Ulster marching season
reopens old wounds

Protestant parades
outrage Catholics
every summer

By Hannah Hoyes
Belfast, The Examiner

BELFAST — The road from
Drumcree Church slopes down-
ward for a quarter of a mile and
turns left onto the Garvaghy Road.
From here it is a scant mile into the
mid-Ulster town of Portadown.
For three consecutive years, a 10-
minute walk down this route has brought
Northern Ireland to a standstill.

According to Orange Order his-
torical, the organization dates to
1785, when a group of Protestants
and Catholics fought in a fierce
battle just three miles from Drum-
cree Church.

The first Orange parade took
place the following year, on July 12,
1795, to celebrate the Battle of the
Boyne (1690), in which the victori-
ous Protestant king, William of Or-
ange, defeated the Catholic King
James.

From the beginning, the march-
ens provided the Catholic commu-
nity, often resulting in violence.
Catholics viewed them as "trium-
phal," particularly because of the
oppressive anti-Catholic laws that
came on the heels of King Wil-
liam's victory.

Orange Order parades take place throughout Northern Ireland every summer.

A Loyalist "victory"

In 1995 the Irish Republican Ar-
my had called a cease-fire in its
campaign of anti-British violence.
Catholic nationalists along the
Garvaghy Road agreed to the pa-
rade in the spirit of reconciliation,
provided it was followed up with
dialogue.

But Unionist politicians leading the parade danced and crowed over their "victory" and refused to meet with residents.

The following year, a ban on the
Drumcree parade brought about the
worst rioting in the province in 25 years. Enraged in part by the end of the IRA cease-fire, loyalists — Protestants loyal to the British crown — blocked roads and train
routes and closed down airports
and ports. The government ca-
phorized the worst riots in the
province in 25 years. Enraged in
part by the end of the IRA cease-
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to the British crown — blocked
roads and train routes and closed
down airports and seaports. The
parade again was suspended.

Three brothers die

For a week clashes between the
parade and security forces intensi-
fied, with the Orangemen vowing
they would stand on the hill for a
year until they won the right to
march. During the week of violence
that followed, 141 Catholics or
Protestants were killed, 1,900 troops
were injured or arrested.

Security forces dug trenches
around the field at Drumcree, put
up barbed wire and brought in
3,000 troops for re-enforcement.

Last year, in the wake of the
peace agreement and the establish-
ment of the first self-governing As-
sembly, the parades went forward.

Make-or-break talks
peace for Ulster

Three bridges

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