

The McCart Street Gang

By Jim Dubelko

1. Introduction to the Gang.

On October 9, 1891, seven “**tough-looking**” young men—most of them not yet 21 years old, appeared in Judge Alfred W. **Lamson’s** Courtroom No. 3 in the old Cuyahoga County Courthouse on the northwest corner of Public Square in downtown Cleveland. They had recently been indicted by a Cuyahoga County Grand Jury for the July 26, 1891 burglary of a saloon owned by Bridget and J. M. Grieles at No. 12 Alger Street (1204 West 67th Street¹), in the suburb of West Cleveland, Ohio. It was alleged that the young men had stolen four kegs of beer from **Grieles’** saloon.² All seven pled not guilty to the charges against them. Judge Lamson accepted their pleas, set their bonds at \$1,000 each—a bond amount that was considered high in 1891, and scheduled a trial date.³

The seven young men **appearing in Judge Lamson’s courtroom that day** were: Patrick Gorman (age 19); his brother, Peter Gorman (age 16); Michael Forbes (age 14); Richard Patterson—the oldest of the group (age 26); Frank Hoban (age 16); Harry **Dwyer (age 18); and Michael “Gillie” Gallagher (age 21).**⁴

All of the young men lived in or near the suburb of West Cleveland and within a few streets of the Grieles saloon.⁵ Patrick Gorman, later identified as the leader of the gang, and his brother Peter, lived with their parents at 46 McCart Street (1282 West 69th Street) in the Village. Michael Forbes lived in West Cleveland on Alger Street at No. 52 (1218 West 67th Street)—a couple of houses down the street from Bridget and J.M. **Grieles’ saloon.** Richard Patterson resided at 13 Gordon Avenue (1216 West 65th

Street)—just across the border into Cleveland. Frank Hoban lived down the street from Patterson at 123 Gordon Avenue (1283 West 65th Street). Harry Dwyer lived in Cleveland at 184 Twenty-Third Avenue (5400 Tillman Avenue)—less than a half mile from the West Cleveland border. **And Michael “Gillie” Gallagher**, who at age 21 had the longest criminal record of the group, lived in West Cleveland with his parents at 123 McCart Street (1339 West 69th Street), just down the street from the Gorman household.

The day following, the Cleveland Plain Dealer published an article (see reproduction on next page) about the arraignment of the seven young men who were alleged to have broken into the Grieles saloon on Alger Street in West Cleveland. In the headline to the article, the Plain Dealer referred to these young men from in and around the suburb of West Cleveland as the **“McCart Street Gang.”**⁶ The Plain Dealer may have referred to this group of young men as the McCart Street Gang because perhaps Gang members told a Plain Dealer reporter that was the name of their Gang. Or, the Plain Dealer itself may have given the group the name because the leader of the Gang, Patrick Gorman, lived on McCart Street, or because the three most notorious members of the Gang—Patrick Gorman, Foxy Gorman, and Michael Gallagher, all resided on McCart Street.

MCART STREET GANG.

Seven Young Men Who Say They
are Guiltless of Burglary and
Larceny—Report of the Grand
Jury.

A tough looking lot of citizens familiarly known as the McCart street gang were arraigned before Judge Lamson Friday morning on a charge of burglary and larceny in entering the place of Bridget and J. M. Grieles, July 26 last, and stealing four kegs of beer. The names of the alleged offenders are Richard Patterson, Michael Gallagher, Michael Forbes, Frank Hoban, Peter Gorman, Harry Dwyer and Patrick Gorman. All pleaded not guilty, and the trial is fixed for Oct. 29. Judge Lamson said that from what he could hear of the case he would raise the bail from \$500 to \$1,000.

October 10, 1891 Plain Dealer

Whatever the source of the name, it was the first time that this name had been applied to the Gang by any of **Cleveland's three major daily newspapers**—the Leader, the Press or the Plain Dealer. Both the Gang and its name were to become notorious in the suburb of West Cleveland and on the west side of the City of Cleveland in the years to come.

2. A Gang from the Suburb of West Cleveland

In 1891, the West Cleveland was a small suburb that abutted the City of **Cleveland's western corporation** limits-- a north-south line located just west of Gordon Avenue. The suburb's territory included much of what is today the northwest side of

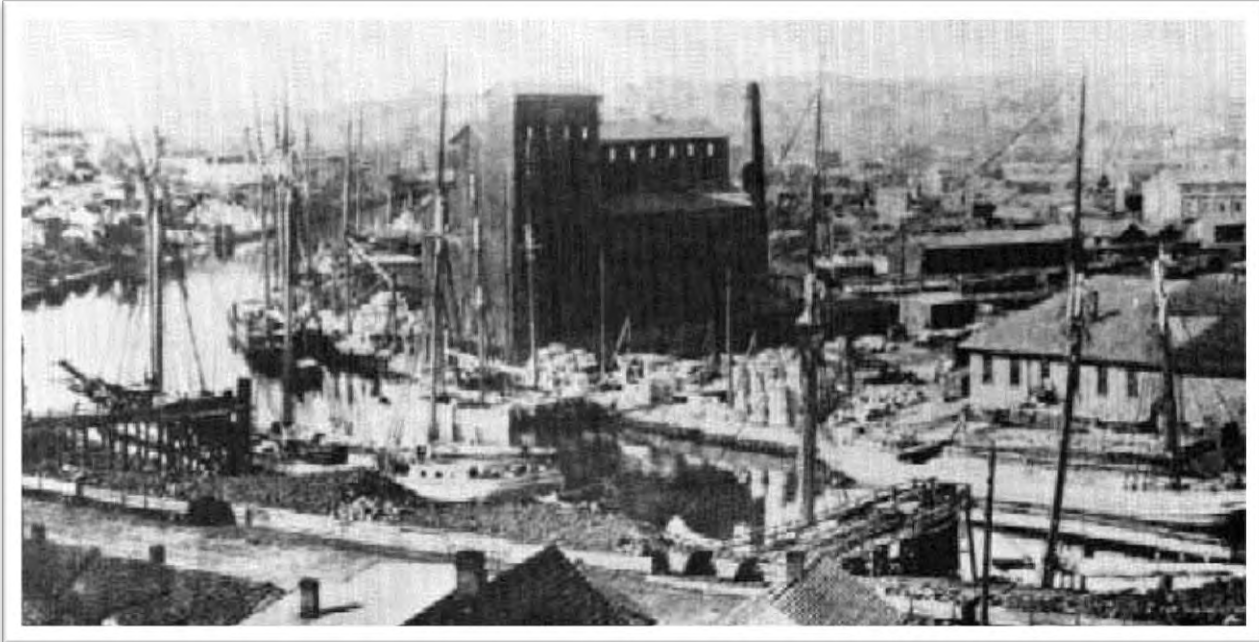
Cleveland.



1874 Map of Northern part of West Cleveland

West Cleveland was bounded on the north by Lake Erie; on the east by the Cleveland corporation line near Gordon Avenue; on the west by Highland Avenue (West 117th Street); and on the south (in large part) by Lorain Street (Lorain Avenue). The suburb's **territory** consisted of 1500 acres of land and it had a population of 6,000 residents at the time of its annexation to Cleveland in 1894.⁷

The new suburb had been carved out of Brooklyn Township territory and incorporated as a village in 1871 by landowners who hoped to develop residential subdivisions there in a suburban setting that would appeal to the housing wants and needs of Clevelanders living in the fast industrializing area of the near west side located near Lake Erie and the Cuyahoga River and known as **the "Triangle"** or, as it was also



1880's Cuyahoga River Scene

referred to, **the “Old Angle.”** In the post-Civil War period, this area of the near west side of Cleveland, which had at one time been a section of downtown Ohio City, was booming with new industrial activities. There were iron works factories near the railroad tracks, ship building plants by the River; and ore docks along the Lake from which unprocessed ores were unloaded and manufactured products were later loaded onto Lake ships.

The factories, plants and mills in the Triangle belched smoke and soot into the air day and night, and discharged a steady stream of oil, grease and other toxic substances **into the Cuyahoga River and Lake Erie. In these early years of Cleveland’s** industrialization, the Triangle also became the home of thousands of Irish immigrants who had been attracted to the area by the jobs offered at the iron works factories, the ship building plants, and the ore docks along the Lake.

These immigrants settled into and crowded old houses just west of the River that **formerly had housed many of Ohio City's early pioneers, and into new cheap houses that** had been quickly thrown up to accommodate them. By the time the Village of West Cleveland was incorporated in 1871, the Triangle was already an overcrowded, boisterous, and grimy neighborhood, as the picture below attests.

All of this made the new residential subdivisions being developed in the suburb of West Cleveland in the 1870s very appealing to working class immigrants who were living their lives in the very hard and noisy and unhealthy environment of the Triangle.

One of the first new residential subdivisions in West Cleveland in the 1870s was built by John McCart. McCart (1806-1881) was an immigrant from Ireland. He first farmed the acres of land he had purchased in Brooklyn Township on Detroit Street just beyond the Cleveland border, but eventually decided that it would be more profitable for him to develop the back acres of the land into a residential subdivision.⁸ Accordingly, in 1869, McCart sought and received approval from the trustees of Brooklyn Township to subdivide the northern portion of his bowling-shaped parcel of land into ninety-two 40-foot wide residential lots which he neatly arranged along the east and west sides of McCart Street, a narrow thirty-foot road that bisected his property from Detroit Road on the south to the right of way of the Lake Shore and Michigan Southern Railroad on the north.

Lying just west of the Cleveland western corporation line near Gordon Avenue, McCart Street was ideally located to attract Irish-Americans and others working class people living on the near west side of Cleveland. It was located only 1.5 miles west of

the Triangle—an easy walk in the late nineteenth century for a factory worker. Moreover, the street car line which operated along Detroit Street on the west side of Cleveland in the 1880s had its terminus at Gordon Avenue—and thus was just a few hundred feet away from McCart Street.

John McCart sold his first lot on McCart Street in 1870 and thereafter, until his death eleven years later in 1881, sold several dozen more.⁹ In addition to selling lots in the subdivision, McCart also rented houses and barns on McCart Street, proclaiming in the ads which he placed in local newspapers that rent **was “cheap”** on McCart Street.¹⁰ This resulted in the population of McCart Street in the period 1870-1890 having a mix of owners and renters.

In the marketing of his new subdivision, John McCart offered the working class **on the near west side Clevelanders his version of a working man’s suburban paradise.** The lots on his street may have been small, the street itself extremely narrow, and the houses cheap, but the air in West Cleveland was fresh and clean. And since rent was **“cheap” on McCart Street, few working class** families were excluded from the opportunity to live on McCart Street.

By 1880, 217 people were living in 40 houses on McCart Street either as owners or renters.¹¹ A large percentage of these new West Cleveland residents were working class Irish-Americans who had moved their families out of the Triangle into the new suburb of West Cleveland. In fact, more than 63% of the people living on McCart Street in 1880 were either immigrants from Ireland or their children born in America.¹² These new West Cleveland residents who had moved from the Triangle to McCart Street, and to other nearby subdivisions in the new Cleveland suburb, not only swelled its

population while making money for **the suburb's** land developers, but they also brought to the suburb a number of **Cleveland's** urban problems, including the problem of street gangs—an urban phenomenon which had plagued the City Cleveland for decades.

One of the most notorious of these early Cleveland street gangs was named after the Triangle **area of Cleveland's near west side. The Triangle Gang** was a gang of young Irish-American men who lived in and about the Triangle in the post Civil War period. This Gang, which operated in an area of the City from which many of the new working class residents of West Cleveland hailed, most likely served as an inspiration and model for the McCart Street Gang which rose in West Cleveland just a few decades later.

When the decade of the 1880s arrived in West Cleveland, McCart Street was already home to a large number of young Irish-American men—many of whom had been born in and had lived their pre-teen years of life in the Triangle. In 1880, there were 50 Irish-American males under the age of 20 living on McCart Street—almost one quarter of **the street's** entire population.¹³ While census figures are not available for the year 1890, the number of young Irish-American men living on McCart Street in the year which preceded the year of the **burglary of Bridget and J.M. Grieles' saloon on Alger Street**, may have been even larger as families increased in size and new families from the **Triangle, like Foxy Gorman's family, moved onto McCart Street** as renters.¹⁴

At some point in time in the 1880s, a number of the young Irish-American men living on and around McCart Street with last names like Farrell, Fallon, Gallagher, Gorman, Hoban, Malloy, and McMahan, gathered together to form a Gang. They assaulted people on the streets of West Cleveland during the day and burglarized local businesses at night. While the Plain Dealer's reference to the Gang in October of 1891 as

the “**McCart Street Gang**” may have been the formal announcement to all of Cleveland that a new gang of “**toughs**” was operating in the suburb of West Cleveland, residents and business owners of this west side suburb had already known for some time of the **Gang’s existence in their community**, especially following a notorious gun battle that erupted in the evening of July 20, 1889, on Gordon Avenue near Detroit Street, between two County Sheriff deputies and two members of the Gang .

3. A Prisoner Escapes Jail; a Member of the Gang is Killed.

On July 20, 1889, Richard Mansfield, a prisoner awaiting trial for stealing a horse, and another prisoner by the name of William A. Smith, escaped from the County Jail in downtown Cleveland. Cuyahoga County Sheriff E. D. Sawyer suspected that the two men might have fled **to Mansfield’s** home located at 26 McCart Street in West Cleveland. He therefore dispatched two of his deputies to the suburb that evening to look for Mansfield and Smith. On Gordon Street, near Detroit, the two deputies came upon two young men driving a buggy. A gun battle ensued in which one of the deputies, Joe Goldsoll, was mortally shot. One of the men in the buggy-- a young man carrying a revolver and a screwdriver with him, was shot and killed by the other deputy.¹⁵

It turned out that the two men in the buggy on Gordon Avenue were not Mansfield and Smith—who had apparently headed east rather than west when they escaped from the downtown County jail, but were instead two other young men. These two other men, given the nature of the tools that they were carrying with them on the evening of July 21, 1889, were most likely burglars getting ready to break into a home or

business on Gordon Avenue when the deputies happened by accident to come upon them.

In a follow up to this story that appeared in the next day edition of its newspaper, the Plain Dealer quoted a confidential source who stated that the two men who had battled with the two deputies on Gordon Avenue in the evening hours of July 21 were members of a new gang that had been operating in the vicinity of Detroit and Gordon **Streets for “about a year.”**¹⁶

In the five year period that followed the year of this gun battle on Gordon Avenue between law enforcement officers and members of the Gang, the new Gang from West Cleveland would commit a large number of sensational crimes that would fast make it notorious not only in the suburb of West Cleveland but throughout the City of Cleveland.

5. The Gang’s Reign of Terror (1890-1894).

It may have all begun simply on the evening of July 28, 1890, when brothers Michael and James Gorman went for a walk down McCart Street. Michael, known as “**Foxy**” because of his red hair, was 14 years old. His brother James was just seven.¹⁷ The boys ended up that evening at the home of Hugh and Barbara Katon, an elderly couple who lived at 37 McCart Street. There, for reasons never disclosed in the local newspapers, the two youths proceeded to beat up Mr. and Mrs. Katon and smash the furniture in their house.

The incident was reported in the Plain Dealer edition of August 1, 1890. In writing of the incident, the Plain Dealer intimated that the two boys were members of a **new “Triangle Gang” operating** in the neighborhood located between McCart and Alger Streets in West Cleveland. The article further attributed a rash of recent crimes in West Cleveland to the Gang, stating: **“Doors of houses in the neighborhood have been kicked in, inoffensive people assaulted and disorder generally has had full sway in the neighborhood.”**¹⁸ The next day, the Plain Dealer, in a follow up story, reported that Mrs. **Katon had been “prevailed upon” to drop the charges against the two boys.**¹⁹

Just a few months later, in November 1890, fourteen year old Foxy Gorman and fellow Gang members Patrick Gorman (18 years old)—a member of a different Gorman family living on McCart Street, and Michael Gallagher (20 years old), also a resident of McCart Street, were hauled into Police Court in downtown Cleveland to answer to charges that they had refused to pay for a street car ride on Detroit Street and had assaulted street car driver Michael Kane when he demanded that they pay their fare.²⁰

Of the three young men appearing in Police Court, Patrick Gorman was the most physically imposing. He had brown hair and blue eyes; was almost six foot tall; and was **described as “well built.” He had a noticeable scar across his right eyebrow. Michael “Gillie” Gallagher was a little over 5’9” in height** and weighed 147 pounds. He was illiterate and drank, smoked tobacco, and used profanity.

Michael “Foxy” Gorman, the youngest of the three (shown in his 1896 Bertillon photograph from the Ohio Penitentiary below), **was only 5’7” tall but** weighed 143 pounds. He had red hair, hazel eyes and large ears. Like Patrick



Gorman, he was **described as “well built.”** Gorman had several noticeable scars, including one on the top of his head, one on his right arm near his elbow, and one above his right eyebrow.²¹ In many ways, he was probably the most colorful member of the Gang in the early 1890s.

Michael "Foxy" Gorman

In the Police Court proceedings, all three were found guilty of assault and battery, and each was sentenced to 60 days in the Cleveland Workhouse.²² All three **spent actual time in the Workhouse, with Patrick Gorman being “pardoned”** after spending 41 days in the Workhouse. He was released early on December 23, 1890.

Michael “Gillie” Gallagher and Michael “Foxy” Gorman spent Christmas 1890 in the Workhouse, each serving their full sentence. Gallagher was released from the Workhouse on January 12, 1891, and Foxy Gorman, who had started his sentence a week after Patrick Gorman and Gillie Gallagher started theirs, a week later on January 19, 1891.²³

After his early release from the Workhouse in late December 1890, Patrick Gorman was back in trouble again and was arrested by Cleveland police officers just a few months later in April 1891. He was charged by the police with stealing a shot gun from a grocery store on Detroit Street and, in a separate incident, criminally damaging a saloon on Gordon Avenue.²⁴ Gorman was locked up at the 8th Precinct Station on Detroit Street in Cleveland, but apparently was able to obtain his release in time to

participate **in the burglary of Bridget and J.M. Grieles' saloon** in West Cleveland on July 26, 1891.

The 60 day sentences in the Cleveland Workhouse meted out to Gang members Patrick Gorman, Foxy Gorman, and Michael Gallagher clearly **hadn't** deterred the Gang from its crime rampage in West Cleveland during the period July 1890-July 1891. Law enforcement officials may have therefore decided to attempt to use the opportunity presented the burglary of the Grieles saloon by seven of the Gang members to send a clearer signal to the Gang that its criminal activities in and about the suburb of West Cleveland would no longer be tolerated. Likewise, it may have been the pursuit of this same law enforcement goal that prompted the County Prosecutor in November 1891 to bring to trial only the two Gorman brothers—Patrick Gorman, the leader of the Gang, and his young brother, Peter.²⁵ In the trial that began on November 11 of that year, the Gorman brothers were defended by well-known Cleveland criminal defense attorney, W. S. Kerruish. At the conclusion of the trial, Peter was acquitted of all of the charges against him, but Patrick Gorman was found guilty by the jury of burglary and larceny. On November 25, 1891, Judge Lamson, perhaps at the urging of the County Prosecutor, sent the desired **“signal” to the Gang** by sentencing Patrick Gorman, leader of the Gang, to three years in the Ohio Penitentiary.²⁶

Law enforcement and Common Pleas Court officials may have hoped that the sentencing of Patrick Gorman to the Ohio Penitentiary for three years would put a quick **end to the McCart Street Gang's reign of terror in West Cleveland. If so, they** were quickly disappointed, because it soon became clear that, while imprisoning Patrick

Gorman for three years may have prevented him from committing additional crimes in West Cleveland, it did little to deter the Gang itself from continuing its crime spree in this suburb of Cleveland.

On December 1, 1891, less than one week after Gorman was sentenced by Judge Lamson to the Penitentiary, the McCart Street Gang was back at it again in West Cleveland. On that date, an elderly man, who perhaps mistakenly thought it was now **safe to walk the streets of West Cleveland, was “knocked down and robbed” on Gordon Avenue.** The next day, December 2, **a man named McLaughlin was similarly “knocked down and robbed” of seven dollars.** However, when he threatened to swear out warrants against the Gang, the Gang returned his money to him! Two days after this, on December 4, a railroad worker was robbed on Gordon Avenue by the Gang. On this latter occasion, two Cleveland police officers responded to West Cleveland and attempted to disperse the Gang which a newspaper **described as a “crowd.”** The Gang at first retreated when the officers appeared, but then pelted the officers with rocks.²⁷

Just two weeks after these incidents on Gordon Avenue, the Gang traveled into Cleveland and attacked the owner of a saloon at Taylor Avenue (West 45th Street) and Detroit Street, firing pistols at him. Jim Herron, the owner of the saloon, had made the mistake of demanding that the Gang members pay for their drinks or leave his saloon.²⁸ During that **same week, Michael “Foxy” Gorman, Michael “Gillie” Gallagher, and an unnamed member of the Gang,** allegedly robbed a grocery wagon on Detroit Street, near Wall Street (West 26th Street), in Cleveland. (The case against them was later dismissed

for lack of evidence—Foxy explaining to the Judge that **“all he wanted was a ride and that he wouldn’t steal for the world.”**²⁹

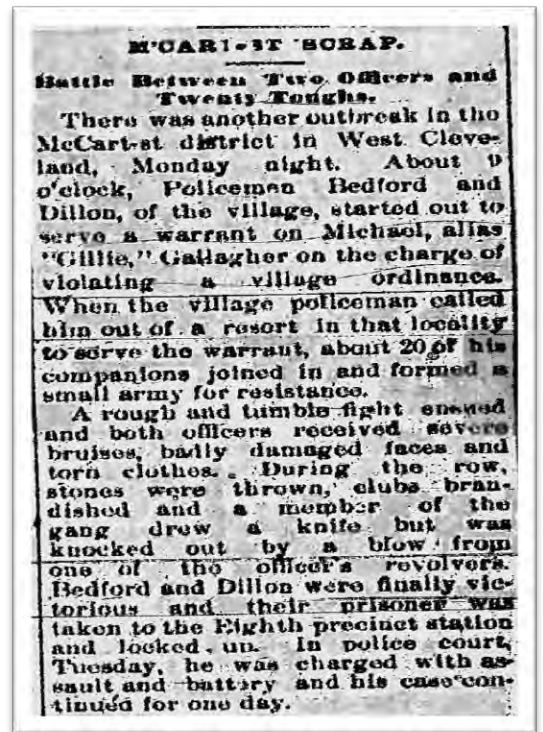
In the year 1892, **the Gang’s reign of terror continued.** On February 17, 1892, Thomas Gorman, another of Foxy **Gorman’s** younger brothers, along with Harry Farrell, burglarized a grocery store on Franklin Avenue.³⁰ **On March 21, 1892, Patrick Gorman’s** younger brother Peter, and William Murray of West Madison Avenue, broke into **Singleton’s saloon on Berea Road. Murray was shot by the owner’s wife.**³¹ In April, **1892, Michael “Gillie” Gallagher and five unnamed members of the Gang assaulted the** proprietor of a saloon located at the corner of Waverly Avenue (West 58th Street) and Cass Street, and then **“rolled out”** kegs of beer and stole several billiard balls from the saloon.³² In May 1892, James Gorman, who had helped his older brother Foxy beat up the elderly Katons on McCart Street two years earlier and was now a nine year old, was hauled into Police Court and charged with assaulting C.J. Powers. A newspaper account described him **as a “big, overgrown, white haired, red faced young fellow.”** **Court** officials laughed at young Gorman when he presented them with a receipt from Powers in which Powers agreed that for \$2.50 received he would not appear in Court against Gorman.³³

Later in May, the violence of the Gang in West Cleveland escalated, when two **West Cleveland** “special” police officers- William Bedford and Ed Dillon, attempted to arrest “Gillie” Gallagher at a saloon **located on a “commons”** near McCart Street. They managed to get handcuffs on Gallagher, but a crowd composed of at least 20 Gang members quickly gathered and attacked the officers. Gallagher attempted to stab one of

the officers with a knife, but the officer deflected the knife with his gun. The two officers, who were badly beaten by the Gang, somehow managed to extract themselves from the situation and retreated from the neighborhood with their prisoner in hand.³⁴

The crimes committed by the Gang and its members during the remainder of the five year period from 1890 through 1894 are too numerous to fully recount in this article, but suffice it to say that the pace of the crimes committed by the Gang continued unabated through the balance of the year 1892, and the years 1893 and 1894. Some of the more notable crimes committed by the Gang during this period include the following.

Sometime in mid May, 1892, members of the McCart Street Gang reportedly dug a pit in the middle of Detroit Street in West Cleveland, hoping to trap and then rob cyclists who were bicycling from Elyria to Cleveland. The attempt failed.³⁵ In April, 1893, Gang members Patrick Fallon and John Kilbane lured a Jewish rag peddler into a home on the near west side of Cleveland and then viciously assaulted and robbed him.³⁶ In July, 1894, Michael Murphy and several other members of the Gang, including Michael McGinty **who was married to Gillie Gallagher's sister Alice**, attacked a young woman and her companion on Taylor Avenue (West 45th Street) near the Lake, raping the young woman.³⁷ On August 22, 1894, Foxy Gorman assaulted Cleveland police officer Robert



May 1892 - Gang and Police Battle

Commerford when he traveled to McCart Street and attempted to arrest another of **Gorman's** younger brothers, Anthony.³⁸ In September 1894, two of **Gillie Gallagher's** younger brothers, Edward and Thomas, robbed a woman on Gordon Avenue.³⁹ One week later, the Gang attacked a widow from the suburb who made the mistake of waiting for a street car on the corner of Gordon Avenue and Detroit Street in the evening hours. She was knocked down by Gang members and robbed.⁴⁰

While the crime spree continued in 1894, unbeknownst to the Gang forces were gathering in this year which would in time cause the Gang—at least as a organization terrorizing the suburb of West Cleveland, to disperse, thereby restoring a measure of peace, quiet and safety to residents of the west side of Cleveland living on or near McCart Street.

6. Residents, Local Business and the City of Cleveland take on the Gang.

The years 1890-1894 were not only the **years of the McCart Street Gang's reign of terror** in the suburb of West Cleveland. They were also the final five years of the **suburb's existence.**

In 1893, residents of West Cleveland, desiring to obtain superior local government services offered by the City of Cleveland, including better police protection, voted to annex their suburb to the City of Cleveland, despite opposition from the **suburb's elected officials.**⁴¹ The following year, commissioners appointed from West Cleveland and Cleveland negotiated, and their respective Councils approved, an **agreement which provided for the terms of West Cleveland's annexation to the City of**

Cleveland. Among the key terms of the Agreement was a promise by the City of Cleveland that it would build a new police station in the territory of the former suburb and staff the new police station with at least six police officers.⁴²



Cleveland's 12th Precinct Station at West 83rd and Detroit

For several years preceding annexation, West Cleveland officials had simply not had sufficient resources to effectively deal with the large scale crimes of the McCart Street Gang. More and more often, they had found themselves compelled to request assistance from Cleveland police officers operating out of the Eighth Precinct Station near the intersection of Pearl and Detroit Streets to respond to crimes committed by the Gang.⁴³ Responding to crime in a neighboring suburb was obviously not the highest priority for Cleveland police officers.

However, following the annexation of West Cleveland to Cleveland, construction of a new precinct station (shown on the preceding page) was begun and, in June 1895, the new Cleveland police station located at the corner of Seward Street (West 83rd Street) and Detroit Street, known as the 12th precinct station, was ready to be opened—just one-half mile from McCart Street.⁴⁴ With the opening of the new Cleveland police station just down the street from their headquarters, a first ominous signal was sent to the McCart Street Gang that, with the annexation of their suburb to Cleveland, things were changing in the neighborhood.

Local businesses, which had begun during this period to play a more active role in improving the conditions of the business districts on the west side of Cleveland, also had an impact upon the operations of the McCart Street Gang. These local businesses banded together to form the West Side Improvement Association. As early as 1895, the Association petitioned the City of Cleveland to provide for a Police Court at the Eighth Precinct Station on Detroit Street to more effectively fight crime on the west side of Cleveland.⁴⁵

Residents of McCart Street also took measures to end the crime spree in West Cleveland which had made their street infamous. Claiming that the McCart Street Gang had disgraced the name of their street, they successfully petitioned their Councilman to introduce legislation to change the name of McCart Street to Hillside Street.⁴⁶ At its June 24, 1895 Council meeting, Cleveland City Council voted to change the name of McCart Street to Hillside Avenue.⁴⁷

Cleveland judges also took on the Gang in 1895, handing out a number of stiff sentences to the Ohio Penitentiary that year to members of the Gang. In May 1895, Gang member Michael Murphy was sentenced by Common Pleas Judge Frank E. Dellenbaugh to 9 years—a lengthy term of imprisonment in 1895, in the Ohio Penitentiary for the rape of Lydia Thompson.⁴⁸ On July 27, 1895, Gang member Patrick **Fallon was sentenced by Judge Dellenbaugh to 3 years in the Penitentiary for “pocket picking.”**⁴⁹ On December 12, 1895, Common Pleas Judge Alfred W. Lamson—the same Judge Lamson who had sentenced McCart Street Gang leader Patrick Gorman to three years in **the Ohio Penitentiary in 1891, sentenced Gorman’s successor as leader of the McCart Street Gang, Michael “Foxy” Gorman, to a 9 year sentence in the Ohio** Penitentiary for robbery.⁵⁰ On that same day, Judge Lamson also sentenced one of the newer members of the Gang—**Edward O’Malley, to two years in the Penitentiary for** robbing a pretzel wagon driver.⁵¹

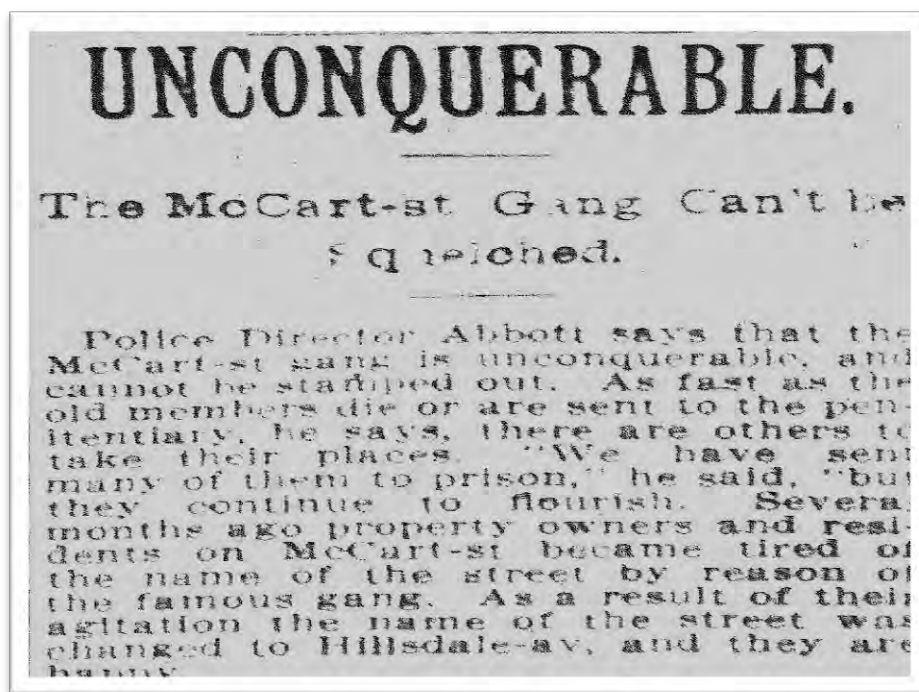
Annexation, the new 12th precinct police station and the six Cleveland police officers who staffed it, the West Side Improvement Association and its lobbying efforts, the residents of McCart Street successfully petitioning Cleveland City Council to change the name of their street to Hillside Avenue, and the tough sentences handed out to Gang members by Common Pleas Court judges in 1895, all had their impact on the McCart Street Gang in 1895.

However, at just about the same time as these events were unfolding, which were to **put an end to the Gang’s reign of terror in West Cleveland,** a new generation of

McCart Street Gang members—dubbed by the newspapers as the “Junior McCart Street Gang,” appeared on the scene in West Cleveland.

7. **“Unconquerable” - the “Junior” McCart Street Gang.**

In an article in the December 16, 1896 edition of the Cleveland Press (below), Cleveland Police Director E. A. Abbot proclaimed that the McCart Street Gang was “unconquerable.” He complained that just as quickly as “old” members were sent to the Penitentiary “others” appeared to take their place.⁵²



December 16, 1896 Cleveland Press

In this article, Director Abbott was referring to the recent appearance on the west side of Cleveland of the “Junior” McCart Street Gang. The “Junior” Gang was first mentioned in Cleveland newspapers in early 1895. On February 28, 1895, the Cleveland

Plain Dealer reported that three days earlier five young boys, several of whom lived on McCart Street, had stolen \$20 from the home of Carolyn Becker at 288 Gordon Avenue (approximately 1488 West 65th Street). The theft was well planned. While two of the boys distracted Mrs. Becker at her front door, two others entered her house by a rear door and took money from two pocketbooks.⁵³

The Plain Dealer dubbed **these boys as members of the “Junior” McCart Street Gang** because they from the McCart Street neighborhood, but were significantly younger in age than Foxy Gorman and the other members of the original McCart Street Gang who had been terrorizing West Cleveland since the late 1880s. While Foxy and the other members of the original Gang were all born prior to the year 1880—most of them in the **decade of the 1870s, the “Junior” members of the Gang** (with one exception—see Patrick Meaney below) were all born in 1880 or thereafter.

John Hunson, who lived at 74 McCart Street (1282 West 69th Street) and was **identified as the leader of the “Junior” Gang in 1895, was only 10 years old. James Gorman, Foxy’s already notorious little brother, was** still just 13 years old in 1895 and lived at 35 McCart Street (1231 West 69th Street). Joseph McGorray, who claimed in Court that he had **refused to participate in the burglary of Mrs. Becker’s house, lived on** Barrett Street (West 70th Street) and was one of the older boys in the group at age 14. William Meaney was also 14 years old and lived with his family at 101 Hermann Street (5206 Herman Avenue). The final member of the group—Thomas McCune (shown below in his 1901 Bertillon photograph taken at the Ohio Penitentiary), who lived at 720



Thomas McCune – Junior McCart Street Gang

Detroit (approximately 5300 Detroit Avenue), was the oldest of the five boys. He was 15 years old in 1895.⁵⁴

While perhaps not named the

“Junior” McCart Street Gang until

early 1895, the members of this

younger McCart Street Gang, several of whom were younger brothers of original McCart Street Gang members, began engaging in gang crimes prior to 1895. It has already been noted in this paper that James Gorman, younger brother of Foxy Gorman, who went by the alias **“William Dyer,”** was the latter’s accomplice in the beating of Mrs. And Mrs. Katon on McCart Street in 1890 when James was only 7 years old! As also noted earlier in this article, two other Junior McCart Street Gang members--Michael “Gillie” **Gallagher’s younger brothers** Edward (born in 1882)—whose also went by the name **“Edward O’Malley,”** and Thomas (born in 1880), had been arrested in September 1894 for stealing money from the residence of Sarah Anderson at 439 Gordon Avenue (1945 West 65th Street).

Other members of the Junior Gang, who, during the last five years of the decade of the 1890s, committed crimes of violence or theft that were reported in the Cleveland newspapers, were: brothers Patrick Meaney (born in 1879—the exception to the rule cited above) and William Meaney (born in 1881), both of whom lived at 101 Hermann

Street; brothers George Kent (born 1883) and Thomas Kent (birth date unknown); brothers Thomas McCune, Robert McCune (born 1882) and William McCune (born 1884), all of whom lived with their parents at 721 Detroit Street; and Bartley Gallagher (born in 1881), who lived at 130 Gordon Avenue (1290 West 65th Street).⁵⁵

While Cleveland Police Director Abbot may have spoken accurately when he stated to the media in December 1896 that, **when “old” members of the McCart Street Gang** were sent away to prison, they were often replaced by “others,” he engaged, I believe, in hyperbole when he also stated on this occasion that the McCart Street Gang **was “unconquerable.”** **As the decade of the 1890s wore on,** many of the original members of the McCart Street Gang, such as Patrick Gorman, Michael Forbes and Harry Dwyer, were either reformed by prison, marriage, employment, or a combination of all three, or, as in the case **of Patrick Gorman’s younger brother, Peter, suffered untimely deaths.** As the ranks of the original McCart Street Gang members thinned, **the “Junior”** McCart Street Gang did not appear to be able to achieve the number levels of the original Gang, perhaps for the reasons advanced in the prior section of this paper, that would allow it to engage in the sort of large scale and boisterous gang activities that characterized the most notorious crimes committed by the original McCart Street Gang during its 1890-1894 **“reign of terror”** in West Cleveland. In short, the McCart Street Gang was slowly dying from attrition.

After 1896, Cleveland newspapers never again referred to either the McCart Street Gang or the Junior McCart Street Gang. As the nineteenth century turned into the twentieth century, former members of the Junior McCart Street Gang such as James

Gorman, Bartley Gallagher, and Thomas McCune, who continued to engage in gang-related crimes during the period 1898-1902, began to be referred to in the Cleveland newspapers as members of the “Whisky Island” Gang or the “Pete Carlin” Gang, and their crimes tended to be committed outside of the McCart Street neighborhood in other areas of the west side of Cleveland.⁵⁶ Other members of both the original McCart Street Gang and the Junior McCart Street Gang, who continued to commit crimes of violence and/or theft on the west side of Cleveland after 1896, were no longer identified in the newspapers as members of the McCart Street Gang or any other gang. For example, original McCart Street Gang members **Michael “Gillie” Gallagher and his brother-in-law, Michael “Block” McGinty** (shown below in his 1898 Bertillon photograph taken at the Ohio Penitentiary), who were charged with committing a robbery on West Madison Avenue in 1904, were simply referred to in the article which described their crime as “**highway men.**” No mention whatsoever was made of **Gallagher’s prominent** role in the McCart Street Gang of the 1890s.⁵⁷



Michael McGinty – Married “Gillie” Gallagher’s sister

The west side of the City of Cleveland continued to be the home to gangs of young men after 1896, and some members of the original McCart Street Gang and the Junior McCart Street Gang continued to commit crimes on the west side of Cleveland after 1896, but after 1896 there is no evidence that the McCart Street Gang, as an organization of young persons who committed crimes, continued to exist on the west side of Cleveland.

Conclusion

The McCart Street Gang was a phenomenon of the short-lived suburb of West Cleveland and a notable part of the history of Cleveland in the decade of the 1890s. All Clevelanders who lived during this period knew of the McCart Street Gang and of its exploits—many of them first hand. Dr. George Crile, one of the founders of the Cleveland Clinic, recalled to his later year associates that, when he was a young physician practicing medicine on the west side of Cleveland in the 1890s near the Triangle, he on occasion encountered the Gang. He noted that they seemed to respect **him as a physician and, while they might steal a “buggy whip, a horse blanket, or carriage robe” from his buggy, he was never personally harmed by any of them.**⁵⁸

Dr. Crile may have been fortunate to have escaped violence at the hands of the McCart Street Gang. The Gang committed numerous crimes of both theft and violence in West Cleveland and on the west side of Cleveland from 1888 to 1896. During the period 1890-**1894 it unleashed what is best described as a “reign of terror” on local businesses and residents.** With the annexation of West Cleveland to the City of Cleveland in 1894, and the effective and coordinated actions thereafter of law

enforcement officials, business owners, and area residents, the reign of terror that the McCart Street Gang had imposed upon the west side of Cleveland slowly came to an end. After 1896, the Gang was never heard from again. **Until the rise of Cleveland's ethnic mafia gangs in the mid twentieth century, Clevelanders would never again experience a wave of gang-related crimes like that of the McCart Street Gang.**

Endnotes

¹ The names and addresses of many of the streets in West Cleveland and Cleveland where events relating to the McCart Street Gang took place during the last decades of the nineteenth century changed in 1906, when the City of Cleveland comprehensively changed the names of streets and its street numbering system. I have wherever possible added in parenthesis the current street names and addresses where Gang members lived and where Gang crimes were committed.

² Cleveland Plain Dealer, October 10, 1891.

³ Cuyahoga County Common Pleas Court Docket No. 40469, Journal Entry for October 9, 1891.

⁴ Most of the demographic information about McCart Street gang members was obtained from federal census records, especially from the 1880 and 1900 censuses. Unfortunately, as anyone who researches any event from the 1890s knows, the 1890 federal census is not available, because it was destroyed almost in its entirety by a fire in 1921.

⁵ In 1891, the territory bounded by Lake Erie on the north; Gordon Avenue on the east; Lorain Avenue on the south; and Highland Street (West 117th Street) on the west was the Village of West Cleveland, incorporated in 1874. This territory was annexed to the City of Cleveland in 1874. See Section 2 of this article for more about the Village.

⁶ See FN 2 supra.

⁷ **James Harrison Kennedy, "A History of the City of Cleveland: Its Settlement, Rise and Progress 1796-1896," Cleveland: The Imperial Press (1896), at 508.**

⁸ **In the 1870 federal census, John McCart listed his occupation as "farmer." In the 1880 census, he listed it as "realtor."**

⁹ According to records of the Cuyahoga County Recorder, McCart sold 29 sublots in the John McCart Subdivision during the period of 1870-1881. Few lots were sold in the subdivision during the balance of the 1880s decade, because the heirs and relatives of John McCart were engaged in a protracted lawsuit over his will. See Cleveland Plain Dealer, March 28, 1885.

¹⁰ See, e.g., Ad appearing in the Cleveland Plain Dealer edition, April 25, 1876, p. 2.

¹¹ This information was obtained from 1880 U.S. Census.

¹² Information obtained from 1880 census records of population living on McCart Street in West Cleveland.

¹³ See FN 12, supra.

¹⁴ See Cleveland City Directories, listings for Patrick Gorman (father of Foxy Gorman), for the years 1890-1899.

¹⁵ Cleveland Plain Dealer, July 21, 1889, at 6.

¹⁶ Cleveland Plain Dealer, July 22, 1889, at 8.

¹⁷ Information obtained from 1900 federal census – Patrick and Kittie Gorman family residing at 5 Herman Street Extension.

¹⁸ Cleveland Plain Dealer, August 1, 1890, at 6.

¹⁹ Cleveland Plain Dealer, August 2, 1890, at 5.

²⁰ Cleveland Plain Dealer, November 5, 1890, at 6.

²¹ See records from the Ohio Penitentiary and Ohio State Reformatory. The description of Patrick Gorman, Prisoner No. 22869, was obtained from the Ohio Penitentiary Register of Prisoners for the year 1891. **The description of Michael “Foxy” Gorman, Prisoner No. 27505, was obtained from the Ohio Penitentiary Register of Prisoners for the year 1895. The description of Michael “Gillie” Gallagher, Prisoner No. 166, was obtained from the Ohio State Reformatory’s Historical Conduct Records for the year 1897.**

²² Cleveland Workhouse Prisoner Register, Entries for dates November 12 and 19, 1890.

²³ See FN 22, supra.

²⁴ Cleveland Plain Dealer, April 22, 1891, at 4.

²⁵ The only other Gang member ever brought to trial for the burglary of the Grieles saloon was Michael Forbes. In a trial that concluded on June 3, 1892, Forbes was found guilty of petit larceny and, on June 13, 1892, he was sentenced fined just \$5, but ordered committed until his fine was paid. See Cuyahoga County Common Pleas Court Case No 40469 (April 1891 Term), Court Journal, Vol. 112, pages 612 and 635.

²⁶ See Cuyahoga County Common Pleas Court Case No. 40469 (April 1891 Term), Court Journal, Vol. 110, pages 633 and 661.

²⁷ Cleveland Plain Dealer, December 5, 1891, at 2.

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- ²⁸ Cleveland Plain Dealer, December 20, 1891, at 2.
- ²⁹ See Cleveland Plain Dealer, December 21, 22 and 25, at pages 8, 2 and 7 respectively.
- ³⁰ Cleveland Plain Dealer, February 17, 1892, at 3.
- ³¹ Cleveland Plain Dealer, March 22, 1892, at 2.
- ³² Cleveland Plain Dealer, April 12, 1892, at 8.
- ³³ Cleveland Plain Dealer, May 6, 1892, at 6.
- ³⁴ Cleveland Plain Dealer, May 11, 1892, at 6.
- ³⁵ Cleveland Plain Dealer, May 23, 1892, at 8.
- ³⁶ Cleveland Plain Dealer, April 25, 1893, at 2.
- ³⁷ See Cleveland Plain Dealer, July 2, 1894, front page.
- ³⁸ Cleveland Plain Dealer, August 22, 1894, at 6. Also see New York Times, August 21, 1894.
- ³⁹ Cleveland Plain Dealer, September 15, 1894, at 7.
- ⁴⁰ Cleveland Plain Dealer, September 11, 1894, at 2.
- ⁴¹ Cleveland Plain Dealer, June 15, 1893, at 4; and August 26, 1893, at 8.
- ⁴² See Annexation Agreement between Village of West Cleveland and City of Cleveland, described in Cleveland Plain Dealer, February 15, 1894, at front page.
- ⁴³ For an early example, see Cleveland Plain Dealer, August 1, 1890, at 6.
- ⁴⁴ Cleveland Plain Dealer, June 21, 1895, at 12.
- ⁴⁵ Cleveland Plain Dealer, May 10, 1895, at 4.
- ⁴⁶ Cleveland Plain Dealer, June 11, 1895, front page.
- ⁴⁷ Cleveland Plain Dealer, June 25, 1895, at 8.
- ⁴⁸ See Cuyahoga County Common Pleas Court Case No. 49803 (April Term 1895), Court Journal, Vol. 121, at 646.
- ⁴⁹ See Cuyahoga County Common Pleas Court Case No. 52346 (April Term 1895), (Journal Entry information not obtained.)

⁵⁰ See Cuyahoga County Common Pleas Court Case No. 52922 (April Term 1895), Court Journal, Vol. 122, at 757.

⁵¹ See Cuyahoga County Common Pleas Court Case No. 52825 (April Term 1895), Court Journal, Vol. 122, at 757.

⁵² Cleveland Press, December 16, 1896.

⁵³ Cleveland Plain Dealer, February 28, 1895, at 6.

⁵⁴ Supra.

⁵⁵ Age and Address information for these individuals obtained from the 1900 federal census and from the Cleveland City Directories of 1890-1899.

⁵⁶ Cleveland Plain Dealer, June 1, 1898; June 22, 1898; February 2, 1902, at 7.

⁵⁷ Cleveland Plain Dealer, October 13, 1904, at 2.

⁵⁸ **Howard Dittrick, "The Origin of the Cleveland Clinic," The Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Society Quarterly (April 12, 1947).**