

CLAY PIPES WITH IRISH AFFILIATIONS

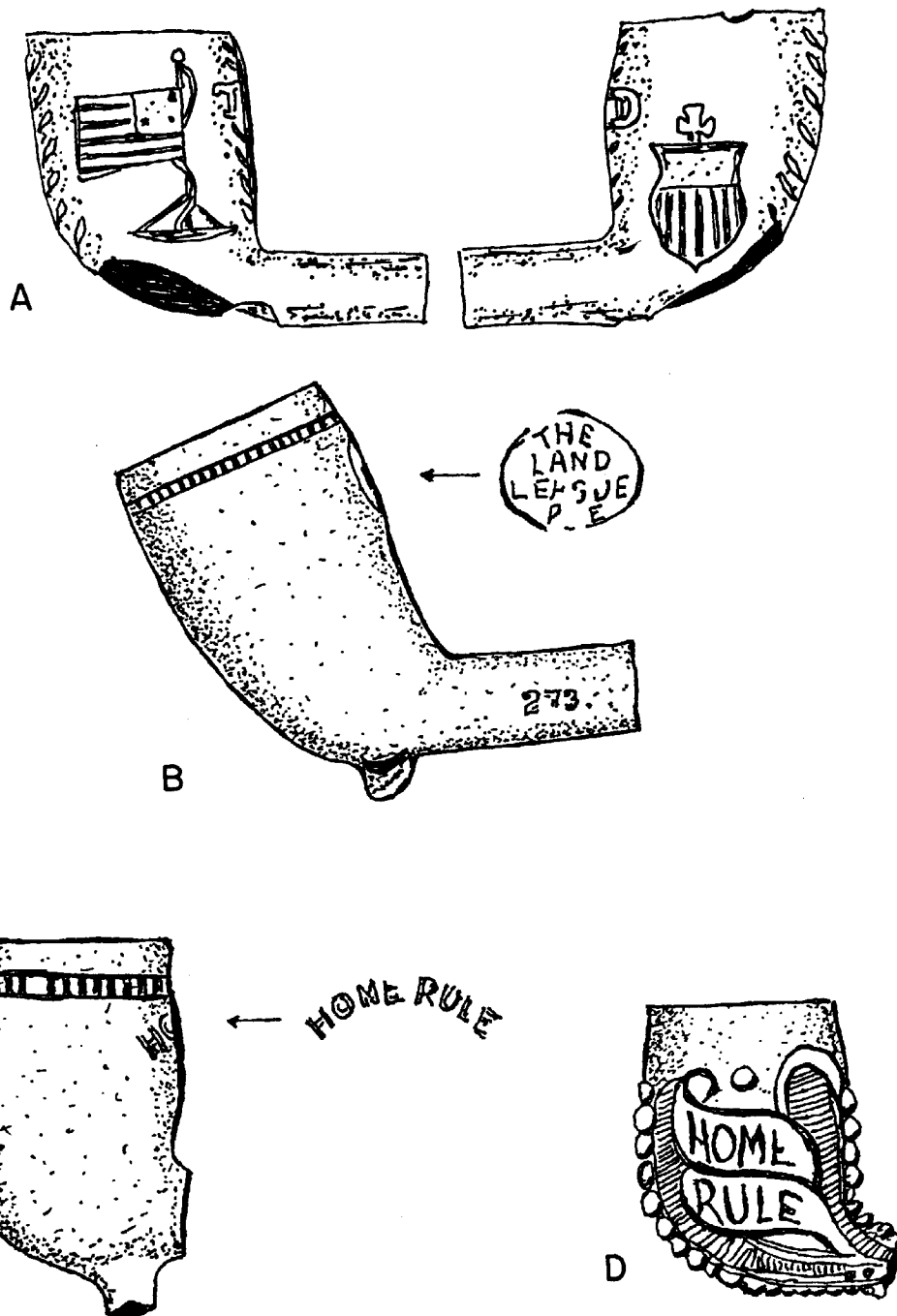
L. T. ALEXANDER

In the mid-nineteenth century, the world-wide famine did not spare Ireland where lack of food was only one of the difficulties they faced. Their problems with the British over secession, religion, and land reform caused considerable unrest, and the Irish formed groups to further their causes. Some were secret societies and others were open; some originated in Ireland and some in America.

Many of the Irish, both in the United Kingdom and here in America, openly flaunted their objections to what they considered unfair treatment by smoking clay pipes deliberately designed to solicit sympathy for their causes. In addition to Ireland, Scotland and Holland also produced such pipes, particularly for export to the USA and to England. Some were subtle reminders of their allegiance such as the pipe shown in Figure 2E. Impressed after molding on the back of the bowl is a harp surrounded by ERIN GO BRAGH (Ireland forever) all within a circle. Molded on each side of the trimmed spur is a shamrock and on each side of the stem, also molded, is CORK. Rouletting appears at the very top of the bowl in some places almost disappearing over the rim. This pipe is typically Irish in profile, and probably dates to post 1840. This specimen was recovered from the Slay Hills Marsh, near the mouth of the Thames River.

The Land League movement came to the U.S. in 1879 when Charles Stewart Parnell, an Irish Nationalist leader, visited America and sanctioned the movement which absorbed the more violent factions. Parnell returned to Ireland in 1880 but not before he planted seeds of discontent among the Irish living here. The Land League was dissolved shortly after 1881, and soon thereafter other Irish revolutionary groups in America began to disintegrate. The Land League was popular, and pipes advertising this cause were made (Figure 1B). Impressed on the back of this bowl after molding is THE/LAND/LEAGUE/P__E within an ellipse, the missing letters obviously completing the word PIPE. Impressed on the stem are the numerals "273," undoubtedly intended to indicate a style or a catalog number. This specimen is massive with walls 6 mm thick, is well made, and leaves little doubt about the allegiance of the smoker. Although rouletting around the rim of the bowl was frequently mold-imparted in the nineteenth century, on this pipe it was hand applied. Inasmuch as the Land League was dissolved shortly after 1881, the pipe must have been made before that date. It was found in Boyle County, Roscommon, Ireland.

Irish propogandists promoted a home government as early as the 1850's, and by 1870 the Home Rule movement came into being, continued peacefully active until 1916, and then faded out. However, the popularity of the movement is marked by the seven "Home Rule" pipes illustrated in this article (Figures 1C, D; 2A; and 3A-D). Four varieties are illustrated in Figure 3. Other variations are known to have been produced. Duco (1984) illustrated a "Home Rule" pipe similar in decorative style to the pipe shown in Figure 3B. The bowl profile is different, but the treatment of the tendrils and "Home Rule" placement is alike. The other pipes in Figure 3 (all found in England) embrace an Irishman dancing a jig, the cap of liberty, the franchise, and the Irish's beloved shamrock.



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L.T.A.

Figure 1

(A) A rare "TD" pipe; no known parallels in England, Canada, or the USA (where it was possibly made), (B) a massive pipe with walls about 6 mm thick, (C) unusually prominent hand-applied rouletting, typical size and shape for the time period, and (D) exhibits fine craftsmanship in molding and finishing.

The HOME RULE pipe (Figure 1C) is another very large pipe (walls 4 mm thick), but is not as imposing as THE LAND LEAGUE PIPE mentioned previously. It is a well-made pipe except that the mold marks on the spur were not trimmed off--a good clue that the pipe was probably not made prior to c. 1800 (Oswald 1975a:39) [the entry for Oswald Item No. 13 reads after c. 1800 but was later corrected to before c. 1800 by A. Oswald (Oswald 1975b)]. The rouletting was applied by hand and is exceptionally large. It is typically Irish in shape and would date c. 1850-1880. It was found at a garbage dump near Lewes, Delaware. The "Plain Home Rule" Pipe No. 145 on the ca. 1875 D. McDougall and Company of Glasgow's 'THE IRISH PRICE LIST' may possibly be this pipe (Sudbury 1980: 45-46).

The other "Home Rule" pipe (Figure 1D) may well be No. 146 on the McDougall Irish Price List which is identified as a "Carved Home Rule." It is unusually well-molded and finished with the same design appearing on the right side of the bowl. Walls are slightly more than 3 mm thick at the rim. It probably dates in the same time frame as Figure 1C (i.e., 1850-1880). These postulated dates are based on the assumption they were made during the period when the Irish-American agitation was in full bloom. This pipe also came from Roscommon, Ireland, where THE LAND LEAGUE PIPE was recovered.

Sudbury (1980) proposed a working hypothesis for dating clay pipes by inferring an initial production date for an undated pipe style by referring to a specific pipe in the price list made at a known historical point in time. For example, he calls to our attention that the McDougall "Home Rule" Pipes (Nos. 145 and 146) appear just before the "Livingston" (No. 147) and "Stanley" (No. 148) ones which logically should date shortly after the famous "Dr. Livingston, I presume" meeting in Africa in 1871. With some assurance, we can imply that the initial production of these particular McDougall "Home Rule" pipe styles was immediately prior to or at least contemporaneous with the "Livingston" and "Stanley" pipes.

The "Scott" TD pipe (Figure 1A) is not as obvious in its expression of protest as The Land League and Home Rule pipes. It is another variant of the ubiquitous "TD" genre. The style of letters on the back of the bowl are typical of "TD's," and the bowl shape places it in the second half of the nineteenth century. The author refers to it as the "Scott TD" because it was excavated by Richard and Janet Scott in a well they uncovered in the cellar of their home in New Castle, Delaware. This pipe is unusual because of the decoration on its sides. On the left side is an American flag on a pole; on the right side a shield surmounted by a trefoil (shamrock). Foliation appears at the mold seams, both front and back. At the base of the bowl is an indication of a missing spur. The quality of the clay is poor, the molding and finishing lacking in craftsmanship. The walls are thin compared with the other pipes shown in Figure 1.

The shamrock, the national emblem of Ireland, leads to a strong speculation that the pipe was made in support of one of the American-Irish organizations. Oswald (personal communication) wrote "there is nothing like it over here" England. Ivor Noel Hume and Iain C. Walker both reported they had never seen parallels to this specimen. Because it bears no resemblance to pipes of European manufacture, all signs point to a probable American origin with a date some time ca. 1870-1885.

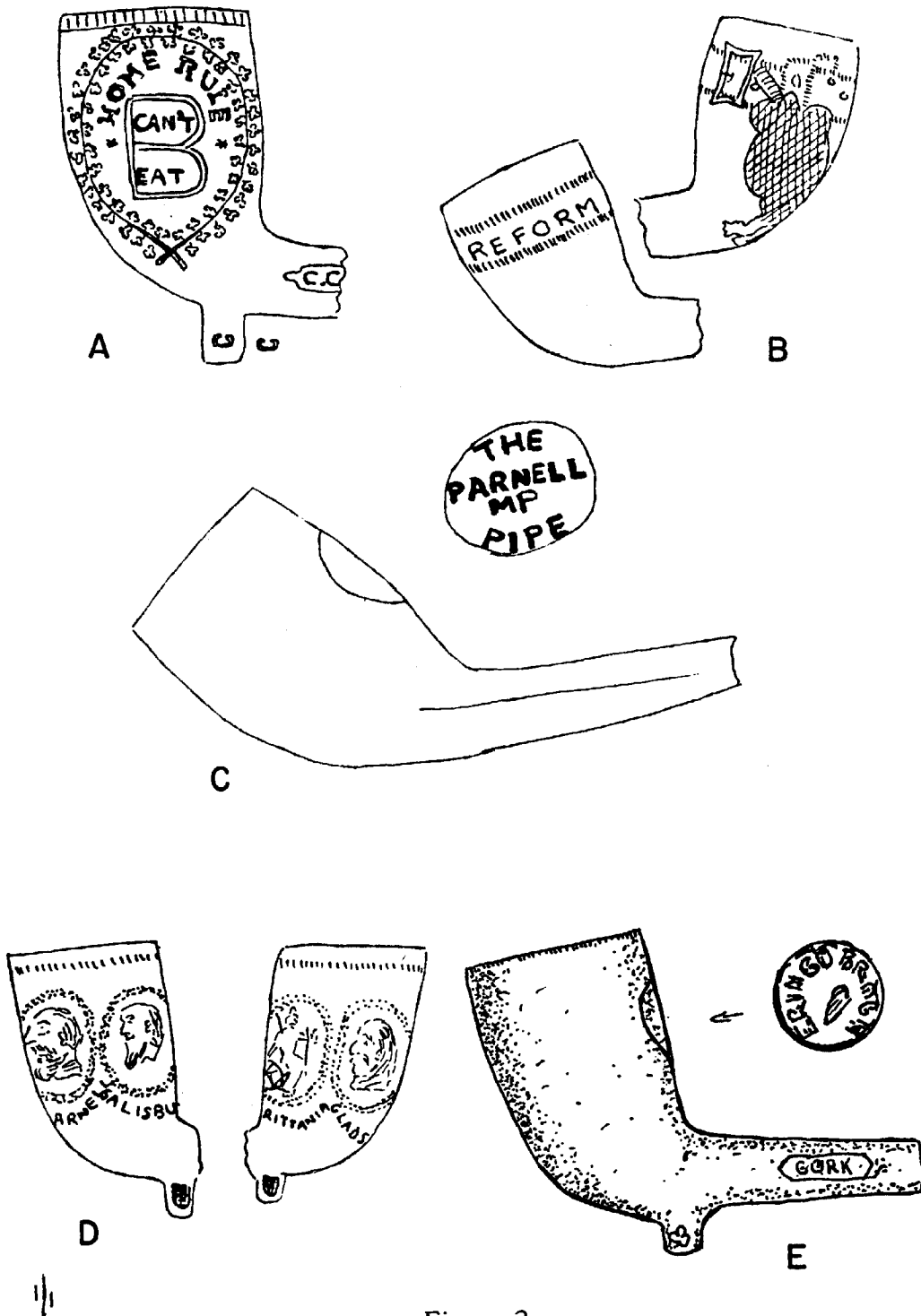


Figure 2

(A) Humorous slogan "CANT BEAT HOME RULE," (B) other pipes with belt and buckle are known, but the significance of this emblem is not known, (C) unlike most "Irish" pipes, this one shows Dutch influence with its angled bowl without heel or spur, (D) the cameo likeness of Salisbury possibly suggests this pipe was made shortly after his death in 1903, and (E) popular slogan "ERIN GO BRAGH" and shamrocks on the heel leave no doubt about this pipe's affiliation with the Irish.

Sudbury (1980: 26-27, 44) describes and illustrates two Home Rule pipes which he "tends to assume are McDougall of Glasgow products, but this cannot currently be confirmed." These pipes have "HOME RULE" in raised letters on the front (an exceptional placement) and back of the bowl. Sudbury reported these pipes and others were recovered from the Old Connellsville Dump, 36 FA 140, in western Pennsylvania. He dates the pipes 1910-1920 and asserts that "A collection of Glasgow pipes from this late a period has not been previously reported in the archaeological literature" (*ibid.*: 34).

Other pipes championing the Irish are found in a variety of styles. Le Cheminant (1981) illustrates and describes four of them, all originating from land dumps in England, as follows:

"c. 1880-90 [Figure 2A]. One of a series of late Victorian Irish pipes mainly carrying calls for Home Rule, the two Bills which Gladstone supported and finally carried through the House of Commons in 1893, following the long campaign for Independence by Charles Stewart Parnell leader of the Home Rule Party. The pipe bears a punning slogan CAN'T EAT, an allusion to the prevalent famine in Ireland, the words surrounded by a large B and topped by HOME RULE; thus the cry CAN'T BEAT HOME RULE. C/C in relief moulded on the spur and the beginning of C. CROP'S name incuse on the stem. Charles Crop and Son were one of the most famous of more recent London pipemakers, working 1856-1924 and producing a wide variety of plain, decorated, and character head pipes (*ibid.*: 154-155).

"c. 1880-90 [Figure 2B]. Another Home Rule pipe, this one moulded into the shape of a belt with REFORM on it and a (?) stylized shamrock hanging from it (*ibid.*: 154-155).

"c. 1880-90 [Figure 2C]. This Dutch-style spurless pipe celebrates Charles Parnell MP himself." (*ibid.*: 154-155).

"An Irish-type bowl [Figure 2D] with 4 cameo portraits moulded around it--Charles Stewart Parnell MP, 1846-91 leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party, Lord Salisbury, 1830-1903, twice Prime Minister, W. E. Gladstone 1809-1898, three times Prime Minister, and the figure of Britannia. It probably dates from soon after Salisbury's death (*ibid.*: 152, 155).

It should be remembered that being marked "CORK" (Figure 2E) and "IRELAND" (Figure 3E), for example, does not necessarily mean that those pipes were made in Ireland. It was not until 1891 that the United States of America made it mandatory for the country of origin to be marked on all products exported to the USA.

Undoubtedly there are many other pipes yet to be reported or simply unknown to this author supporting the various causes of the Irish both here and abroad. Inasmuch as the Irish are still at odds with the British and clay pipes are still being made, perhaps we may see a revitalization of Irish-affiliated clay tobacco smoking pipes.

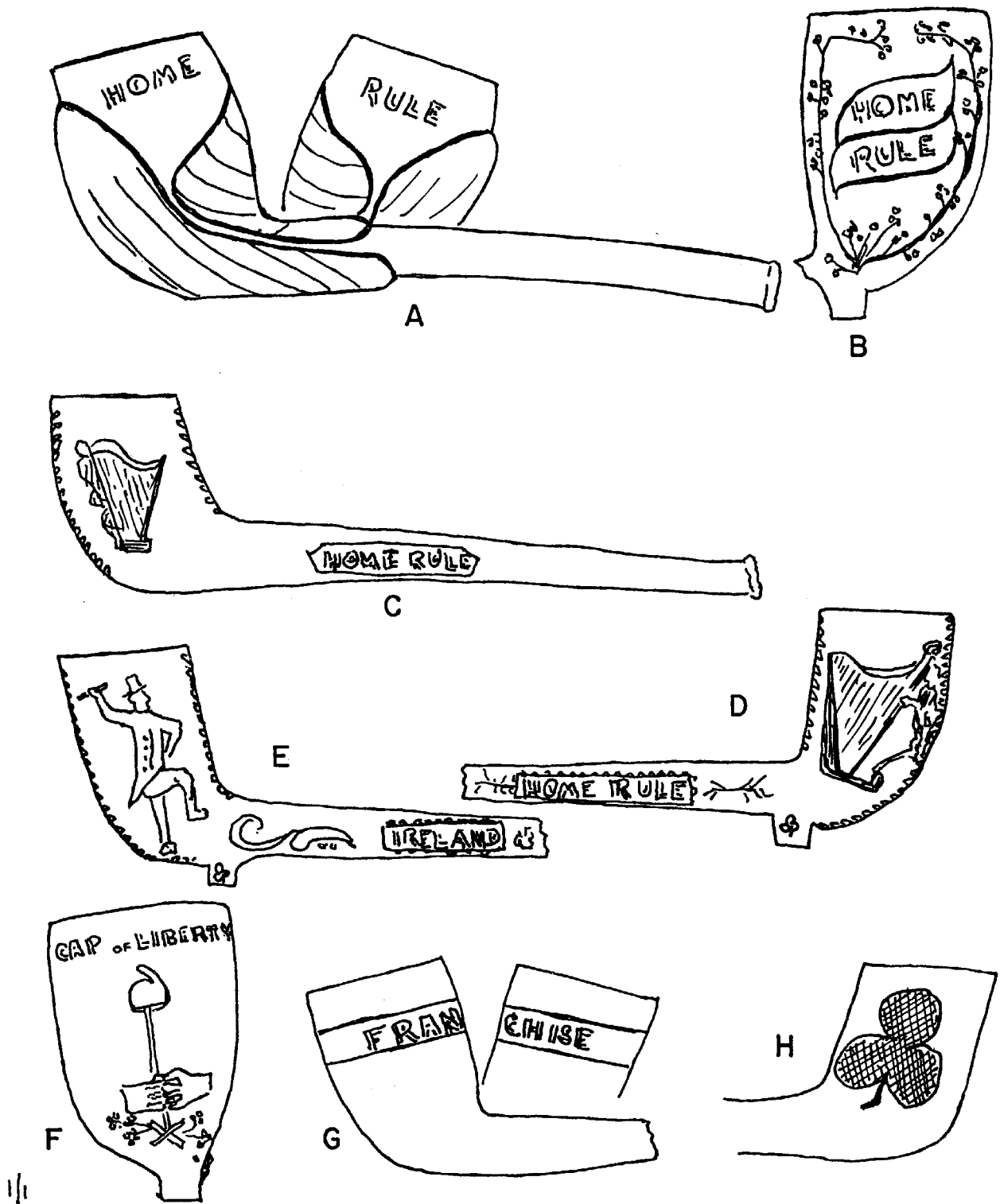


Figure 3

Eight pipes variously proclaiming the right to self-government (A-D), the right to vote (G), and reminders of Irish Allegiance to the country (E, F, and H).

Acknowledgements

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