873, the Sisters of St. Joseph built a convent there and taught school, a mission that lasted until 1991. After St. Michael's went up on South Hill, classes continued to be held for a time in the old church on North Hill. This might have been the school Anne McGarry remembered—a two-room structure with a partition dividing the girls, taught by Annie Hofferma, and the boys, taught by John Burke, who also was the school principal. Discipline was swift and forceful. Anne McGarry recalled "watching the teacher punish Ignatius' brother, John O'Shaughnessy, age twelve, by sitting on him and bumping his head against the floor, demanding that he be good."

During the 1880s, the parish built a second school behind the new church. It was a two-story red brick building with outside toilets, the boys' on the north side and the girls' on the south. Reginald A. Kilty's memories of attending school there between 1896 and 1906 are quoted in the St. Michael's Church history. Kilty recalled "a pail of drinking water with a wooden cover and a notch cut in so the dipper would not fall into the pail. Steve Voegeler was the janitor and would come

in several times during the day to tend the hard coal stoves in each room, so if you sat by the stove it was hot and by the windows it was cold.”

Since I. A. O’Shaughnessy’s school years spanned the 1890s, this very likely was the school he attended. The decade was marked by a brief period when St. Michael’s School took part in an experimental program with the public schools. Spurred by now-Archbishop John Ireland’s concern over the financing of Catholic Schools, the plan was to rent St. Michael’s School to the public school district. The teachers, who were nuns, would become state employees and religion would be taught after school. Not surprisingly, both Protestants and Catholics protested violently. Their protests reached the Vatican, and the plan was abandoned after a year.

Unfortunately, St. Michael’s Church has turned up no records of I. A. O’Shaughnessy’s first communion or confirmation, nor has the school located any accounts of him as a grammar school student, since its records date back only to 1901. What has survived are stories of his prowess as a young athlete, revealing his love for sports, particularly football, that would last throughout his life. Friends remembered scrimmages “so rugged in training for football in the backyard that neighbors thought they would surely kill themselves.”

Football was a tough, no-holds-barred challenge. On October 5, 1900, the *Gazette* reported, “the football game between Stillwater High School and New Richmond High School at the latter place Saturday broke up in a row and both teams left the field after 15 minutes of play. It was claimed that the New Richmond captain had been kicked in the head and a general fight followed.” Ignatius’s cousin, Louis Bernard, who was only a spectator, was kicked in the leg and died unexpectedly a month later. “Talk on the street,” the *Gazette* reported, “claimed that his death was due to that injury,” but added that it actually was caused by a ruptured appendix that developed into peritonitis. He was eighteen.

Sadness had shadowed the O’Shaughnessy family earlier when their oldest son James died in 1880 and their four-year-old daughter Mary in 1887 of pneumonia.

James, who was eighteen, had graduated from the commercial course at St. John’s University at Collegeville, Minnesota. He had been visiting in St. Paul when he was “seized with cramp colic” and died several days later. Five years later a William O’Shaughnessy was committed “to the reform school for stealing some choice wines from Louis Gottschall’s cellar.”

Ignatius O’Shaughnessy’s boyhood was cast in the golden age of lumbering and colored by his view of the picturesque lumberjacks, their vigor, their skill, and their courage in enduring the hazards of their work. In 1895 when he was ten years old, 321,764, 530 feet of logs were scaled through the boom at Stillwater. By then he was old enough to see the river fill with logs floating down from the white pine forests of the north.

The famed St. Croix boom was the end point of the log drive, an institution in logging that was actually a huge water bowl where logs from the northern forests were collected and sorted and their owners identified. (Some 2,000 log marks were in use during its history.) Logs then were arranged in rafts manned by raftsmen who would move them down

the St. Croix to the Mississippi. Chartered in 1851 with \$10,000 in capital, the boom first was located opposite Osceola on the west bank of the St. Croix above Stillwater, but later it was moved to a point only three some miles north of the city. The boom was so important to the lumber industry and so well known up and down the Upper Mississippi valley that it was referred to simply as “The Boom.” Its size was immense, extending almost nine miles up and down the river. In 1857 the incorporators of the boom company reorganized, boosting its capitalization to \$25,000. Between 1840 and 1874, 3,504,000,000 feet of logs passed through the boom, according to Alice M. Larson’s *History of the White Pine Industry in Minnesota*.

The impact on the economic life of the region was immense as well. Some 2,500 men worked in the rafting and booming business in Stillwater. In 1864, for ten successive days, ten rafts of logs manned by 200 men floated south. Raftsmen were paid \$35 for each trip. Merchants set up shop to sell them and other workers dry goods, clothing, food and other provisions and John O’Shaughnessy sold them



St. Thomas's 1905 football team. O'Shaughnessy, the team's captain, is in the center of the second row. Under his leadership, the team took the first of its out-of-state trips. Special Collections, University of St. Thomas.



I. A. as a student at St. John's in Collegeville, Minnesota. From the I. A. O'Shaughnessy Foundation archives.

their boots. By the 1890s when the search for lumber moved farther into the northern forests, the industry began to sense the end of an era. The last of the logs flowed through the boom in 1913.

I. A. O'Shaughnessy and storytellers like him helped to keep it alive. In later life he delighted in telling tall tales about log spinners and log spinning contests. He would describe the lumberjacks in their costumes, some in buckskins, some in clothes of many patterns and colors, some in plaid mackinaw with red and white knee stockings, mittens and caps. The woodsmen wore a sort of oil-tanned moccasin with legs, called a larrigan or boot pack. Ignatius O'Shaughnessy would describe how the men rode the logs, controlled their spinning, and broke up logjams.

He told wild stories about the huge sucker fish that were so thick when spawning that a person could walk across the river on their backs. He seems to have taken pride in describing his own reckless youth and how he and his friends would cross the railroad trestle when a train was coming, then hang on below the trestle until it had passed. He contracted and

survived smallpox, a disease that periodically spread through lumbering camps and communities. He claimed to have walked five miles in snow and rain to church and school until his close friend, former Bishop James Shannon discovered that school, church, and home were "cheek by jowl" on the bluff above Stillwater. He talked of working in his father's shoe business (or perhaps it was one of the sawmills lining the St. Croix River—accounts, differ) for \$1.40 for a twelve-hour day, six days a week. It was hard work. "I did it to toughen up for football," he once said. "But men married and raised families on that pay. It was a great hardship."

Because he lived so close to St. Michael's Church, he said he would be called upon to serve Father Corcoran as altar boy if the scheduled youngster failed to show up. He once told someone he'd been a bugler boy during the Spanish-American War in 1898. He liked to tease, an aspect of Irish humor that, one grandson believes, people never really understood until they realized they'd "been had."

He might have attended Stillwater's lavish Opera house that had opened in May of 1881 with "Uncle Tom's Cabin." Many events sponsored by groups from St. Michael's were held there; John Philip Sousa's band played there and John L. Sullivan appeared there. It was not to last. The Opera House burned down in 1902.

Ignatius would have witnessed an exciting event for the city's Irish Catholics when James Cardinal Gibbons, the most prominent Catholic churchman in nineteenth-century America, arrived in Stillwater in July, 1900. He was there to officiate at the wedding of his niece, Catherine Gibbons, to Patrick E. Burke at St. Joseph's Church. Described as one of the largest Catholic churches in the country and seating 3,000, it was crowded to the rafters with wedding guests and with Protestants and Catholics alike who were on hand to greet the Cardinal. Born in the United States of parents who had emigrated from Ireland, Gibbons possessed a strong Irish heritage. He was educated initially in his parents' homeland but ordained in Baltimore following his seminary training in the United States. Gibbons corresponded regularly with Archbishop John Ireland. They were

longstanding allies in the struggle for more flexibility in the American Catholic Church.

The *Stillwater Gazette* spared no ink in describing the event: "Never have so many distinguished prelates of the church lent their assistance at the conferring of the sacrament of matrimony. . . . The bride, Miss Catherine Gibbons, a tall, gracious, and handsome young woman was gowned in a chic and costly white satin and wore the regulation bridal veil." The bridesmaids' costumes "in compliment to the Cardinal were of crimson hue. They wore toque hats with red streamers. His Eminence wore a handsome scarlet cassock." He said Mass at St. Michael's. Returning to St. Paul, the Cardinal inspected the Seminary Ireland had built at Shadow Falls, in Merriam Park, overlooking the Mississippi at the foot of Summit Avenue. Perhaps the Cardinal and the Archbishop discussed church politics. Certainly, according to the many columns of coverage of his visit, the Cardinal's party was met by James J. Hill, who "drove them in carriages" to his home for a luncheon. The Cardinal spent three days with the Hills.

Early on the O'Shaughnessys, determined that their sons have college educations, enrolled them successively at St. John's. Although it was some seventy miles far out in the country northwest of Stillwater and accessible only by a Great



James P. Shannon, I. A.'s close friend. St. Thomas archives.



Ignatius O'Shaughnessy at the age of twenty in 1905.

Northern rail line, St. John's was the obvious choice for a Catholic family seeking a Catholic institution that offered an education beyond grammar school level.

Because of the large span in ages between the oldest and youngest in the family, Ignatius was still a boy when his brothers and cousins went off to college, to marry the young women in their Irish community, and to launch their own careers. John Burke married Rose O'Brien; John A. O'Shaughnessy, Jr. married Rose McCann and, after her early death, Catherine Sullivan. Following in his father's footsteps, John Jr. entered politics in Stillwater. In 1897 he was elected city clerk. In 1904 he moved his family to Holly Avenue in St. Paul where he "purchased a fine home."

Ignatius was sixteen when he, too, enrolled at St. John's in 1901. He was an Irish Catholic teenager from a city with a population of 11,260 enrolling in a predominantly German Catholic institution in the sylvan environs of Stearns County's lakes and forests. The railroad deposited the aspiring students at Collegeville's two-story frame depot that did duty as telegraph, express, and ticket office as well. A bus pulled by two horses met the young scholars at the

depot and conveyed them a mile-and-a-half west until St. John's twin towers, like medieval watch towers, appeared above the trees, signaling journey's end. There they found a huge red brick quadrangle with six sections that included church, monastery, seminary, college, and farm buildings where monks and lay brothers conducted a large-scale farming operation. Whether or not O'Shaughnessy was uncomfortable in such a monastic environment is unknown. He seems never to have said so, but he did admit, later in his life to experiencing some loneliness.

Also unknown is the course of study he pursued. Like most institutions of the time, the "college" training then offered resembled more closely today's high school or two-year college-level program. Tuition was \$100 for a five-month session and included, according to an undated catalogue, board, bedding, washing, and mending of linens. The courses of-study open to O'Shaughnessy and his fellow students were divided into five sections: Classical, Philosophical, Theological, Commercial, and Scientific. The 1900 Catalogue included a description of the classical course:

"The primary object is a thorough liberal education, which consists in the full and harmonious development of all the faculties of the student. Long experience teaches that no other study is so well adapted to develop these faculties as the study of the classics." The Classical Course was the most popular, requiring completion of courses in the classics, religion, mathematics, history, literature, composition, modern languages, science, ethics, philosophy, and the writing of a thesis (in Latin until World War I). Then there was the three-year Commercial Course, established in the early 1870s as a distinct department to meet the growing need by merchants, bankers, and other business firms for trained accountants and bookkeepers. Besides bookkeeping, instruction was offered in actual business practice, commercial arithmetic, commercial law, and business correspondence. Eight students received the first degrees awarded in 1872, and they included William Hamm and Frank Schlick, who would become leading St. Paul businessmen. The direction of



Lillian G. Smith, age nineteen, in 1906, two years before her marriage to I. A. Both photographs are from the I. A. O'Shaughnessy Foundation archives.

O'Shaughnessy's later life suggests that he enrolled in the commercial course, as had his brother James.

In the spring of 1901, total enrollment was 331, the largest to that date; forty-six were seminarians and 285 were taking other courses. The rules were Draconian, more closely related to monastic discipline than to the lives of the sometimes unruly young men they were designed to corral. Student mail could be inspected for "objectionable material." Attendance at daily worship was mandatory. Absolutely prohibited were "cigarettes, snuff and chewing tobacco." Any student who wished to leave the college grounds, even to visit his sister at St. Benedict's College in nearby St. Joseph, needed special permission granted only once a month, and no visits home were allowed except at Christmas and Easter.

When O'Shaughnessy arrived at St. John's in the fall of 1901, he was just in time to play football. He was part of a new era in the college's history, the revival of athletics and the organization of the St. John's Athletic Association. The first game had been played in October, 1900, against the St. Cloud High School. St. John's lost 5-0. A return



The home of Charles J. Smith at 1952 Ashland Avenue in St. Paul, I. A. roomed here after leaving college and before his marriage to Lillian Smith. Photograph courtesy of Ronald Smith.

game posted the same score. The 1901 team, made up mainly of leftovers from the 1900 second and third teams, turned out to be “one of the most celebrated in St. John’s history, one of those rare combinations of spirit and talent that crop up occasionally in college athletics.” St. John’s defeated St. Cloud High School 11-6 and 11-0 and St. Cloud Normal School 17-6.

Then came the never-to-be-forgotten climactic game of the entire season when St. John’s, playing St. Thomas for the first time, won 16-0 with three touchdowns and a point after touchdown. The game was played on the morning of Thanksgiving Day at Lexington Park in St. Paul. One of the four stars of the game was “a

remarkable young man named Ignatius O’Shaughnessy, who, though a tackle, carried the ball for a total of 76 yards, an average of eleven yards per try.” Three of his friends from Stillwater were on the team. In one brilliant run, the *St. John’s Record* reported, O’Shaughnessy “carried the ball to the St. Thomas two-yard line where [William] Kilty, an end, *was shoved over* for the second touchdown.” Some years later, the *Record* pointed out that “It is evident to all that the rules and scoring systems of the game have changed radically since the year 1901.”

Years later, O’Shaughnessy received a letter from the Reverend Benjamin I. Stein, O.S.B., commenting on that Thanksgiving Day game. Explaining that

the letter had lain in the files of the *St. John’s Record* for the past sixty or more years, Father Stein wrote:

What seems particularly odd to a present day football fan is the line-up of the teams and then the subsequent account of the plays. For example, you are listed as playing left tackle and yet you carried the ball as much or more than any other man on the team! Were all these Statue of Liberty plays or did you just decide to rotate in the office of carrying the ball?

The game must have seemed important to the editorial board of the *Record* since it covers pages 361-364. O’Shaughnessy replied in part:

Like many others, you were not around watching football games in those days. The question has often been asked me why men in the line ran with the ball. The original line-up in those days was what is called the T-formation now. It was a very close formation and if the guard as well as the tackle or end wanted to he could drop back and receive the ball from the quarterback and run with it. For your information, this was the first game played between the two schools. As a matter of fact, it was the first time that a St. John’s team was allowed to come to the Twin Cities to play ball. It might be interesting for you to know that the Minneapolis St. John’s Alumni organization offered a Meerschaum pipe for the player making the longest run. I happened to be the one who won the pipe. However, in those days, if a student was caught smoking a pipe, he was immediately sent home—so you can see how times have changed.

Alas, despite knowing the campus rules, O’Shaughnessy’s college career at St. John’s came to an abrupt halt in January of 1902. His good friend, Father (later Bishop) James P. Shannon, told the story in a newspaper column he wrote in 1973. It seems that at first all was well with O’Shaughnessy at St. John’s. (He had received honorable mention for good conduct in October.) However, Shannon wrote, one Sunday afternoon in January 1902 “a few of the boys skipped vespers in favor of a barrel of beer they had stashed in a shaded pile of oak leaves back in the woods. Their absence from chapel and their later joyful return to the

campus made [O'Shaughnessy] and his two friends easy quarry for some vigilant Benedictine confidently awaiting the return of the truants. The next day they were expelled from college."

Understandably, perhaps, Ignatius was unwilling to burden his parents with the news. Instead, he took a train to St. Paul and walked from the old Union Depot to the College of St. Thomas, a distance of some five to eight miles, arriving close to nightfall. There he met a priest strolling alone through the campus. He was Father John F. Dolphin, president of the college, and he knew a young man in distress when he saw one. Dolphin was adept at dealing with adventurous young men. "He was at his best," Joseph B. Connors wrote in his history of St. Thomas, "in facing up to the most painful of his tasks: breaking the news to a parent whose son had been expelled from the college." Dolphin adhered rigidly to the rule that forbade being off-campus without permission, a rule boarding students living between the two cities, were prone to break, as well as the rule against bringing liquor into the college, "either in his pocket or his stomach," as the good priest put it.

First Dolphin asked Ignatius if he was hungry. The shaken youth admitted that he was, so Dolphin took him along to the dining room and gave him a hot meal. In the course of it, O'Shaughnessy poured out the story of his expulsion from St. John's. Shannon continued: "What Nashe did not know was that one of the boys expelled with him had preceded him to St. Thomas, applied for admission, and been turned down. Father Dolphin asked Nashe whether he thought the Benedictines at St. John's were justified in sacking him. He replied, 'Absolutely. I knew the rule and the penalty. I broke the rule and got caught. They had to fire me.' He was accepted on the spot."

O'Shaughnessy's long association with St. Thomas had begun. Commenting ruefully years later in a history of athletics at St. John's, authors Dunstan Ticker and Martin Schirber wrote:

"As for Ignatius O'Shaughnessy, it is still a subject for jestful comment at St. John's the fact that the future great philanthropist, the generous endower of Catholic schools, colleges and uni-



Charles J. Smith and Anna Curran Smith with their children in the early 1900s. In front with Charles and Anna are Clement E. and Everett. Left to right, standing: Ray, Mabel, Robert, Florence, Charles, and Lillian.

versities did not remain at St. John's. He transferred and graduated from the College of St. Thomas. Fr. Walter Reger, O.S.B., once jokingly remarked, "Someone goofed at St. John's."

Father Dolphin's influence on O'Shaughnessy during the brief time the priest remained on campus was profound. He admired the priest's gentlemanly conduct, his high standards in education, and in the way he conducted his life. In *Journey Towards Fulfillment: A History of the College of St. Thomas*, author Joseph B. Connors identifies the taproot of O'Shaughnessy's fruitful and lifelong attachment to St. Thomas as due, at least in part, to his "devotion to Father Dolphin." This extended as well to the succeeding president, Father Humphrey Moynihan.

After Father Dolphin welcomed him into the St. Thomas fold, O'Shaughnessy quickly became the mainstay of the college's nascent football team. He already had distinguished himself as left tackle in that first St. Thomas-St. John's game in 1902. At St. Thomas the same year he played left tackle, halfback as needed, and fullback from 1903 to 1905. A student journalist described him as "perhaps the best all-around man on the team."

"Captain O'Shaughnessy," the *St. Paul*

Pioneer Press wrote in 1905, "will hold down his old position at right half. This is his fourth year at St. Thomas, and it is expected that he will do even better than ever, although from the very first year he has been one of the very best players St. Thomas ever had, whether at tackle, full or half back."

Football at the college level was every bit as hazardous as the high school leagues. Connors described what it was like at St. Thomas in the early years of the twentieth century: During his junior year at St. Thomas, O'Shaughnessy injured his shoulder, "a common experience," Connors wrote, "in the days when primitively equipped elevens engaged in the juggernaut line assaults that made up a great part of every game. (Before reform, only five yards were needed for a first down.) Within two weeks in the 1903 season, St. Thomas lost its quarterback and a star lineman, one with a broken collarbone, the other with a broken wrist. While no one was killed in a St. Thomas game, eighteen American players died of football injuries in 1905." The evils associated with college football were many, Connors noted. There was brutality, use of bogus students, and distraction from educational pursuits, to the point where President Theodore Roos-

evelt insisted that football either be abandoned or reformed. St. Thomas followed the path to reform.

In March, 1903, O'Shaughnessy was appointed Father Dolphin's private secretary, but the priest left St. Thomas a month later because of ill health. His successor, Father Humphrey Moynihan, apparently was aware as well of the young O'Shaughnessy's developing skills and retained him as his secretary. His course of study was similar to the offerings at St. John's. During his first year at St. Thomas, the classical course was divided into a four-year academic (high school) department and a two-year collegiate department, similar to a junior college. O'Shaughnessy chose the academic and collegiate programs.

He also must have taken the college's popular commercial course that had been strengthened in 1895 to offer bookkeeping, business arithmetic, business correspondence and forms, typing, stenography, and penmanship. In his senior year he was appointed bookkeeper-secretary for the college.

"It was somewhat unusual for a student approaching graduation to become part of the college administration team," the late Msgr. Terrence Murphy, past president and then chancellor of what is now the University of St. Thomas, once observed. "However, St. Thomas was a small institution then and money was scarce." But he remembered O'Shaughnessy as a friend having an orderly, analytic mind.

O'Shaughnessy was on campus from 1902 to 1906. He was there to see an important new addition to the college curriculum in 1903: compulsive military drill in uniform. Two years later St. Thomas was listed by the United States War Department as an official military school. The entire student body then was clad in uniforms, and "I bought them," he once said. The year after he graduated, the college's enrollment was 480, half of them boarders and half day students. The 1906 *St. Paul City Directory* listed O'Shaughnessy as "secretary, the College of St. Thomas," and his address as "Cleveland Ave. N.W. cor. Summit Ave."

A year later, on November 6, 1907, the *Stillwater Gazette* announced the death of Ignatius' mother, Mary Ann



The O'Shaughnessy house at 1705 Summit Avenue, St. Paul, I. A. settled his family here in 1928 and it remained the family home until his death in 1973. From the I.A. O'Shaughnessy Foundation archives.

O'Shaughnessy, at the age of sixty-nine. John O'Shaughnessy followed her on January 21, 1909, "a most worthy man [who] possessed the respect and regard of the entire community in which he lived for so many years. He had no enemy in all the wide world."

The *Gazette* had more news of the O'Shaughnessy family. "Ignatius A. O'Shaughnessy, youngest son of Mr. and Mrs. John O'Shaughnessy, has recently been appointed secretary of the Amateur Athletic Assn. of St. Paul, succeeding E. A. Westerhagen. Young O'Shaughnessy is a first class amateur football player, having played four years and always made good. He has secured a position that pays \$1,200 a year, which is a pretty fair start for a young man 23 years of age." (It is interesting to note that the Amateur Athletic Association marked the beginning of the St. Paul Athletic Club.)

His office was listed in the 1907 *St. Paul City Directory* as 28-34 East Sixth Street in downtown St. Paul and he was paying board and room at 1952 Ashland Avenue, in the Merriam Park neighborhood of St. Paul. It was the home of Charles J. Smith, his wife, Honora (Anna) Curran Smith, and their eight children. The oldest of their

three daughters, twenty-year-old Lillian, would marry Ignatius O'Shaughnessy a year later.

Charles J. Smith was the great grandson of a John Smith, who was born in 1798 in Alsace-Lorraine when the province was in French hands. Both he and his wife Catherine Andrias Schmitt, also born in Alsace-Lorraine in 1792, were of French ancestry. They emigrated to America, settled in Mishawaka, Indiana, where they bought some land, subdivided it, built a house, and had children. When they joined a German Catholic parish in 1863, the priest insisted that they use the German version of their names, so for a time they became Johannes Schmidt and Catharine Andrias.

Preceded by a line of three earlier John Smiths (Schmidts), Charles Smith, Lillian's father, was born in Mishawaka on July 7, 1854. On May 12, 1885 he and Honora (Anna) Curran, who had been born in Galway in 1862, were married at St. Mary's Catholic Church, then in St. Paul's Lowertown. They were living in Winona when Lillian was born on March 27, 1887, but soon moved to St. Paul. Smith was a master mechanic for the Minnesota Transfer Railway, a sprawling

district of shops and roundhouses just off Prior and University Avenue where he walked to work daily from their home, first at 1952 Ashland, and later at 2042 Iglehart Avenue, St. Paul. The children attended Longfellow elementary school and Central High School; the family attended St. Mark's Catholic Church.

How Lillian Smith and Ignatius O'Shaughnessy met is a story in itself. Both young people attended St. Mark's Catholic Church during Ignatius's school years at St. Thomas. St. Mark's had various social programs for its young parishioners, including Mississippi river boat excursions. It was on one of these river boat excursions on the "Capitol" that Ignatius met Lillian and her seven brothers and sisters who were there for an evening of cruising and dancing to music. Lillian's and I.A.'s nephew, Ronald Smith, remembers the story of how they began dating after one eventful Mississippi cruise. Their meeting might have played a part in the young Ignatius later on rooming and boarding at the Smiths' home on Ashland, and developing a close friendship with the Smith family. Clement E. Smith, Lillian Smith's brother, met his future wife, Myrle Day, on just such a river boat cruise and both couples later were married at St. Mark's Catholic Church, a few short blocks from the Smith home.

"My parents and uncles and aunts loved to talk about those riverboat excursions," Smith recalled. "I think Uncle Nashe was especially close to the Smith family because of those experiences and also because Lillian's five brothers shared his love of athletics. My Uncle Ray Smith was a star lineman for Central High School that played the University of Minnesota and won at just about the same time Uncle Nashe was starring in football at St. Thomas."

According to her son, Lawrence M. O'Shaughnessy, universally known as Larry, Lillian herself loved to tell another story of their courtship: "I was dating your father and he was dating me and we were going out together. One evening he said, 'May I kiss you?' I said, 'But we're not even engaged!' And he said, 'Okay, then, will you marry me?' And that's how I caught him."

They were married Wednesday morn-



On board ship, off for Europe in 1935. Behind I. A. and Lillian O'Shaughnessy are, left to right, Larry, John, Eileen, Marian, and Donald. From the I. A. O'Shaughnessy Foundation archives.

ing, October 7, 1908, at St. Mark's Church, "the Rev. Wm. Hart performing the ceremony," the *Pioneer Press* reported two days later:

The Misses Florence and Mabel, sisters of the bride were her maids of honor and bridesmaids, while Charles Sheeran of Fairbault, Minn., attended the groom. The ushers were E. G. North of Minneapolis and Prof. LaViolotin of St. Thomas College. During

the ceremony, Mrs. Eugene Hammersley North of Minneapolis rendered a number of solos. The bride entered the church accompanied by her father and wore a gown of white ivory satin. Following the ceremony, a wedding breakfast was served at the home of the bride's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Smith, 2042 Iglehart Avenue. The newly married couple departed at noon for an eastern trip and will be at home to their friends right after Dec. 1, at Houston, Texas.



Lario Oil & Gas Company drilled this gusher on the Wenrich lease in the Oxford Pool in Sumner County, Kansas. The photograph was taken on April 15, 1928. This well yielded Lario's first oil production and marked its beginning as a successful oil prospecting company. The Wenrich lease is still producing today. Photo reproduced by permission from the private collection of the Lario Oil & Gas Company.

Grandson J. Michael O'Shaughnessy recalls a family story that I. A.'s older brother John A. Jr., gave him \$500 with which he married Lillian, bought a car, and drove to Texas. John was twelve years older than I. A.

Houston had become I. A. O'Shaughnessy's new home shortly before his marriage. He left the Amateur Athletic Association in the spring of 1907 to join his older brother, who was establishing insurance agencies in Houston and Galveston,

an important port for shipping to Cuba, Key West, and other eastern ports-of-call. Although not much is known about him now, John A. O'Shaughnessy seems to have led a colorful life. In Minnesota he was famous for running the campaign that in 1900 elected John Lind, a Democrat, as governor. An immigrant from Sweden, Lind had been a teacher, lawyer, a three-term representative to Congress and in 1896 an unsuccessful candidate for governor. His election four years later broke the grip the Republicans had held on the governor's chair since the Civil War.

It's not surprising that Lind subsequently appointed John O'Shaughnessy insurance commissioner for the state of Minnesota. In 1900 John O'Shaughnessy was a Minnesota delegate to the Democratic National Convention that selected William Jennings Bryan as the party's candidate for the presidency. Several months later, in January of 1901, John O'Shaughnessy ended his term as insurance commissioner, or his term was ended for him, when Lind failed in his bid for reelection. By 1905 he had become vice president of Minnesota Mutual Life Insurance Company in St. Paul. A year later a report surfaced that as insurance commissioner he had accepted a \$5,000 bribe from an insurance company official, a charge O'Shaughnessy vigorously denied in a lengthy news story published in the *Minneapolis Journal*.

By this time John was in Texas. He had left behind him in his St. Paul household his wife, two children, two sisters-in-law and a mother-in-law, and he had established business and personal relationships in the southwestern states. He never returned to Minnesota. "He was lost to us from that time on," a great granddaughter, Margaret Bergen, remembered.

Instead, John A. had persuaded I. A. O'Shaughnessy and another brother, William, to join him when he opened a second agency in Houston. Their agencies spread into Mexico when John O'Shaughnessy negotiated a deal with the Mexican government to help sell life insurance to Mexican nationals. Offices in a number of Mexican cities were set up. Then the country became engulfed in a series of revolutions. Beginning with the Revolution of 1910, the dictator,

Porfirio Diaz, was overthrown and supplanted by Francisco Madero, who was murdered. General Victoriano Huerta succeeded Madero but was overthrown in turn by Venustiano Carranza. A popular revolutionary, Francisco (Pancho) Villa, began to terrorize northern Mexico. In an ill-fated expedition, he crossed the border into the United States, attacking Columbus, New Mexico, looting the town, and killing some of its inhabitants. President Woodrow Wilson reacted by ordering out a force under General John J. Pershing to deal with Villa, but the O'Shaughnessys' Mexican agencies already had been seized by whichever Mexican government was in power at the time.

I. A. O'Shaughnessy might have concluded there were safer places to do business. He parted from his brothers and organized the Bankers' Trust Company of Texas. Next he moved to Denver, Colorado, where he organized the Farmers Life Insurance Company, then went to work for Gates Tire Company.

There were personal as well as business reasons for I. A.'s move to Denver, Colorado. His daughter Eileen was ill and needed the higher, drier climate Denver offered. When World War I broke out, I. A. organized the Mid-Continent Tire Company of Wichita, Kansas, borrowed money, leased a factory, and began making tires to sell to the government. In 1917, with Wichita now his base of operations and his eye on the region's booming oil discoveries, he turned to oil refining. With two other local investors, I. A. established in February, 1917, the Globe Oil & Refining Company of Oklahoma.

He was entering a marketplace that was literally glowing with promise. America would shortly join the Allies in World War I and the United States would help them "float to victory on a sea of oil," as one historian of the oil industry has noted. At about the same time, a Standard Oil chemist named Dr. William M. Burton had patented a process that would give an enormous boost to the burgeoning oil industry. It was the art of "cracking," a way to greatly increase the percentage of gasoline that could be produced from a barrel of crude. In the years to come, as motorized vehicles, tanks, and airplanes



The well (top) that Lario Oil & Gas drilled on the Wenrich lease in 1928 drew a crowd of on-lookers. This well was not only an outstanding producer, it was also the first well ever drilled in Kansas using a hydraulic rotary system (below) instead of the older cable tool rig. Cable rigs were less expensive than rotary rigs, but rotaries typically drilled faster and to greater depths. Photo reproduced by permission from the private collection of the Lario Oil & Gas Company.





Three separate photographs form a panoramic view of one of Globe Oil's refineries in the 1930s. This facility is either the plant at McPherson, Kansas, or the one in Lemont, Illinois. Photo reproduced by permission from the private collection of the Lario Oil & Gas Company.

flooded onto the battlefields, high-octane gasoline that was produced through the cracking process was of critical importance for the combatants.

O'Shaughnessy was not in at the beginning of the great oil industry, but he was in at the end of that industry's beginning. In 1859 Colonel Edward E. Drake had drilled a successful well near Titusville, Pennsylvania, but oil's possibilities were slow to surface. Before the coming of the gaslight era in the late nineteenth century, Americans had used candles, whale oil, or camphene made from turpentine to light their homes. However, supplies of turpentine from the South and whale oil from the North fell off during the Civil War and necessity became the mother of invention. Chemists discovered they could "cleanse" or refine crude oil by using sulphuric acid to make cheap kerosene for home illumination. John D. Rockefeller, who built Standard Oil, entered the refining business in 1863 in Cleveland by investing in a company that was doing just that.

As a growing post-Civil War economy demanded kerosene and various lubricants made from petroleum, the search for oil spread to other parts of the country. The development of the internal combustion engine at the turn-of-the-century spurred demand for another product of the refineries: gasoline.

Early oil prospecting in Oklahoma, where O'Shaughnessy established his stake, had begun in the mid-1880s and revealed what came to be called the Mid-Continent oil and gas field. It spread

over much of the territory of Oklahoma and parts of Kansas, north Texas, southwestern Missouri, western Arkansas, and northwestern Louisiana.

Oklahoma's first big oil field was discovered in 1901 in the Tulsa-Red Fork area and led off a series of discoveries: Bartlesville in 1904, Okmulgee County in 1905, Cushing in 1912, Healdton in 1913, and Tonkawa in Kay County in 1921. (Tonkawa's name came from the Tonkawa Indians who had been removed from Texas in 1885 and resettled in the area west of Ponca City, Oklahoma.) The field was about fifteen miles south of Blackwell and thirteen miles from Ponca City, then a major oil-refining center. With ample reserves of crude oil and a huge supply of gas, it soon became a major center for manufacturing gasoline.

In Kansas, one of the first commercial oil wells was drilled in 1893 near Neodesha in the southeastern part of the state, and Kansas joined the booming oil states with the discovery of oil in 1917 at El Dorado in Butler County. In the heart of the Kansas portion of the Mid-Continent field, El Dorado was about thirty miles northeast of Wichita. Prospectors found oil only 600 feet down, a relatively shallow depth that gave small operators, and especially wildcatters, a better chance of striking oil and also reduced their drilling costs.

When America entered the war and O'Shaughnessy was still in Wichita, oil had been discovered outside the Oklahoma towns of Garber and Billings. He decided to set up an office in nearby

Enid, a city of some 15,000 inhabitants in north central Oklahoma. In his unpublished history of Globe Oil, Francis L. Jehle, the new company's bookkeeper and stenographer and for a time its only employee, has left a vivid description of their early months in Enid. He and I. A. took a Rock Island train from Wichita to Enid and were shown rooms in the First National Bank building that were suitable for an office. Then, like any other businessmen, Jehle wrote,

"... The next thing we did was to go down to an office supply store and buy some furniture and record books. . . . The summer was unusually hot. Water hardly flowed from the faucets on the second floor [of the bank building] and that which could be obtained had a very reddish color. . . . The object of the company was to build and operate a refinery, and efforts were made to obtain crude oil for its operation from the new producing areas, but we were not successful, although a site for the location of a refinery was purchased."

They needed to find another source of crude for the proposed refinery. O'Shaughnessy explored the area and decided to obtain land and build a plant at Blackwell, a town of some 7,000 people in north central Oklahoma. He moved the company's office there. Despite the war, Jehle wrote, "it was still possible to buy most of the needed materials, but transportation was difficult. Blackwell was located on branch lines of the Santa Fe and Frisco railroads and this in itself created some delay, but material actually

used in the war effort was given every priority”

Leases were something else again. From the oil industry’s earliest days, nearly all commercial drilling operations in the country were carried out under a lease from the landowner. But obtaining oil leasing rights in Oklahoma was complicated. Much of the land where oil was thought to be located lay within the reservations of the Choctaw, Creek, Ponca, Osage, Seminole, Cherokee, and other Indian tribes. Oil prospectors had to negotiate their leases from tribal leaders, as well as the U. S. Department of the Interior. In return, landowners received royalties based on the number of barrels of crude oil a well produced. For the impoverished Native Americans, oil royalties were a huge windfall. Local printers also reaped a bonanza in the printing of blank lease forms with the standard legal language and other provisions both parties needed to agree on before drilling could begin.

By 1907, when Oklahoma became a state, its wells were producing forty-three million barrels annually; in 1915, production had grown to seventy-two million barrels, nearly 20 percent of all the oil produced in the United States, which by that time was the largest oil-producing country in the world. Because oil prospectors paid all costs of drilling and hoped for the best, in the 1920s about a third of the wells turned out to be dry and the risk of financial failure in the oil business was high.

In Blackwell, O’Shaughnessy’s fledgling company rented three rooms in the bank building, hired a “local girl to do the stenographic work,” and a timekeeper for the plant. “We laid a four-inch pipeline from the [refinery] plant to the Blackwell Field,” Jehle wrote. O’Shaughnessy also negotiated leases from two other operators, and contracted for the purchase of their oil.

Unstated, but clearly evident from Jehle’s account, is the fact that O’Shaughnessy was in the right business at the right time. “The first oil was run through the plant on February 22, 1918,” Jehle wrote. “The capacity was 1,500 barrels per day. The crude oil used in its operation was an unusually high grade type.” The build-

World War II service. O’Shaughnessy did more for his country than serve as a Dollar-a-Year man on the National Petroleum Board. He also paid for a series of patriotic radio broadcasts on WMIN. This undated ad is from the Minneapolis Star Tribune. O’Shaughnessy papers, Minnesota Historical Society collections.

ing of oil refineries and the production of various petroleum products would be the hallmark of O’Shaughnessy’s career in the oil business.

Although once honored as “king of the wildcats,” O’Shaughnessy preferred to be known as an oil refiner, Michael W. O’Shaughnessy remembered. While much of the oil industry’s public notoriety has hinged on the colorful and flamboyant wildcatters—the legendary, immensely wealthy Thomas B. Slick was “king of the wildcats”—they were dependent on the refiners who turned crude into a wide variety of petroleum products. Instead, O’Shaughnessy hired geologists, carefully sought out producing wells, bought their oil, refined it, and sold it.

His company’s manufacture of aviation gasoline and its sale to various army air fields showed “a nice operating profit in the beginning,” Jehle noted, “although it was necessary to pay a premium to obtain a supply of oil.” Jehle

recalled that their work week was typical of the times:

It was six days a week and on Sunday it was the custom to go to the post office to pick up mail and take it to the office. Since I was unmarried, my Sundays were usually spent with Mr. O’Shaughnessy at the office. Naturally, during these occasions I had an opportunity to become fairly well acquainted with him. We would spend part of our time in the shade of the office throwing a baseball back and forth. We even had a bat and would do a little hitting.

If O’Shaughnessy missed his family at such a time, he evidently never said so. By 1918, however, Lillian O’Shaughnessy had had enough of moving her household from place to place and her children from school to school. Their first two children, John and Eileen, had been born in Houston and Marian in Denver. They had lived in Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas, and Colorado. Lillian O’Shaughnessy had to manage those moves and she saw

how difficult they were for her children. In addition, family members recall, she was uncomfortable in what was for her an alien environment, the roistering oil patch communities of the southwest. Blackwell, Oklahoma, was not sophisticated, cultured St. Paul, Minnesota, with its broad boulevards, its well-built houses, its theaters, and its shops. She was afraid, according to family stories, of the recently affluent Indians who flooded into town. In short, Blackwell wasn't home for her.

She finally took her frustrations and her fears to her husband. As Larry O'Shaughnessy told the story, "She said, 'Nashe, I can't raise a family like this. I need to go home.'" He said, 'All right,' and brought her back to Minnesota. Don and I were the real beneficiaries of that move. We were born in Minnesota. When we were finally settled, my brother John, then about nine or ten, asked, 'Now can we stay here forever? Can I go to school here forever?'"

They lived first in Incarnation parish in south Minneapolis and several other neighborhoods before buying, in 1928, the house at 1705 Summit Avenue that was their home for the rest of their lives. "The number 1705 adds up to thirteen," Larry O'Shaughnessy observed, "and my father always regarded that as his lucky number. I followed in that tradition. The numbers of the first three houses I lived in with my wife Betty all added up to thirteen."

O'Shaughnessy, however, was gone for long periods of time traveling the Midwest and Southwest, looking for producing wells and sites for refineries. Early in 1920 the company built its own office building near the Blackwell plant and that remained the center of his operations until the mid-1930s.

Even so, the oil industry often was up and down—true generally throughout the industry, even though the end of World War I had unleashed thousands of war-surplus vehicles (three million trucks were on the road) and factories were churning out new automobiles and trucks. All of them needed oil and gasoline. Globe Oil obtained its crude from producing wells in the Blackwell area, but toward the end of 1918, production from the leases declined to such an extent

that the Blackwell plant was operating at about 50 percent of capacity. On the other hand, a few months later O'Shaughnessy negotiated a contract for crude oil with a company that was producing a substantial amount of oil from the Blackwell Field. Sometimes there weren't enough tank cars to move Globe Oil's products from the refinery to the jobbers located in Midwestern cities.

"Up to this time, Jehle wrote, "all of the products produced and sold at the plant were shipped in tank cars provided by the buyer. We sold considerable fuel oil to the Santa Fe [Railroad] and they not only furnished their own equipment for this transaction, but we were also able to use a large number [of tank cars] in making shipments to large fuel oil consuming centers such as Chicago."

Local conditions continued to confront Globe Oil as it operated in northern



I. A. O'Shaughnessy in midlife.



Lillian O'Shaughnessy. Both photos are courtesy of Ronald Smith.

Oklahoma and southern Kansas. Each time a new pool of oil was opened, transportation of the crude to Globe Oil and other refineries was a problem. Pipelines were not yet widely used, but those that were carried the crude from storage tanks to refineries. Tank cars then shipped the refined products to brokers who sent them on to customers.

While a 1918 oil business compendium, the *Illustrated Discovery of Oil* declared there was "no [financial] risk" associated with refinery operations, there was in fact plenty of risk. O'Shaughnessy and others had to find investors, raise the capital to build a plant, hire a skilled plant superintendent who in turn would hire competent workers to run it, maintain safety standards, and keep operating costs low enough to deliver a profit. A case in point: Sometime during the 1920s, O'Shaughnessy contracted with two prospectors to drill near Deer Creek in Grant County, Oklahoma, twenty miles north of Blackwell. Globe Oil provided most of the equipment. It was the rainy season. Teams hauling the pipe bogged down in the muddy dirt roads and drivers and teams could manage only eight miles a day at \$1 per ton-mile. After all that, it was a dry well. By the time the company abandoned the well at 3,290 feet, almost \$50,000 had been paid out.

O'Shaughnessy's first plant superintendent was Carl B. Haun, whom he had met on the train he took to Blackwell to establish his first refinery. Haun apparently was a gifted manager and although he later moved into business for himself, he and I. A. remained on good terms. Globe Oil documents indicate that O'Shaughnessy was a master at dealing

with people. He possessed the people skills needed to establish a successful company. Moreover, he was a quick study and a hard worker with the sort of persistence that defied obstacles and barriers. He repaid the loyalty of men like Francis Jehle with steady advancement in the company. In addition, I. A. was ahead of his time in introducing various employee benefits because he thought it made good business sense to reward workers over and above their paychecks. He was one of the first in the oil business to allow his workers to establish a company union "for their own protection."

"It was difficult, in those years, to make money in the refining business," Jehle wrote. "In fact for every profitable year, we would have one bad year, and perhaps two. That was prevalent throughout the entire industry." At one point O'Shaughnessy had to mortgage the Blackwell plant and sell some high gravity gasoline at low market prices but leave it in the tanks awaiting a price increase, "which never came."

Despite setbacks, O'Shaughnessy and his company were moving fast during the 1920s. Leases were purchased, companies created, refineries built. Globe Oil became an innovator in the industry when it was the first to take out a commercial license under cracking patents held by Dr. Walter Cross of Kansas City. Cross furnished a construction engineer to supervise the Globe employees as they installed and operated his new process. The product the Cross Cracking Still delivered was called "synthetic" crude and it was rerun through the Cross equipment to make gasoline. With the help of the Cross innovation, the refinery operation expanded and plant output rose to 5,000 barrels a day at first, and 8,000 barrels later. Still, O'Shaughnessy was forced to negotiate with major oil companies in the area to obtain a steady supply of crude, often at a premium price per barrel. Competition from the "majors," as they were known in the industry, was growing tougher for the "independents," refiners like O'Shaughnessy.

In 1926 O'Shaughnessy began providing investment capital to Tom Palmer, a wildcat oil driller in Ponca City. This led to Globe acquiring a half interest in



O'Shaughnessy surveying the auditorium in the O'Shaughnessy Education Center he gave the University of St. Thomas. Special Collections, University of St. Thomas.

a lease near another field, known as the Oxford Pool, in Sumner County, Kansas. The drilling of that well was so highly productive that it led to the formation of the Lario Oil & Gas Company with Jehle, Palmer, and O'Shaughnessy himself as the first directors. It was incorporated in Delaware on July 10, 1927. According to Michael W. O'Shaughnessy, the first thirteen wells were drilled with cable tools. The fourteenth well was drilled with a rotary rig, the first well in Kansas to be drilled with a rotary assembly. Average daily production in 1928 was 2,420 barrels; through 1934 cumulative production was 2,780, 224 barrels, but in 1931 oil was selling for as little as 32.5 cents per barrel. The Oxford Pool (Wenrich lease) is still producing and operated by Lario Oil & Gas Company today as part of what is now the privately-held O'S Companies, Inc. On July 15, 1927,

the three directors organized the Don Oil Company, also incorporated in Delaware. O'Shaughnessy named his companies for his two youngest sons: Lario (for Larry), Don (for Donald). The purpose of The Don Company was to drill for crude oil in eastern Kay County, Oklahoma. (Later the company was sold, then liquidated in 1963.)

During the late 1920s and into the 1930s, I. A. O'Shaughnessy and others organized or acquired other companies in Oklahoma and Kansas to drill for crude oil on leases they owned. The organizational and operating intricacies of the oil companies, "majors" and "independents," were apparent, for example when Globe Oil & Refining Company of Delaware was incorporated on July 18, 1928, to acquire crude oil from Shell Oil. The crude that Shell, a "major" produced, was then refined in a Globe plant in Cushing,



O'Shaughnessy and the library known today as the O'Schaughnessy/Frey Center. I. A. O'Shaughnessy Foundation archives.

Oklahoma, which Globe, an “independent” leased from Sinclair Oil, another “major.” The light refined products processed at Globe’s Cushing refinery were then sold back to Shell.

A year later, Globe of Delaware began operation of a leased refinery in Tonkawa. That year also, O’Shaughnessy’s refineries began to use the Winkler-Koch cracking process. Standard Oil of Indiana, a major oil company, claimed that Globe and other refineries that used the Winkler-Koch cracking process had infringed on Standard’s patent for this method of cracking. A lawsuit followed claiming patent infringement by Globe and other refiners. Three years later, when the suit finally came to trial, the federal judge ruled that Globe’s use of the process was not an infringement, sparing Globe the payment of substantial royalties to Standard Oil.

* * * *

The New York Stock Exchange’s memorable crash in 1929 seems to have stirred few ripples in O’Shaughnessy’s financial stream. Larry O’Shaughnessy described his father’s philosophy:

Like most entrepreneurial businessmen in

the Middle West and West, my father didn’t like those people on Wall Street. He thought that what was going on economically in his companies shouldn’t be determined by Wall Street and its fluctuating stock prices. He had the old-fashioned idea that the only way to make money honestly was to produce something and sell it. That was his lifelong conviction. He never really trusted Wall Street. He was a very conservative investor whenever he invested in anything on the open market. He tended to invest directly in companies that made money, not in the market. He didn’t play the market. He invested in business. He relied on his own business to create companies that were prosperous in finding oil and refining it.

My father’s private holdings were mainly in his own companies, but he also had a lot of municipal bonds. He was very proud of those bonds. They were only producing 2 or 3 percent, but it was all tax free. He said, “Isn’t that great?”

By the mid-1930s, I. A. O’Shaughnessy was head of one of the largest independently owned oil companies in the world. In Oklahoma, an early history of the oil business noted, by 1930 refining was the largest manufacturing business in the state, and O’Shaughnessy was pushing even farther afield. He organized the Globe Oil & Refining Company of Illinois. He bought a small refinery in Lemont, Illinois, to obtain oil from Muskegon, Michigan, and sell it in the Chicago area. O’Shaughnessy hired George Woodruff, an Englishman, who had been with Shell Oil. “and was in the Chicago office and a close associate of my father’s,” Larry O’Shaughnessy remembered. “I think my father respected his ability; he felt that he knew what he was doing because he’d been with Shell.” With Woodruff’s help, Globe and its Lemont refinery were strategically positioned to provide oil and gasoline to the Chicago market.

The discovery of large pools of oil in East Texas and Oklahoma City in the early 1930s, however, created an over supply of oil and brought down the price of crude as well as its products. In one of the first instances of an independent refiner obtaining oil by way of a pipeline owned by a major oil company, O’Shaughnessy, who was always an industry innovator,

negotiated with the jointly owned Empire Oil and Refining Company and The Texas Company in Houston. He wanted a higher grade of oil for the Lemont plant than had been coming from Michigan. At almost the same time, the Lario company began active crude oil production in the Ritz-Canton Pool in McPherson County, Kansas. This new source of crude permitted O’Shaughnessy to establish Globe Oil & Refining of Kansas, build a refinery there, and install the latest in cracking equipment.

The Great Depression that followed the 1929 stock market crash had worsened. The struggling economy strained Globe Oil’s resources and set off a seesaw pattern. The company made money in 1933, lost more than \$700,000 in 1934, and lost money again in 1937, 1938, and 1939. In response to the national crisis, Congress in 1933 passed the National Industrial Recovery Act (NIRA). The act, among other things, established the Petroleum Administration under Secretary of the Interior Harold F. Ickes, who also ran the Public Works Administration. The Roosevelt administration appointed O’Shaughnessy to the NIRA Planning and Coordinating Committee, which was responsible to the Petroleum Administration for implementing the oil codes relating to refinery operations. Under the NIRA codes, petroleum industry leaders worked out ways to restrict crude oil production and allocate it equitably among the various producers and refineries. Nevertheless, Globe Oil’s losses in 1934 led to the closing of the Blackwell plant in Oklahoma and moving its operations to the refinery in McPherson, north of Wichita in central Kansas.

In 1935 a letter dated January 3 reached O’Shaughnessy in St. Paul. It was from Carl B. Haun, president of the Blackwell Chamber of Commerce—the same Carl Haun O’Shaughnessy had hired to run his Blackwell plant when it first began operations. Haun eloquently described the effect the plant closing had had on the town’s economy and its people. “Dear I. A.,” he wrote in part:

I know it is not necessary for me to detail to you the blow it is to this town to have your refinery not operating. . . . I know from past



O'Shaughnessy Hall at the University of St. Thomas. This was I.A.'s first major gift to St. Thomas. I. A. O'Shaughnessy Foundation archives.

With reference to our carrying a substantial account at the [Blackwell] bank, you need have no fear of our reducing the amount for quite some time, I am sure. If at any time you feel as though you would like to have the amount increased, let me know and I will see what I can do . . . I will always have a warm spot in my heart for Blackwell.

The episode demonstrated the impact of the depression on the oil industry. It also revealed O'Shaughnessy's ability to deliver bad news with kindness and warmth and his capacity for demonstrating his humanity toward others.

* * * *

At the same time that I. A. O'Shaughnessy was wrestling with New Deal policies and the day-to-day responsibilities of running a complex oil refinery business, he also found time to indulge one of his passions: athletic competition in the form of a Globe Oil-sponsored semi-professional basketball team known as the Globe Refiners. In those days many semiprofessional teams played under the sponsorship of companies such as Globe Oil and all the players worked for their sponsoring companies. The Refiners' coach, Gene Johnson, built his team around a center who was six feet eight inches tall, a forward who was six feet nine, and several outstanding guards. At the end of the 1935-1936 Amateur Athletic Union's season, after beating a strong collegiate team from Temple University, then losing in the finals by one point to the Universal Pictures team from Hollywood, California, six of the Refiners were selected for the U. S. Olympic team—the team that played in the Olympic Games which a frustrated Adolf Hitler watched in Munich, Germany, in 1936. The U. S. team won the gold medal in basketball.

The McPherson team was described in a 1936 edition of the *New York Times* by the famous sportswriter, Arthur J. Daley. Under the headline, "Awesome Kansas Giants Reverse Basketball Lay-Up Shot Process," he chronicled the "fabulous feats" of the McPherson Oilers, the "refinery-sponsored team that awed fans and opponents by dunking during practices and warm-ups." After a McPherson

experience you and I have had in the refining business that it is impossible to operate a plant when you are losing money on the basis that it really can be lost in that business. I am wondering if there is anything you can tell us which we can pass on to the businessmen of Blackwell as to what the possibilities are of your future operations. Your payroll is the only payroll in this town which is of any particular benefit as your employees receive sufficient money to indulge in some of the luxuries of life as well as live on a higher plane than the ordinary laborer or worker in this community; consequently it is a very serious blow to the business institutions of this town. I want to assure you that . . . the businessmen of the community and the city officials will do anything in their power to expedite the opening of your refinery . . .

Haun's plea was an eerie echo of Stillwater's plight when the lumber industry began to fade during O'Shaughnessy's boyhood. Unable to offer much hope, I. A. explained that operating under the NIRA "has been anything but profitable for the independent refiners:"

As you know, an artificial price of \$1.00 was established for crude oil about fifteen

months ago and during this entire period I know of no refiner but who lost every month during this period. As you know, we are regulated as to the amount of gasoline we can manufacture and we find it possible to take care of our entire requirements at our McPherson plant, but during the past year, rather than shut down our Blackwell plant and throw a lot of men out of employment, we elected to take our chance in the hopes that conditions would get better each month so that we would at least break even. This was a wild dream on my part and had I exercised a little common sense I should have closed the plant down last January. However, after having men working for you for 17 or 18 years it is not easy to just walk away from them, after they have given you the best of their services. Finally necessity compelled us to make this move.

In mid-1936, O'Shaughnessy moved the Blackwell sales office to the main sales office in Wichita. Again Haun wrote, asking if anything could be done to keep a Globe Oil presence in Blackwell. I. A. responded that he had hesitated closing the Blackwell office "more for sentimental reasons than otherwise:"

workout at New York's West Side YMCA for the 1936 Olympic trials, which the Oiler won en route to claiming the Olympic gold medal, Daley wrote:

The McPherson version of a lay-up shot left observers simply flabbergasted. Joe Fortenberry, 6-foot-8-inch center, and Willard Schmidt, 6-foot-9-inch forward, did not use an ordinary curling toss. Not those giants. They left the floor, reached up and pitched the ball downward into the hoop, much like a cafeteria customer dunking a roll in coffee.

There were other matters on O'Shaughnessy's mind during the mid-thirties, among them politics. Although nothing in the O'Shaughnessy files identifies any specific political affiliation (*Who's Who in America* listed him as an Independent), he seems to have been attuned to the political winds of the time. His financial contribution to Alfred Landon's failed campaign for the presidency in 1936 is understandable. Globe Oil's headquarters were in Kansas; Landon was a favorite son of Kansas and he also was a progressive in such issues as oil prorationing and conservation that very likely O'Shaughnessy also supported. After noting the "unanimous nomination" of Landon, the Landon-for-President Committee wrote O'Shaughnessy that "it means our country's soul has been stirred as never before. . . . You have played a big part. . . ."and the Landon Committee is deeply appreciative."

J. Michael O'Shaughnessy remembers that he "spent many hours with Granddad watching the political conventions [on television]. His basic theory was that they were all crooks but you had to work with them."

On the other hand, the O'Shaughnessy papers contain an invitation to the White House, dated January 20, 1937 (the very day of Franklin D. Roosevelt's second inaugural) that suggests I. A. was invited to the post-inauguration reception. Perhaps this was in recognition of his service on the oil board under Harold Ickes. More telling is a letter from Robert E. Hannegan, chairman of the Democratic National Committee and dated October 16, 1945:

Dear Mr. O'Shaughnessy: President Truman



O'Shaughnessy Hall of Liberal and Fine Arts at the University of Notre Dame, South Bend, Indiana. I. A. O'Shaughnessy Foundation archives.

would like very much to have you visit with him on Friday, October 26, at 11:45 a.m. I do hope that you can arrange to be present at the White House Executive Offices a little before 11:45 a.m. I am looking forward to seeing you on that date.

And on January 12, 1946, a letter from political operative John A. Hastings reached O'Shaughnessy in Florida:

Dear I. A.: Bob [Hannegan] asked me to talk with you confidentially about your willingness to accept in the immediate future the post of United States Minister to Australia. He has not changed his mind about Ireland or Mexico but thinks the Australian post is particularly attractive and one intensively sought after by people in the Diplomatic "know."

Obviously, O'Shaughnessy must have said no. Perhaps neither of the O'Shaughnessys had any interest in relocating to Canberra. The O'Shaughnessy files reveal his continual financial support of candidates from the Democratic side of the aisle: Minnesota Congressman Eugene McCarthy sent a thank you for

I. A.'s support in his successful campaign for the Senate, and a similar letter came from former Senator and Vice President Hubert Humphrey, also.

It is ironic that in 1936, three years after O'Shaughnessy and other industry leaders struggled with the NIRA codes aimed at stabilizing oil production and prorating supplies among producers, the oilmen were confronted with a massive antitrust lawsuit known famously as the Madison Cases. Basically, price-fixing was the charge, even though the Petroleum Administration under Ickes had in effect asked the oilmen to do just that. Inevitably, oil conservation, combined with an improving economy, had created a rise in prices. Another part of the problem lay in the Roosevelt Administration's tangle with the U.S. Supreme Court and its invalidation of some New Deal programs as unconstitutional. NIRA was one of them. With the dismantling of NIRA, oil producers were thrown on their own to control prices. Tank Car Stabilization Committees were formed in the major refining districts of the United States. Under this program, major refiners



O'Shaughnessy and Father Hesburgh with Pope Paul VI, who called the Ecumenical Institute for Advanced Theological Study "the greatest thing that has happened in my reign." I. A. O'Shaughnessy Foundation archives.

bought up some of the small, independent producers' "excess" production. In the industry, this program was known as "dancing partners;" and it not only stabilized prices but also kept them at a higher level. Jobbers (wholesalers who sold oil and gas to retail operators) complained and the government went to court under the 1890 Sherman Anti-Trust Act.

In April, 1936, a federal grand jury was impaneled in Madison, Wisconsin, a venue that upset the oil companies. Wisconsin was not an oil-producing state. Moreover, it was the home of Robert M.

LaFollette Sr., founder of the Progressive party, and many Progressives were hostile toward big business, including Big Oil.

Indictments were handed down to twenty-three oil companies, three trade publications, and fifty-eight company executives, Globe Oil of Oklahoma, Globe Oil of Kansas, Globe Oil of Illinois, and O'Shaughnessy himself among them. When a second indictment was issued later in 1936, O'Shaughnessy and the three Globe companies were again named. Chief counsel for the defense

was Colonel William J. ("Wild Bill") Donovan, the colorful, high-priced Wall Street lawyer. Colonel of the "Fighting 69th Regiment of World War I fame, Donovan is best remembered today for his role in heading the Office of Strategic Services in World War II. (OSS was the predecessor of the CIA.) Stories abound that his wealthy clients didn't do much to help their case, arriving as they did in limousines and spending lavishly while in Madison.

Be that as it may, sixteen companies and thirty individuals were found guilty or pleaded *nolo contendere* and were fined \$5,000 each. Globe Oil of Illinois and Globe Oil of Oklahoma were found guilty under the first indictment and paid their \$5,000 fines. The charges brought under the second indictment of the three Globe companies and of O'Shaughnessy himself under both indictments were dismissed in 1940 for lack of evidence.

It was a long-drawn out proceeding, appealed and reversed and appealed again, dragged through the courts for the next ten years until finally sputtering out in the late 1940s as the U. S. Justice Department turned to what it apparently thought were more critical issues.

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While I. A. was coping with the seesaw swings of oil production, with the NIRA, the Great Depression, and the Madison Cases, his children were growing up and moving out. John F. O'Shaughnessy, the O'Shaughnessys' oldest son, was the first to go. He had joined Globe Oil back in 1932. He graduated from Georgetown University in Washington, D. C., spent a year at Harvard Law School, discovered that he disliked law, then reported to the company's main office in Wichita. His father had a rigorous indoctrination program awaiting him. "You've got to learn the business from the ground up," he told him, according to Larry O'Shaughnessy. "He put John on an oil rig manned by roughnecks, hard-nosed guys capable of treating a young man pretty roughly, especially an educated man, which they were not. My mother used to worry about that. Then John fell ill, I think with typhoid fever, and that ended his days on those rigs." He was assigned to company

headquarters in Wichita and there he remained. He married Lucille Weygand of Wichita.

Don, John, and I all went to St. Thomas Military Academy before striking out in other directions. Marian went to the University of Minnesota for two years, then married a navy man, Charles Lyman (who was on the deck of the *Missouri* when the Japanese surrendered). After his death, she married Tom Burke, who was in hotel management at the Hilton Hotel, perhaps the largest hotel in the United States at that time. Marian was very social and supported many arts and music events, especially in the Chicago area. She possessed a fine mezzo soprano voice and considered a career as a professional singer; instead, she poured her energy into supporting arts and music organizations.

Eileen graduated from St.-Mary-of-the-Woods in Terre Haute, Indiana, where she met her husband, John T. O'Shaughnessy. Although he bore the same last name, he was not related to the I. A. O'Shaughnessy family. They met when he drove down from Notre Dame to attend a dance at St. Mary's. Eileen graduated with honors in history. Back in St. Paul, she worked with the Mexican community on the West Side. Her husband worked for a time with Globe Oil in Wichita before practicing law, his father's profession, in Chicago.

Don went to Notre Dame, but his college education was disrupted by World War II. Because of his training at St. Thomas Military Academy, he was called into the army immediately after Pearl Harbor. He became captain of an all-African American transportation company, first in New York, then in Louisiana. Once in the infirmary there, one of his soldiers became enraged and pulled a knife. Don had to disarm him. After completing college at the end of the war, he married Barbara Streeter from St. Paul and managed Lario Oil & Gas Company offices in Midland, Texas. Eventually he became president, succeeding his brother John.

I married Elizabeth Beatson and after her death, Bonnie Carlson. I spent the first two years of college at St. Thomas where my grades were excellent—suspiciously so. I decided I wanted more challenge. I decided to enter Yale and my father agreed. I trained as an English teacher there and at

the University of Minnesota and I taught for three years at St. Thomas. I began work on a doctorate in literature, but I felt the need to “give back,” so I became active in many different civic organizations. I was the only son who never worked for the family companies. Later on, of course, I became president of the I. A. O'Shaughnessy Foundation.

He profoundly regrets that his brothers and sisters are no longer alive to share their own memories and insights of their years together. Larry O'Shaughnessy particularly remembers the family's early years, the 1930s and 1940s. His mother, he said, was a socially shy person. “Because my father was out of the city so often during his early career, she didn't make many new contacts in St. Paul, beyond her immediate family. He was doing well in business, but many others who built homes and fortunes here were ‘old money’ and did not always welcome ‘new money.’ My mother attended only those events, civic or social, that my father felt were necessary for her to attend. Later on, of course, after he was so successful, my father was accepted everywhere, and mother was somewhat forced to accept more public attention.”

Traveling widely, commuting around the southwest by rail or car, and away for several months at a time, I. A. O'Shaughnessy spent as much time as possible with his family when he was home in St. Paul. In 1926 he packed them all into the family car and took them to Glacier and Yellowstone Parks. Larry, then aged five, remembered an encounter he had with a prairie dog. As he grabbed its tail, his father shouted, “Let go! It will bite you! And it almost did bite me!”

He would tell his children stories and jokes. He loved fishing. He taught his sons to fish, and took them along on fishing trips, some of them into Canada. In 1935 he took his family to Europe, to Iceland, first, then to Denmark, Finland, Norway, England, Moscow, St. Petersburg, and Germany (where they watched men, the so-called Brown Shirts, training with shovels on their shoulders in lieu of guns). But they didn't visit Ireland. In 1938, as Hitler's vise tightened on Europe, he took them on a trip around South

America. He never discussed business on these trips or his business acquaintances, or his family in Stillwater or other family matters. According to his son, “he wasn't reluctant to talk. He just didn't.”

Not so Lillian O'Shaughnessy, who loved to tell stories about her family, about her brothers and sisters, and about their parents. They were close knit and remained so all of their lives, Larry O'Shaughnessy remembered:

I might have been the recipient of more confidences than other members of our family. My mother and I got along splendidly, perhaps because when I was very young, I had a severe case of scarlet fever. They thought I might die. It was hard to control those diseases at that time. I was quarantined. I remember my mother saying “I came into your room last night. You were so white that I was worried sick.” My father and mother were very private in their relationship as husband and wife. I knew they loved each other. They just weren't demonstrative. Perhaps that was the culture of the period.

My father never carried a wallet. He stuffed his money in his pockets. I don't know if it was carelessness or self-confidence. Whenever my mother wanted money, she'd raid his pockets. He never missed it. He must have had supreme confidence in his ability to raise money, to succeed. Once he got into some financial trouble. My mother told me this. He needed a little money to get out. She asked, “How much do you need?” He said, “About \$5,000.” And she said, “Well, that's about how much I've got right here.” She'd accumulated the money over a period of years. At first she was always afraid he would lose his money, so she was careful. She thought he was extravagant. At one time she said, “Can't you just earn enough money to pay our bills?” He replied, “Should I then just turn off the faucet?”

Certainly he was generous. His philanthropy, his pattern of giving that marked the last three decades of his life developed as early as the 1930s, with modest contributions of which there is little record. There is a touching story about a \$500 gift to a priest “so he could be properly attired” for a special ceremony. His first major gift, however, came in 1939 in the waning of the depression, and it went to the College

of St. Thomas. Perhaps his long remembered admiration of Father Dolphin and Father Moynihan influenced him on behalf of St. Thomas; perhaps it was the fact that his three sons had begun their educations at St. Thomas Military Academy; or perhaps it was his earlier election to the St. Thomas Board of Trustees, that aroused his awareness of the college's pressing needs. At any rate, he told the trustees that he would provide \$300,000 to underwrite construction of the badly needed St. Thomas Athletic Center, later renamed O'Shaughnessy Hall. Total cost would turn out to be something over \$400,000. Designed by the St. Paul architectural firm, Ellerbe Company, the new building was a three-story Gothic structure clad in sandstone and housing a gymnasium, one of the finest swimming pools in the state at the time, basketball courts, handball and squash courts, bowling alleys, therapeutic rooms, offices, classrooms, club rooms, even a handsomely furnished lounge for faculty and student meetings. Later, in 1941 an O'Shaughnessy gift supported construction of the O'Shaughnessy Stadium.

He was just in time. Following the Pearl Harbor attack in December, 1941, plans for a new science hall at St. Thomas were shelved "for the duration." It was almost impossible to obtain structural steel, except for projects the federal Office of Production and Management deemed "immediately necessary for defense or for the health and safety of the nation." Arguments with OPM that a new science hall would enhance St. Thomas's contribution to the war effort were to no avail. The project was suspended.

In any case, O'Shaughnessy's attention was diverted elsewhere. He became, as he had during the earlier crisis of the Great Depression, a spokesman for the independent oil producers of America and was often in Washington. Four days after America entered the war, the U. S. government created the Petroleum Industry Council for National Defense (later called the Petroleum Industry War Council or PIWC) under the leadership of Harold Ickes whom Roosevelt named as Petroleum Coordinator for National Defense. O'Shaughnessy was one of seventy-two oil leaders Ickes appointed to the PIWC.



O'Shaughnessy with his children: Eileen, left; Larry, Marian, John, and Donald.

He also served on the Committee on Products and on the local Refining Committee and he was chairman of the Manpower Sub-Committee that served the Refinery Committee District 2.

The PIWC's daunting task was to substantially increase the production of crude from the nation's oil wells, increase the volume of refined oil, gasoline, and lubricants to meet the growing needs of the armed forces and the public, and help speed up the delivery of petroleum products to the military and civilian distribution centers. Among their problems were the Nazi U-boat operations off the East Coast that left large areas of the East starved for gasoline and fuel oil. Few tankers could make a safe transit from Gulf coast refineries to eastern distribution centers. The oilmen delivered. By 1945 national output of refinery products had risen 32 percent to some 5 million barrels a day. O'Shaughnessy served voluntarily as a "dollar a year man" throughout the entire four years of the war.

His willingness to volunteer his time to his country during the war carried over to his approach to philanthropy. His first major gift to St. Thomas College of the athletic center that became O'Shaughnessy Hall established a pattern. He was not a passive giver who left

the details to others. He invested the time it took to make sure a project was done properly. He followed every step of the St. Thomas project, from the planning phase, the development of the architectural design, and the actual construction, and he would continue to do so with most of his later philanthropic projects.

In 1941 he established the I. A. O'Shaughnessy Foundation as a way of formalizing and introducing some order into the philanthropy that had become a dominant force in his life. Several other factors were involved too. Estate taxes, for one. He knew that his friend, Frank Phillips, one of the brothers who founded the Phillips Petroleum Company in 1917 (best known as Phillips 66 and today part of Conoco Phillips) had set up a foundation in 1937. I. A. also knew that other wealthy business owners created foundations where they could "park" family stock and maintain control of it. "That wasn't my father's primary purpose, however," Larry O'Shaughnessy recalled. "For him, it was a tool. It helped him give back. He understood that great wealth carries heavy social responsibilities."

I. A. ran the Foundation himself from an office on the top floor of the First National Bank building in downtown St. Paul. He made his own decisions as to

what he would support and when. He was in charge. He provided the same kind of management acumen and scrutiny that he gave to his business projects; the Foundation, in a sense became an extension of his business, and he brought to it the same results-oriented drive that he had to his oil companies. Looking back, Msgr. Terrence Murphy said he believed that no one, not even his family members, ever knew how much he really gave, or to whom.

What is widely known, however, is that education for young people, particularly but not necessarily within a Catholic environment, was at the top of his list. "Without education," he often said, "people don't succeed." He placed few limitations on his philanthropy, there were few areas he would not support. His concept of how the Foundation should function was simplicity itself. "My children," he wrote, "will have diverse interests and probably do a lot in their own communities and from time to time. They may wish to cooperate in making grants."

He did his homework. Most of his grants were to people who asked, Larry O'Shaughnessy said.

He always wanted to know those who were in charge of a program at an institution he was thinking of supporting. He had an intense interest in the personalities and capabilities of those people. It was a question of accountability. He always went first to the people, not to their books, not to their histories. If he didn't have confidence in them, he wouldn't support them. He trusted their judgment primarily because they were engaged in what they were doing. He wanted to know, "Are they good enough to do this? Are they the right people?" If they were, and if their request had to do with something he thought was important, he would give.

By the late 1940s, with John F. O'Shaughnessy running Globe Oil's day-to-day operations in Wichita, and John's brother Donald in charge of Lario in Midland, Texas, in the midst of the great Permian oil basin, I. A. O'Shaughnessy was retired, so to speak. However, like many entrepreneurs who founded companies, then passed them on to the next generation, he never really let go of the business or the Foundation. Whenever he



The Marileen, the sixty-five-foot cruising vessel O'Shaughnessy named for his daughters, Eileen and Marian. I. A. O'Shaughnessy Foundation archives.

walked into a room, everyone continued to defer to him throughout his lifetime. Both brothers commented that the most difficult aspect of working in the family business was being given authority to make decisions, then finding that I. A. would disagree. According to Larry O'Shaughnessy, I. A. could be "quite blunt."

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As early as January 31, 1936, a letter from L. W. Dyer, a Globe Oil manager in Kansas, to I. A. O'Shaughnessy assessed John F.'s progress in the company four years after he joined it. "I want to say right now it is inconceivable the amount of detailed information that [John F.] has picked up in the short time he has been here on his present job. He has practically memorized our monthly statements and seems to be getting the swing of the whole thing very rapidly." Even allowing for some understandable exaggeration in a letter to the boss about his son, Dyer indicated that the younger O'Shaughnessy possessed a natural aptitude for the oil business and the potential for becoming more and more involved in

the day-to-day operations. He must have been the quick study his father was.

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The years following World War II were years of expansion for the St. Thomas campus as the college coped with bulging student enrollments and changes in leadership. O'Shaughnessy was a force in trustee meetings, providing hardheaded, practical advice. He took on the conservative Archbishop John Gregory Murray concerning adoption of Social Security for faculty members. The archbishop, like other leaders of religious institutions, feared that accepting federal funds would open the door to federal intervention. As Joseph Connors writes in his history of St. Thomas, at one trustee meeting, "I. A. O'Shaughnessy tipped the scale decisively in regard to the archbishop's fears. 'Archbishop, that's *all gone*,' he said." The Social Security program was adopted.

With O'Shaughnessy's help, in 1947 St. Thomas moved toward construction of the long-delayed science building. Its cost was estimated at more than \$1.3 million. He had been general chairman of a drive

that began in 1945 to raise money for an ambitious college expansion program, but even in his skilled hands and with his own financial support, the drive lagged in the postwar atmosphere of readjustment. Part of it was realized, however, with the construction of Albertus Magnus Science Hall, named for St. Albert the Great and dedicated in 1949. Facing Summit Avenue and joined to the Administration building by a double arch, the building, like so many others of that era, was "Collegiate Gothic," faced with Mankato stone and trimmed with Bedford stone. Other O'Shaughnessy gifts during those postwar years included some \$90,000 for refurbishing St. Thomas Aquinas Chapel; \$350,000 toward construction of the \$1.9 million Murray Hall Student Center; and a \$500,000 contribution to the \$6 million Program for Great Teaching.

The issue of expanding the campus continued into the 1950s. After James P. Shannon was appointed the twelfth president of St. Thomas in 1956, he became one of O'Shaughnessy's closest friends among the many priests O'Shaughnessy knew, and he had O'Shaughnessy's entire support. Shannon, with his own Irish wit, "could get along with I. A. in a way that others didn't, or couldn't," Msgr. Murphy remembered. "He had tremendous rapport with members of the Catholic hierarchy. He was very well known, he was always so congenial, so pleasant, and he had a good sense of humor. This rapport went far beyond his ability as a financial supporter. It was personal. He liked people. He was attuned to people's problems."

As Connors tells the story, Shannon and O'Shaughnessy were taking a turn around the campus one evening when I. A. asked Shannon to define the college's greatest need. "A new library," Shannon replied. O'Shaughnessy was pleased. "The library is the heart of any campus," he said. "You get an architect and I'll build the building." A dedicated reader himself, especially in American and English literature and history, O'Shaughnessy might have remembered his own days as a student when the library, a collection of shelves with books on them, wandered from place-to-place, from the rooms of faculty members who loaned them to

students, to the basements of various buildings.

The O'Shaughnessy Library, known since 1991 as the O'Shaughnessy/Frey Center, was completed in 1959. Relays of students hauled more than 80,000 books from Aquinas Hall, the library's most recent home, to the new building, a four-story semi-Gothic-style structure with forty rooms. Built at a cost of \$1.5 million, the library was, in Connors' words, "the most beautiful expression of [I. A.'s] love for his alma mater . . . and understandably the building that gave him the greatest delight." Stained glass medallions representing writers, philosophers, religious orders, men of the church and others were incorporated into the building's design creating a jewel-like effect.

Ten years later he contributed more than \$700,000 toward another new St. Thomas building, a gift that leveraged almost \$3 million more in federal grants and loans. This was the I. A. O'Shaughnessy Educational Center. It was, Msgr. Murphy said at the time, "a college in miniature," its five stories designed to house offices, class and seminar rooms, the college's management center, a Learning Center with audio-visual facilities, a 577-seat auditorium, and an adult education center. Earlier, in 1963, with a \$500,000 gift, O'Shaughnessy played a major role in financing the separation of the eighty-year-old St. Thomas Academy from its St. Paul site and its move to a new home, a \$2 million campus in Mendota Heights.

Always focused on the need for a well-run institution and for quality education, a term he never really defined, O'Shaughnessy did not confine his gifts to St. Thomas. Sometime in the early 1940s, the University of Notre Dame in South Bend, Indiana, caught his attention. Since its founding in 1842 by Father Edward F. Sorin, a French missionary priest from the Congregation of Holy Cross on the shores of St. Mary's Lake in the wilds of northern Indiana, Notre Dame had grown to become one of the leading Catholic universities in the country. Its day-to-day operations were managed by Holy Cross priests who held key posts in the faculty and administration, and six of whom

made up the university's Board of Trustees. All students were men until women were admitted in 1971.

Perhaps it was the wish in 1941 of his youngest son Donald to enroll there; perhaps I. A.'s interest grew out of a letter he wrote the university asking that his son and a friend be allowed to room together; but whatever its origin, his thirty-year association with Notre Dame was personally and professionally fulfilling for both the university and himself.

Judging from records in the Notre Dame archives, I. A. enjoyed his visits to the campus, especially when he could take in a "Fighting Irish" football game. In 1942 he donated \$100,000 to help establish the O'Shaughnessy Fine Arts Foundation. In 1950 his gift of \$1 million started construction of the I. A. O'Shaughnessy Hall of Liberal and Fine Arts. This was a Tudor-Gothic structure with a six-story tower that lent a medieval aura to the three-wing building. Stained glass windows illuminated its Great Hall. By the time the building was dedicated in May, 1953, O'Shaughnessy had paid the entire cost of its construction, more than \$2.1 million.

In 1954, when the Notre Dame trustees decided that the stadium needed an elevator to its press box, O'Shaughnessy paid for half of the cost of construction (\$13,050). In 1960 he gave another \$1 million to help build a new thirteen-story Memorial Library. In all, over the course of his lifetime and through a bequest in his will, O'Shaughnessy gave Notre Dame more than \$6 million.

Back in 1943, O'Shaughnessy had been elected to Notre Dame's twenty-four-member Associate Board of Lay Trustees. At the time, the primary responsibility of the lay trustees was to advise the University on how to invest its endowment. From 1950 to 1952 he served as president of its lay board. A description of him in action comes from Ronald Smith, a Notre Dame graduate:

As a student and as a nephew, I got to know some of the trustees because of Uncle Nashe and because I worked in the art gallery where many meetings were held. Those men didn't mix with other donors who had only a few million. When I. A. presided at

those meetings, there was a steady stream of trustees who wanted to talk to him. He was a good fund-raiser. He'd put the arm on them, and he wasn't subtle about it. He was blunt. He tended to be seen as a genial Irishman, but he had a crusty side. Asked once what it cost to own a company plane, he told one of the wealthy trustees that "If you have to ask, you can't afford it."

The last decades of his life seem to have been golden years for O'Shaughnessy. He and his wife visited Ireland, exploring places associated with O'Shaughnessys, turning up a few traces of his family, and Dunguaire, reputedly an O'Shaughnessy "castle," actually a fortress, in County Galway. There is a legend that Guaire, an ancient ancestor of the O'Shaughnessys, was so generous to the poor that, in stretching out to them, his arm actually would grow longer and longer.

With a group of Irish-American friends, he bought a fourteen-room manor house known as Killarney House. A ruined fortress, Rosse castle, was situated on the same property in the County Kerry lake district. He described it as surrounded by 3,000 acres of land and 5,000 acres of water. "I bought it because of the three lakes of Killarney—just the sound of the name means something wonderful to me," he explained.

He became part owner of the Cleveland Indians baseball team through his friendship with William R. Daley, an executive in a Cleveland, Ohio, steel corporation. Both men were Notre Dame trustees. Daley, who had a financial interest in the Indians, needed another investor, and in 1956 O'Shaughnessy bought into the team. Asked why, he told reporters he'd been looking at business figures so long that "it'll be fun to look at some baseball figures." It turned out to be not so much fun. Although the Indians had won an American League record of 111 games in 1954 before losing the World Series to the New York Giants, the Indians still had to face the powerful New York Yankees for the American League title. By 1956 the Indians were ten games behind the Yankees, and O'Shaughnessy was not happy. "I don't believe in being number two," he told a Cleveland newspaper in an expression of his own



Lillian O'Shaughnessy had her own philanthropies. I. A. O'Shaughnessy Foundation archives.

competitive nature. "I want those boys to get in there and fight like hell to win a pennant this year." They didn't. Realizing that the team would have trouble winning consistently, and this would affect the box office, O'Shaughnessy later sold his interest.

Perhaps the highlight of his life came at the request of Pope Paul VI: the building of the Ecumenical Institute for Theological Studies on the hill of Tantur between Bethlehem and Jerusalem. Planned to commemorate the historic meeting in 1964 between Paul VI and Orthodox Patriarch Athenagoras I of Constantinople, the Institute in the heart of the Holy Land "helped fulfill a lifelong dream," the Pope told O'Shaughnessy. And thereby hangs an oft-told tale reflecting I. A.'s forcefulness. He was not always a patient man. In his 1973 newspaper column, Jim Shannon described O'Shaughnessy's encounter with the Pope. After noting that "no one awed him," Shannon continued:

In a private audience with Pope Paul, with the Reverend Theodore Hesburgh, president of Notre Dame, as his translator, I. A. told the Pope he would pay for construction of [the Institute]. Then he added, "Tell him I want some action on this project. Tell the

Pope to get off his pants." To this day, no one knows precisely how Father Hesburgh handled that translation.

Subsequently, O'Shaughnessy donated \$4.5 million to the Institute that, after three years of planning and construction, was dedicated in 1972. It was a gift that does not even bear his name; yet it was perhaps his greatest single gift in a long line of gifts. Also maintenance gifts were continued for a number of years.

In a newspaper interview, O'Shaughnessy described the Institute and what it meant as an expression of his own faith:

It's on the road Mary and Joseph took on their way to pay taxes. We decided that I'd build an ecumenical institute where scholars of all religions could come and study and live for a year. It would have microfilmed religious documents, all the great works, for those theologians and scholars. You know, theologians are like engineers—very compatible with each other. We're all together—the Church of Rome, Methodists, Baptists, everybody. I think it could accomplish a great deal for the Christian world. And there's a practical reason . . . The more we're compatible with each other, the better for the whole Christian world.

Ignatius and Lillian O'Shaughnessy had celebrated their fiftieth wedding anniversary in 1958. They had planned a party, and a special Mass at St. Mark's Church, with Archbishop William Brady officiating. Greetings poured in. Then all was cancelled. Lillian O'Shaughnessy was hospitalized with a minor illness. On April 14, 1959, she died from a heart ailment at their winter home in Florida. Known as a "family woman of the old school," she was not a club woman, nor did she participate in the Twin Cities social scene, but she was active in religious and charitable organizations. She shunned publicity. She happily remained in the background as her husband basked in the limelight. Even so, her name was linked with his in their major gifts. Together, they gave, according to the news accounts that followed her death, unknown millions of dollars to schools, churches, and charities in Minnesota and around the country. She had her own philanthropies. She contributed to the

Catholic Boys Home and to St. Joseph's Home for Children in Minneapolis. She built the Guild Hall for Catholic Women in St. Paul and the Lillian O'Shaughnessy Residence Hall at St. Thomas Academy in Mendota Heights. Her gift to the St. Paul Convent of the Good Shepherd Residence helped build a home for young women who had completed their studies and needed a place to live. It bore her name: the Lillian G. O'Shaughnessy Residence for Girls. Six months before her death, the Pope had presented her with the *Pro Ecclesia Et Pontifice* (For Church and Pontiff) award.

Lillian and I. A. O'Shaughnessy had shared a satisfying life. "Her death affected him profoundly for the next five years," Larry O'Shaughnessy remembered. "My wife Betty and I spent many hours with him to support him emotionally. My mother had died in April, but he didn't feel up to coming back to St. Paul for the summer, so we stayed with him in Florida. I know he appreciated that."

It was a gray period in his life. Yet his joy of living didn't desert him. He continued the pattern he and his wife had established years earlier when they spent time at their son John's lake home at Nisswa, Minnesota, and began to spend winters at a home at Golden Beach, near Miami Beach, Florida. His interest in athletics continued throughout his life. He always had season tickets to the Minnesota Gopher and Notre Dame football games.

He owned a yacht, a sixty-five-foot cruising vessel named the *Marileen* for his two daughters. He kept it at Bal Harbor, and he loved to entertain business associates and friends, especially those in the priesthood. "He felt particularly comfortable with them, I suspect because they were so well educated and on the cutting edge of current events," Larry O'Shaughnessy surmises. With a crew of three—a cook, deckhand, and captain—he would take family and friends on cruises. Twice he took the yacht up the intracoastal waterway that stretched from Florida along the Atlantic coast to the St. Lawrence River. Twice he took the yacht up the St. Lawrence and into the Great Lakes. Once he was able to get it to Marine-on-the-St. Croix River, his son said.

Father Theodore Hesburgh was

another close friend. O'Shaughnessy would invite Hesburgh; Father Edmund Joyce, Hesburgh's executive vice president; and Jim Shannon to Florida for short vacations aboard the *Marileen*. In a 1960s letter to Shannon, that is in the O'Shaughnessy papers at the Minnesota Historical Society, Hesburgh described these retreats as "the only three days in the whole year when we can reconstitute the Church, the world, and the universe." I. A. would serve as altar boy during morning Mass.

The spirited conversations of these four men, their new ideas, and their earnest plans for the future would have a profound impact on the course of higher education in the nation's Catholic colleges and universities. Hesburgh had I.A.'s support when he proposed to the Holy Cross fathers in 1967 that the university's control of Notre Dame be turned over to its lay trustees. Hesburgh wanted to increase the involvement of the laity in the life of the Church, in the spirit of Vatican II (1962-1965). He discussed it with O'Shaughnessy. "Very few important things went on in my life during those years that I didn't talk over with him," Hesburgh said. "He was a great counselor and he was among the first of the lay trustees to be entrusted with the affairs of the university."

O'Shaughnessy's philanthropy sustained him, and so did his exuberant Irish sense of humor. He still loved to tease people. He once told a newspaper columnist that he had been painting "for years," and that his paintings hung in the Minneapolis Institute of Art. "I sign them Rembrandt," he said.

He seems not to have taken himself very seriously. Connors tells the story of I. A.'s encounter with several St. Thomas students in downtown St. Paul. Recognizing him, they talked for a bit and then, wanting to somehow thank him for his gifts to the college, blurted out, "Well, thank you very much for the college." "Oh, that's all right. Thanks," O'Shaughnessy replied, as he went on his way with a blithe wave of his hand and a smile on his lips.

He did take seriously his family, his friends, and his faith. He delighted in giving his money away. Once in New York attending a performance of the

musical, "Hello, Dolly!" with Jim Shannon and some other friends, he remarked that "Mrs. Levi" had the right idea, that "money is like manure. It isn't worth a thing unless it is spread about encouraging young things to grow."

Awards flowed in. The pope granted him the personal title of Papal Count. He was perhaps the first layman in the Archdiocese of St. Paul to receive it. He was named Knight Commander of the Pontifical Order of St. Gregory the Great, a Knight of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem, a Knight of Malta, and a Papal Chamberlain of the Cape and Sword. To please his wife, he was photographed in the regalia of each order, then never wore them again.

In 1966 when he was eighty-one years old, O'Shaughnessy married Blanche I. Finn of Coconut Grove, Florida, in a ceremony in the chapel of the Catholic archepiscopal residence in St. Paul. Jim Shannon conducted the service. An artist and the widow of an army officer, she was from New York and Florida, and a longtime friend of the O'Shaughnessys.

That same year, in a ceremonial dinner at the Minnesota Club honoring I. A. O'Shaughnessy, Shannon, as president of St. Thomas, saluted him as "the most generous philanthropist to Catholic education in the country." O'Shaughnessy would reach farther than that. The National Conference of Christians and Jews gave him its Brotherhood Award in 1967. He also was honored with the title of Mr. St. Paul—A Great St. Paulite.

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In the late 1960s the federal government ordered all foundations to divest themselves of their holdings in their own corporations. O'Shaughnessy may have had mixed reasons for creating the Foundation, his son said, but "he already had set up trusts for his children and grandchildren, and he had rid himself of his own company stocks that had been held in the Foundation. He gave them to institutions such as St. Thomas, Notre Dame, the Boy Scouts, and so on, with the understanding they could redeem them at book value from the companies."

Tying up loose ends, he sent a letter October 17, 1968, to the First Trust Company

of St. Paul expressing his wishes as to how he wanted the Foundation to function after he was gone. "Please file this letter with my Will to be reviewed by my children in the event of my death," he wrote:

Under my Will, I have bequeathed my stock in the I. A. O'Shaughnessy Foundation in equal shares to my five children. Accordingly, my children will each have an equal voice in determining the distribution of amounts from the Foundation to carry out the charitable purposes for which it was organized.

It would be natural that on occasion my sons and daughters may have diverse views as to the worthwhileness of various projects. In particular, my children may have a disposition toward making some disbursements in his local community. As a means of recognizing this point of view, I recommend that as a general policy that each of my five children be responsible for recommending to the officers and Board of Directors the manner in which one-fifth (1/5th) of the funds available for distribution are to be expended. There may be instances when particular expenditures may have the joint endorsement of all five of my children and in all cases the final determination will be subject to the requirement that the expenditure is for a bona fide tax exempt purpose.

Very truly yours,
(signed) I. A. O'Shaughnessy

His health began to fail as the 1970s dawned. There was a tinge of sadness to his last years. Although John and Don had long been running Globe and Lario Oil, I. A. kept in touch with his old associates in the industry. But it was bittersweet. Rather sadly, he mused in a 1972 interview: "The trouble is that you gradually lose your friends, your business associates. They die. You just have to tell yourself they're not there anymore."

He celebrated his eighty-eighth birthday on July 31, 1973, by announcing the gift of a fountain to the City of St. Paul for installation on O'Shaughnessy Plaza, across from the Civic Center. Four months later he died on November 21, 1973, at St. Francis hospital in Miami. He had suffered a stroke two days earlier. He had outlived all of his thirteen siblings, including John A. O'Shaughnessy, who died in 1927, and William F., who

died in 1931. Services for I. A. were held in the Cathedral of St. Paul. Burial was in Resurrection Cemetery in the shade of a Celtic cross and monument crafted by Ivan Mestrovic, the great Croatian sculptor whom I. A. had assisted in coming to Notre Dame to teach.

"He was not a religious man in the ordinary sense of the word," his close friend Father Hesburgh told the mourners in his eulogy, "but he had a deep faith. Many of his friends in the priesthood could say with me that they never spent a day with him that he did not serve my Mass and receive Holy Communion with sincere devotion. When his eyesight failed, he used to ask me to read my breviary out loud so he could ponder and enjoy this prayer of the church."

During his active career, O'Shaughnessy had been a director of the New York Central and St. Louis railroads, First Bank of St. Paul, First Bank Stock Corporation, the Minnesota Orchestral Association, Nickel Plate Railroad, and the University of Minnesota Medical Foundation, in addition to serving as a trustee of the College (now University) of St. Thomas and the University of Notre Dame.

His estate was inventoried at \$7,930,603, even after he had disposed of considerable assets before his death. Each of his children received five shares of stock in the Foundation, as specified in his 1968 letter to the Trust Company. His will also provided that St. Thomas and Notre Dame each receive 40,000 shares of Globe Oil & Refining Company stock and that the College of St. Catherine receive 20,000 shares, then valued at \$55 a share. A bequest also went to the Boy Scouts.

Afterword

When I. A. O'Shaughnessy died, all grants for the year had been approved for distribution. His heirs honored those grants. John F. O'Shaughnessy, as the oldest son, stepped up as president of the Foundation. At their Board meeting in 1974, I. A.'s five children, Donald, Eileen, Marian, Larry, and John affirmed their commitment to the Foundation their father had established more than thirty years earlier, stating:

The Corporation is organized exclusively for such religious, charitable, scientific or educational purposes as will promote the well-being of mankind, and we the directors pledge our time and effort to continue the Foundation under the guidelines the Founder established.

Several years later, Larry O'Shaughnessy, the only member of the Foundation's Board to live in St. Paul, succeeded his older brother as president. In the following decades, the Foundation's pattern of giving changed little from that established by I. A. O'Shaughnessy himself. Almost 50 percent of its grants went to education; some 15 percent went to arts and music; the remainder was evenly divided among public service, health, and humanitarian issues.

Then in the early 2000s, Larry O'Shaughnessy sensed that his watch was ending and it was time to hand off the Foundation to the new generation. He organized a series of retreats for his extended family members to lay the groundwork for a transition plan and to "respect our Founder's intentions, learn from one another and together make plans for the future."

Larry O'Shaughnessy retired as president of the O'Shaughnessy Foundation in February, 2004, and was succeeded by Eileen's son, Timothy, who is chairman of the Board Grants Committee. The Foundation's major emphasis will continue to be on education, but will begin to focus on high quality education for children in need. The Foundation office will remain in St. Paul.

John M. Lindley is an independent historian, researcher, and writer and the author of a new history of St. Paul Celebrate Saint Paul—150 Years of History published in 2003. Virginia Brainard Kunz is editor of Ramsey County History and author of three earlier histories of St. Paul. They most recently collaborated on a biographical profile of Lucius Pond Ordway, "The Financial Angel Who Rescued 3M," published in the Fall, 2001, issue of this magazine.

O'Shaughnessy Sources

The largest collection of materials dealing with the life of I. A. O'Shaughnessy is in the manuscript

collections of the Minnesota Historical Society in St. Paul, Minnesota. The O'Shaughnessy Papers at MHS fill fourteen boxes. They include business correspondence, documents relating to O'Shaughnessy's service on the U.S. Petroleum Administration Board in the 1930s, his service on the Petroleum Industry Council for National Defense in World War II, wide-ranging business correspondence dating from 1917 dealing with Globe Oil & Refining Company, Lario Oil & Gas Company, and other companies that O'Shaughnessy organized, invested in, or served as a member of its board of directors.

The MHS collections also include correspondence relating to O'Shaughnessy's long associations with the College (now University) of St. Thomas and the University of Notre Dame. Other documents in these files show O'Shaughnessy's abiding interest in other educational institutions and the wide range of his personal charity and philanthropic interests. These boxes also have some correspondence concerning the O'Shaughnessy family property in Florida and his yacht, the *Marileen*.

The University of St. Thomas in St. Paul also has a substantial collection of O'Shaughnessy materials, including several albums of photographs, most of which are unidentified. The St. Thomas documents range from information prepared for publication in the press or in alumni publications to some business and personal correspondence. Joseph B. Connors, *Journey Toward Fulfillment: A History of the College of St. Thomas* (1986) has helpful information on the life of the college when O'Shaughnessy was a student at St. Thomas and on his years as a trustee and benefactor of the college. The College of St. Catherine, St. Paul, and the O'Shaughnessy Foundation, St. Paul, also have small collections. The papers at the College of St. Catherine relate almost entirely to various O'Shaughnessy gifts to the college, primarily in the 1960s and '70s. The papers at the O'Shaughnessy Foundation concentrate on I. A.'s approach to philanthropy and individual gifts. The Foundation office also has an invaluable unpublished account of the history of Globe Oil from its founding in 1917 to the mid-1950s written by long-time Globe executive Francis L. Jehle. The Foundation was also helpful in providing a copy of Rita Lammers's *Church of St. Michael, Stillwater, Minnesota: 1853-2003* (2002) to the authors for use in researching O'Shaughnessy's boyhood in Stillwater.

The University of Notre Dame in South Bend, Indiana, has considerable material relating to O'Shaughnessy's many gifts to the school between the 1940s and the 1970s, his long service as a member of the University's Board of Trustees, and his close friendship with Fr. Theodore Hesburgh and other Notre Dame administrators. At the present time, a substantial number of files relating to O'Shaughnessy are closed to researchers because of privacy reasons. In addition to a number of files of press releases, newspaper clippings, and other outside coverage of the University and O'Shaughnessy, the Notre Dame files also have articles from Catholic newspapers and magazines

and other Catholic institutions of higher education with which O'Shaughnessy was associated. *God, Country, Notre Dame* (1999) by Theodore M. Hesburgh, CSC, with Jerry Reedy, is Fr. Hesburgh's autobiography and has only one brief reference to I. A. O'Shaughnessy, but it does provide helpful background on the growth and changes that took place at the University during I. A.'s many years on Notre Dame's Board of Trustees.

There is a vast body of historical and biographical literature relating to the development of the oil industry in the United States. Few of these otherwise helpful books make any mention of O'Shaughnessy or Globe Oil because they generally focus on the histories of the major oil companies or on better known oil men such as Frank Phillips, E. W. Marland, Thomas B. Slick, and John D. Rockefeller. Daniel Yergin's *The Prize: The Epic Quest for Oil, Money, and Power* (1991) is invaluable for its big-picture perspective on the development of the oil industry in the United States. The *Oil and Gas Journal* contains information on individual companies, oil industry leaders, and issues such as oil conservation, prorationing, and price fixing complaints and cases. The *New York Times* and other major newspapers have sporadic coverage of the oil industry in the 1920s, '30s, and '40s. *Roosevelt's Warrior: Harold L. Ickes and the New Deal* (1996) by Jeanne Nienaber Clarke is a good place to start to understand the way that President Roosevelt and Secretary Ickes dealt with the problems of the oil industry during the Depression. The literature on the role of oil in World War II is substantial. *A History of the Petroleum Industry for War 1941-1945* (1946) edited by Igor I. Kavass and Adolf Sprudz is essential. Harold Ickes's *Fightin' Oil* (1943) and D. Thomas Curtin's *Men, Oil and War* (1946) are also very helpful in understanding the role that oil industry volunteers such as O'Shaughnessy played in the formulation and execution of government policies regarding oil during the war.

A number of people who knew I. A. O'Shaughnessy graciously allowed the authors to interview them for this biographical profile. Foremost among them is Lawrence M. (Larry) O'Shaughnessy, I. A.'s only surviving child, who was interviewed for more than ten hours. He regrets that his brothers, John F. and Donald, and his sisters, Eileen and Marian, are no longer alive to share their own insights and memories of their father.

J. Michael O'Shaughnessy, son of I. A. and Lillian O'Shaughnessy's daughter Eileen, shared his own research on the family's history and his vivid recollections of his lively talks with his grandfather. Another O'Shaughnessy grandson, Michael W. O'Shaughnessy, son of Donald O'Shaughnessy, provided photographs that accompany this biographical profile and was the source of additional information about the family. Patrick E. O'Shaughnessy, Wichita, Kansas, and a descendant of John F. O'Shaughnessy, answered questions about Globe Oil.

Others who were interviewed include Ronald Smith, nephew of Lillian Smith O'Shaughnessy and I. A. O'Shaughnessy, who also provided a number of family photos; Fr. Theodore M.

Hesburgh, C.S.C., who provided great insight to O'Shaughnessy's long association with Notre Dame, and shared his memories of O'Shaughnessy's Irish sense of humor and his love for his family.

Sr. Alberta Huber, C.S.J., now retired as president of the College of St. Catherine, and the late Msgr. Terrence J. Murphy, retired president of the University of St. Thomas and then its chancellor, talked to the authors about O'Shaughnessy's gifts to their schools. The authors also arranged to talk with James P. Shannon about his long friendship with O'Shaughnessy but were unable to do so because of Shannon's unexpected death. For this perspective, we relied upon news reports of Shannon's career and his *Reluctant Dissenter: An Autobiography* (1998).

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James O'Brien, whose family has been long-time members of Stillwater's Irish-Catholic community and knew the O'Shaughnessy family, was a skilled guide to O'Shaughnessy sites in his hometown;

Sr. Margery Smith, C.S.J., archivist, College of St. Catherine;

E. D. Stinson, vice president of Lario Oil & Gas Company, Wichita, Kansas;

Jody Vitek, transcriber of hours of taped interviews;

Gayle Watson of the I. A. O'Shaughnessy Foundation staff.



A crane installs the Globe Oil & Refining Company sign at the company's McPherson, Kansas, refinery in 1933. Photo reproduced by permission from the private collections of the Lario Oil & Gas Company. See article beginning on page 4.

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