

By June he was encouraging tenant farmers to resist their landlords and telling them to 'keep a firm grip on their holdings'.

'The Land for the People' became the catch-cry of the Land League of Mayo, founded on August 16th, 1879. Its chief leaders were Davitt, Parnell, Daly, Loudon, Nally and another Mayoman John Dillon. Funds for the League were supplied from Clan na Gael in New York. Davitt, a socialist, and some other members of the leadership of the League favoured the replacement of the landlords' estates by collective farms. Well attended rallies and publicity ensured that the League became a national organisation within then weeks. Tenant farmers sought individual ownership of their rented holdings and the redistribution of lands farmed by extensive graziers. During the following two years there was a violent struggle between landlords and tenants that eventually forced the Government to enact a series of Land Acts. The first of which - The Land Law (Ireland) Act - commenced the dismantling of the Landlord system. Estates were purchased by the Irish Land Commission, which was financed by the United Kingdom government, and sold to tenants over long repayment periods at moderate rates of interest. In the very poor areas the government-sponsored Congested Districts Board built houses and established cottage industries.



Michael Davitt
 from County Mayo. As a result of this and later emigration about 2,500,000 present day Americans have Mayo ancestry - twenty five Mayo-Americans for every person currently living in the County.

While the redistribution of land ownership was widely welcomed it was not the instant solution to Ireland's problems that many had expected. As the century ended nationalism began to dominate Irish political thinking in line with much of Europe. But the independence of 26 of the 32 Irish Counties achieved in 1922 with the foundation of the Irish Free State failed to redress the emigration problem. Emigration from Mayo has continued to the present time.

Over 3,500,000 Irish people emigrated to the U.S.A. in the period 1841 to 1900 of which about 300,000 were from County Mayo. As a result of this and later emigration about 2,500,000 present day Americans have Mayo ancestry - twenty five Mayo-Americans for every person currently living in the County.

BOYCOTTING AND GIRLCOTTING

BOYCOTTING: The word 'boycott' was first used in the Daily Mail of 13th December 1880 to describe the Land League tactic of socially isolating its victims. Captain Charles C. Boycott of Lough Mask House, Ballinrobe was the first target of the campaign.

GIRLCOTTING: Derived from the word 'boycott' and referred to the practice during the 'Land War' of girls being warned by the Land League against marrying boycotted farmers.