

The Civil War was a cataclysm which uprooted a social order and planted a new strain of democracy in the United States. While the emancipation and military service of the blacks was the greatest upheaval, the fortunes of the Irish and Germans and other immigrants in America were also enhanced. After fighting in their adopted country's war, the foreign born veterans were awarded a larger role in the life of the nation. In the large volunteer armies of the Union, officerships and politics were intertwined, and after the war a flood of candidates ran for office on platforms supported by their war records. One man whose life reflects these changes produced by the war is Patrick Henry Jones, one of the twelve Federal generals who were born in Ireland.

He was the first of an eventual seven children raised by James and Ellen (Lynch) Jones, who were living in County Westmeath when Patrick was born on November 20, 1830. At age seven the youngster began attending school at a monastery in County Wicklow. Three years later the Jones family joined the tide of Irish immigration to America. After landing in New York City on June 5, 1840, the family traveled westward to Cattaraugus County, New York, and settled on a farm. In addition to working on the farm, Patrick attended the common schools until the age of twenty.¹ Then, in 1850, he took up journalism and became local editor of the Buffalo Republic. Soon after he became an editor of the Buffalo Sentinel² and traveled through the western states as a correspondent.