



## Irish Yale prof led 10-year fight that saved Sleeping Giant

**W**ere it not for an Irish American botanist named James W. Toumey, and many others who joined him, one of Connecticut's most treasured natural wonders — the Sleeping Giant — would have been dynamited into rubble long before now.

A rock ridge almost three miles long, two miles wide and 739 feet high at its peak in the Mount Carmel section of Hamden, the Sleeping Giant, shown above, is the product of earthquakes, volcanic eruptions and lava flows 200 million years ago. Looking for all the world like a gigantic human being stretched out in sleep from west to east, this slumbering colossus can be recognized for miles around and today attracts thousands of visitors each year.

The ridge was given its name by Native Americans who inhabited Connecticut centuries before Europeans showed up. The Indians wove a story of its origins from its appearance and their imagina-

tions. We need to have the good sense to remember that they were not less intelligent nor more naïve than later settlers. Rather, like the ancient Greeks, who have a well-deserved reputation as the founders of western civilization, American Indians simply lacked scientific tools and had to resort to mythology to explain the earth and the heavens and their history.

Thus, according to the legends of the Quinnipiac tribe of Native Americans, the Sleeping Giant rock formation was the evil spirit Hobomock, who in a fit of temper stomped his foot and diverted the course of the Connecticut River, causing it to suddenly turn eastward in Middletown after running due south for several hundred miles from its source in northern New Hampshire. Hobomock was placed under a spell that left him to sleep forever, with his

*(Please turn to page 4)*

## Shopkeeper excels at reunions

**W**hen Katie O'Neill Regan of Hamden got involved in planning a family reunion, the end result was the renting of six houses in County Kerry, and a weeklong shindig of more than 40 kinfolk from the United States, Ireland and England.

Katie, who is the proprietor of the Lucky Ewe Irish Goods Store in downtown Hamden, was one of two family members who came up with the idea of a transatlantic reunion and then made it happen. The cousin on the County Kerry side of the ocean was Noreen O'Leary Horgan. Both she and Katie are granddaughters of Thomas and Nora Grandfield O'Leary of the town of Portmagee, a fishing village of the Iveragh Peninsula on the west coast of Ireland.

*(Please turn to page 3)*



*Katie O'Neill Regan of Hamden, fifth from left in front row, was a prime mover in organizing a transatlantic family reunion in Portmagee, County Kerry, in 2016.*

## Connecticut Irishtown: Hamden

In September this year, the town of Hamden sponsored a one-evening Irish festival and asked our historical society to put together a small display illustrating some of the town's Irish links. It did not take much research to fill the display board with examples of Hamden's Irish, some famous for their deeds, others nameless laborers. So we decided to make this an all-Hamden issue under the general headline of "Irishtown," a word sometimes used to designate communities and even neighborhoods that have large Irish populations or significant Irish histories. As we were putting the issue together it struck us that Hamden is not unique in its Irish roots. In fact, our entire state is filled with "Irishtowns," from our largest cities to our hamlets and crossroads. As we begin a new year, we look forward to exploring other Connecticut municipalities and districts that fit the name Irishtown.

### Pick and shovel Irishmen

*Connecticut Journal, Aug. 14, 1827*

**We understand that one hundred and seventy Irishmen arrived in this city, yesterday afternoon, from the West, to be employed upon the Farmington Canal in this vicinity.**

The 170 Irishmen mentioned in the news item above came to New Haven to dig the canal north through Hamden. Today, hikers and bicyclists enjoy leisure-time exercise where the Irish workers, according to a contemporary, "dug and removed the earth with wheelbarrows on plank runs of the width of a single plank and when near the bottom of the excavation it required a run of steep grade and strong muscles to dump the barrow on the tow path."

### School superintendent, 1912-1954



*Margaret L. Keefe*

At a special meeting of the Hamden Board of Education in September 1912, Margaret L. Keefe smashed a huge glass ceiling. After interviewing her and two male applicants, the board that evening unanimously selected her to be Hamden's superintendent of schools. One astonished newspaper reported it was, "for the first time in the history of Hamden or any town hereabouts."

Keefe was one of six children of Irish immigrants John and Mary Keefe who owned a farm in Middletown. Only 26 years old, Margaret Keefe had taught five years previously in the town of Kensington and had been appointed principal of Hamden's Centerville School just the year before becoming superintendent.

Even though it would be another eight years before American women could even vote, Keefe proved such an outstanding administrator that Hamden retained her as superintendent for 42 years until her retirement in 1954. The esteem in which she was held by the community is evident from the dedication in the yearbook of the Hamden High School class of 1937: "In deep appreciation of all her kindness, fine courage, true justice, keen insight and warm heart ... to Our Superintendent Miss Margaret L. Keefe."

### Architect & author

Born in 1888, in Lowville, N.Y., son of an Irish father and a German mother, John Frederick Kelly did much to ensure preservation of Connecticut's colonial homes and meetinghouses. His family moved to Hamden in 1900. He graduated from Yale in 1915. After service in World War I, he and his brother Henry started the architectural firm of Kelly & Kelly. He designed many New Haven buildings including the New Haven Museum and the Yale School of Medicine. Kelly also was greatly interested in the history and the



*J. Frederick Kelly*

preservation of Connecticut's colonial residences and houses of worship. In early and mid-20th century, he was the architect for restoration of the Whitfield House in Guilford, the oldest stone house in New England, the Denison homestead in Mystic and the Nehemiah Royce house in Wallingford. Kelly also wrote extensively on the history of early Connecticut architecture. He died in September 1947 at the age of 59 and is buried in Whitneyville Cemetery.

### First police chief

In 1923, James W. Whelahan, son of an Irish-born father and a Connecticut-born mother, was appointed Hamden's first police officer. Four years later Whelahan, who had served as a corporal with the 102nd Infantry Division in World War I, became the town's first police chief. He died in 1946, and he and his wife Hortense Mason are buried in St. Mary's Cemetery.

## Lucky Ewe gift shop: A little bit of Ireland in downtown Hamden

*(Continued from page 1)*

The home of the O'Leary family was a farm three miles outside of Portmagee on the road to Cahirciveen.

The O'Learys had one son, John, who remained on the family farm, and four daughters: Mary, Ann, Kay and Bridie, all of whom left Ireland. Mary the oldest daughter came to Connecticut in 1948, married William McNally and settled in the Yalesville section of Wallingford. She was followed in 1950 by her sister, Ann. On the ship crossing the Atlantic, Ann met and later married a County Waterford native, William O'Neill. The O'Neills settled in Hamden.

Noreen Horgan and Katie Regan are first cousins — Noreen, the daughter of John, the son who remained in Kerry; Katie, the daughter of Ann who settled in Hamden. Over the years, members of the clan maintained ties despite the thousands of miles separating them. Katie's first visit to Ireland was when she was just seven years old, and she remembers not liking the homeland at all. "It was cold and rainy and I didn't like the food," she says. But as the years passed, there were more visits back and forth and, says Katie, "My Irish roots became something very important to me. Ireland began to feel very comfortable, and very much like home."

It was during a visit of Noreen's family to Katie's family in Hamden in 2015 that the idea of a reunion was hatched by the two of them. They set the last week in July 2016 as the date. A family page was opened on Facebook making communications easier. Noreen handled the tasks of scheduling events, renting the houses in Portmagee, and arranging for a banquet at the Ring of Kerry Hotel in Cahirciveen. A chartered bus took the Connecticut contingent to Kennedy Airport in New York. Other relatives attended from Boston, New York, North Carolina and Washington, D.C.

The reunion turned out to be a busy week of getting reacquainted, meeting new O'Leary cousins, reminiscing and visiting places of significance like the family farm, the parish church and the cemetery. There were both sad and lighthearted moments.

One of the most humorous and also most touching, was when Katie and her husband Michael, along with the rest of the clan, were told that the Regan family's identical twin daughters, Katlyn and Megan, both were pregnant. When the congratulations, laughter and hugging from that revelation were over, it dawned on everyone that there were two more O'Leary descendants present than could be found in a head count and that an entire new generation of O'Learys was now part of the family.

"A lot of the cousins would never have met before," said Noreen. "Many of them were making their first trip to Ireland. It was the first time that all the cousins met on home ground. It was very emotional for them to think that when my Auntie Mary left the homestead, the five of them were never together again. That was the story of many Irish families."

Katie says she felt similar emotions when a visit to the Great Hunger Museum at Quinnipiac University reminded her of the hardships of Ireland's people and the diaspora that scattered them to the far corners of the world. That visit, she says, was a catalyst in her decision to end her career in nursing and take up a new career that would immerse her in Irish culture and heritage. Thus it was



*Standing in front of the Christmas decorations at the Lucky Ewe Irish shop in downtown Hamden are Katie Regan, second from left, with her two partners, Mary Beth Radigan, right, and niece Tara O'Neill, second from right, and Katie Everette, left.*

that along with two partners — her niece Tara O'Neill and a long-time neighbor and friend, Mary Beth Radigan — she opened the Lucky Ewe Irish Goods Gift Shop on Whitney Avenue across the street from the Hamden Town Hall.

The shop was christened on Nov. 14, 2015, in true Celtic fashion with a bagpiper, a blessing by John O'Donovan, an immigrant himself and a deacon of the Catholic church, and the cutting of an Irish tricolor ribbon. Katie and her partners have done everything possible to nurture that atmosphere and make the Lucky Ewe not just an Irish store but a little bit of Ireland in Hamden.

On a Sunday in late summer 2016, for example, they sponsored a "Find Your Irish Family Story" program with professional genealogist Jennifer Hadlock emphasizing the importance of passing down family data and stories and suggesting ways to do so. On other occasions, the gift shop sponsored an Irish soda bread competition and an evening of music featuring the Irish bodhran drum.

Katie even invited her cousin, Sean O'Loaghair, to become a sort of visiting scholar at the Lucky Ewe. A storyteller by profession, Sean is well known for his workshops and courses in Kerry towns. He stayed with Katie's brother Tom O'Neill for three months and encouraged customers and all those who happened to drop by the Lucky Ewe to take up storytelling as a way to preserve the Irish history and folklore of their families.

For anyone interested in feeling the warmth and smelling the fragrance of a peat fire, and chatting about Ireland and its people, the Lucky Ewe is a good venue during the holiday season. Katie will probably even ask visitors what county their people came from and pin a little flag representing their clan on the map of Ireland that she maintains.

The Lucky Ewe at 2371 Whitney Ave. is open Monday through Saturday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; during December, Wednesday and Thursday to 7 p.m.; and Sunday 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. The number is (203) 507-2160 and the website is [www.luckyeweirishgoods.com](http://www.luckyeweirishgoods.com).

# Toumey forged plan to stop quarrying of ‘majestic landmark’

*(Continued from page 1)*

head and body lying in northeastern Hamden, and his feet hanging over into western Wallingford. So embedded in the lore of Hamden is the story of Hobomock that his image and the inscription “Land of the Sleeping Giant,” adorn the official seal of the town.

## ‘Symbol of latent strength’

In a history published in 1936 to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the incorporation of Hamden, author Rachel M. Hartley began her 500-page book with the sentences, “In the shadow of the same Sleeping Giant which overlooks our closely built houses, busy streets and factories of Hamden today, were once only the forest and streams that the Indians knew. Throughout all the many changes of modes and of men ... since then ... the old Giant — lying here through incalculable years — has inspired all those who have seen him. The Indians who loved him, the sturdy New Haven pioneers as they have edged out into the wilderness, and we ourselves have looked upon him as a majestic landmark and a symbol of latent strength.”

For all of that, however, the landmark which is so beloved in Hamden just narrowly escaped destruction in the early years of the 20th century, a victim of the shortsightedness of that era’s advocates of making America great. By 1900, those advocates considered the Sleeping Giant obsolete and no longer of any value except to provide crushed rock to build highways. It was a classic case of that old saying about those who know the price of everything and the value of nothing. There was money to be made in that endeavor and in 1911 one resident who owned a cottage on the ridge, signed a lease granting to the Mt. Carmel Traprock Company the right to begin quarrying on the head of the Sleeping Giant.

By 1912, wrote Nancy Davis Sachse in her book *Born Among the Hills: The Sleeping Giant Story*, “the sound of blasting and crushing could not be ignored. It went on all day, every working day. The Company ran a spur of track across the Mill River to the base of the Giant’s Head. That way, cars, each bearing eight tons of crushed rock, could be run out to the trolley tracks and from there be drawn to nearby Connecticut towns. There was nothing better for road construction ...”

The byproduct of the quarrying was soon obvious. Historian Hartley wrote: “This majestic monument had been loved by generations of men who looked upon its beauty and felt that somehow it rightfully belonged to the whole public. But by 1915, it was apparent to everyone who looked toward the mountain that the unsightly inroads already made by the trap rock company into the back of the Giant’s head would soon destroy the beautiful and imposing figure — unless something were done at once to stop it.”

Something was done. New Haven newspapers kept readers up-to-date on the progress of the dynamiting and many readers respond-

ed in letters to the editor with concern, criticism and anger. Most wanted the dynamiting to stop, but no one seemed to know how to accomplish that. As historian Sachse suggested, “Nothing was done beyond grumbling and expressing indignation.”

Nothing, that is, until James W. Toumey entered the picture. In some ways, Toumey was an unlikely savior for a New England landmark. He was a native of the Midwest and spent the early years of his career in the Southwest. Fortunately for the Sleeping Giant, that career eventually brought him into the Land of Steady Habits.

Toumey was born in Lawrence, Mich., on April 17, 1865. Census returns for Lawrence in 1880 show him to be one of five children of Dennis and Mary Buckley Toumey. Dennis was a 46-year-old farmer who was born in Ireland. Mary, age 38, was the Michigan-born daughter of two Irish immigrants, Daniel, and Ann Buckley, who also lived on a farm in Lawrence.

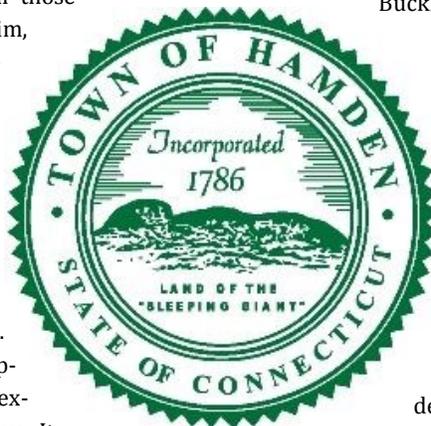
Dennis and Mary Toumey’s children, were John, age 17 in 1880; Mary, age 16; James, 15; Gertrude, 13 and Daniel, 8. James had an early introduction to agriculture working on the family farm as a boy. After graduating from Lawrence Union School, he enrolled in the Michigan State Agricultural College in East Lansing. It was the first agricultural college in the United States and it eventually grew into Michigan State University. There he earned both bachelor and master of science degrees and even taught a course in botany.

Then at the age of 26, he went west to Tucson in the Arizona Territory, to take a job as assistant professor of botany and entomology at the University of Arizona. Established as a land grant college by the Territorial Legislature in 1885, the university did not open its doors for students until autumn 1891.

## Distinguished career began in Arizona

Toumey arrived there some months before that and got a head start in what would be his workplace for almost 10 years. A recent university booklet explains: “The herbarium at the University of Arizona houses the world’s best scientific collection of vascular plants from the arid Southwest. It was established even before the university began operation. The university’s first botanist, James W. Toumey, arrived in 1891 to find that classroom facilities were not yet ready to be occupied. He therefore took to the field to collect plants and had amassed 700 before the university opened.” It was an early example of the diligence and creativity with which Toumey would approach other opportunities and challenges.

When classes began that fall, Toumey was one of only six original faculty members. Ironically, that was one professor for every student. Thirty-two students had enrolled, but because of the absence of high schools in the territory, all but six were required to attend a preparatory school. Toumey’s class in freshman botany met for two hours daily with just five students, most of whom were women. In addition to teaching, Toumey continued constantly to expand his



field work, his collections and his contacts.

He sent samples of the plants he collected back to his alma mater Michigan State and to Harvard University where he himself studied in the summer of 1893. He also networked with the U.S. Department of Agriculture which was interested in every aspect of plant and tree research.

One small reward Toumey got for collecting and sharing the specimens with the federal agency was that the USDA named a species of oak trees found in Arizona and northwestern Mexico in his honor: "Quercus toumeyae." Many years later, in 1976, one of Michigan's last virgin beech-maple forests, a 24-acre tract on the campus of Michigan State, was named Toumey's Woodlot, and declared a National Nature Landmark.

During his stay in Arizona, Toumey also became botanist and director of the Arizona State Agricultural Experiment Station which was linked to the university. Then, in the summer of 1900, he moved on, accepting an appointment as director of research on tree planting at the new Forest Division of the USDA in Washington, D.C. That autumn he moved again when his boss, Gifford Pinchot, the director of the Forest Division, highly recommended him and another USDA employee, Henry S. Graves, to organize the school of forestry then being established at Yale University in New Haven.

### Planting the seeds of Yale's School of Forestry

Yale was not the first institution of higher learning to have a forestry department, but its entrance into the field was a major step forward because it was the first to offer postgraduate courses. In 1901, 27 students including seven women were accepted into the Yale program. Graves and Toumey were the only instructors. Along with the teaching duties, they handled all the organizational details from developing a curriculum, to raising funds and originating off-campus research sites for students. The first of the latter came about through an agreement with the New Haven Water Company whereby a portion of the company's forest property was placed under the management of the Yale department. Other summer school and permanent research sites included the Yale-Myers Forest in Union, CT, Grey Towers in Milford, PA, and one in Keene, NH, which was named the Yale-Toumey Forest in recognition of his part in its birth and growth.

Toumey was also a prolific writer, keeping notes on all his projects and expanding them into valuable botany and forestry books and guides. He published more than a dozen books including: *Seeding and Planting, A Manual for Forestry Students, Nurserymen and Farmers; The Testing of Coniferous Tree Seeds at the Yale School of Forestry; The Yale Demonstration and Research Forest in Keene, NH; Forest Notes on Some of the Range Grasses in Arizona and Foundation of Silviculture Upon an Ecological Basis.*

When Graves resigned as dean of the Yale school in 1912, Tou-



*James W. Toumey, an Irishman and a nationally known forester, was a 'tree-hugger' in the noblest sense of the words.*

mey succeeded him. He served as dean for 10 years. On his retirement, the Yale Corporation summarized his value to the Forestry School: "Due to his untiring interest and enthusiasm, this youngest of Yale's schools has gained largely in endowment, extended its educational scope and added both to its equipment in New Haven and in the field ... The corporation recognizes with pride and gratitude that no other school of Yale University has enjoyed a more remarkable and better planned development than has the School of Forestry ..."

Toumey brought to the struggle to save the Sleeping Giant the same efficiency and persistence that he displayed in developing the Yale School of Forestry and the Herbarium at the University of Arizona. As it turned out, every bit of those traits that he could muster was needed to prevent destruction of the Hamden landmark.

Toumey entered the fray in Hamden in 1915 when it had become visible to the naked eye that the quarrying was mutilating

the head of the giant and that a continuation would soon mangle the rest of the body. After reading newspaper accounts of the situation, Toumey prepared a speech for delivery at one of New Haven's dinner clubs. His talk went far beyond opposition to the quarrying, instead offering a vision of a much better use of the mountain. He emphasized the fact that the Sleeping Giant ridge was "the only area of suitable extent within the reach of the large population of New Haven County that was at all acceptable as a wilderness park for public use." He urged the initiation of plans to purchase, bit by bit, pieces of land on the mountain with the long-range goal of making it a state park."

One of those attending the dinner, Dr. Anson Phelps Stokes, secretary of Yale University and an Episcopalian clergyman, immediately became an important ally in the project. The son of a wealthy New York merchant, Stokes made a financial donation to the cause and hired a resident of Mount Carmel to make a map of the mountain with the tracts on it belonging to each of 30 landowners and to search town land records. "With our information on assessed values and ownership," Toumey wrote, "we went ahead in a preliminary way in accepting gifts of land ... and in securing pledges of funds to purchase additional land."

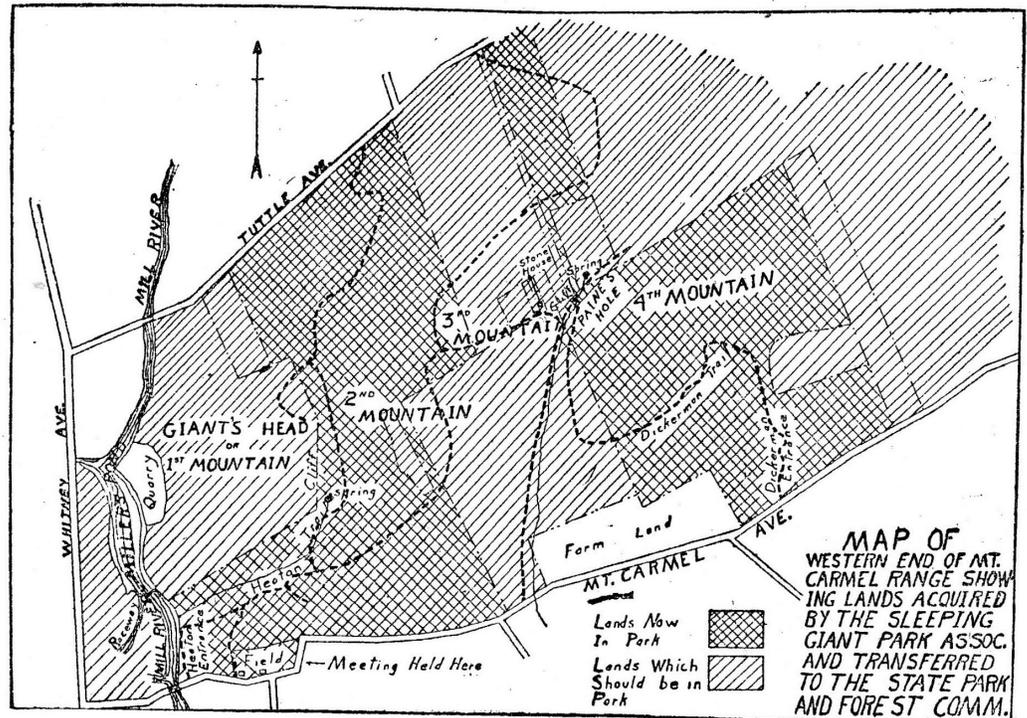
At that time, it appeared that support for a wilderness park comprising the entire mountain was gathering steam, but the whole project came to a standstill as the United States was drawn into the war raging in Europe. The involvement of America in the fighting in 1917 and 1918 was followed by the turmoil of the peace conference and the controversy over joining the League of Nations in 1919 and the early 1920s.

It was possible that the Sleeping Giant project might never have been revived, but as early as November 1922, Toumey was busy

*(Please turn to page 6)*

## TO OPEN SLEEPING GIANT PARK SATURDAY

The founding of Sleeping Giant State Park was celebrated on Saturday, Oct. 11, 1924, with a community picnic. The New Haven Times-Leader printed a map showing lands then in the park checkered and lands still to be acquired lined. The quarry that alerted townspeople to the possibility the landmark could be destroyed is shown in white in the lower left close by the words "Giant's Head." Although small, the quarry, like a cancer, might well have spread quickly. At the bottom left is shown the location where the picnic and meeting were held.



(Continued from page 5)

putting it back on the agenda. That month he suggested that 20 to 40 New Haven residents be invited to a meeting "to talk the project over, explain the situation and appoint a committee through whom the citizens of New Haven can act."

Throughout 1923 and early 1924, Toumey presided over and spoke at similar meetings with the participants growing in numbers and enthusiasm. "Mount Carmel for the people," was the slogan of 200 from that neighborhood who met "to formulate plans for the preservation of the mountain ...," reported a New Haven newspaper after one such meeting.

### Park association organized

Finally, on March 4, 1924, the Sleeping Giant Park Association was formally organized with its purpose: "To secure, acquire, preserve and maintain land in the towns of Hamden, North Haven and Wallingford ... for use as a park, forest or game preserve, and with the eventual purpose of transferring the same for the use and benefit of the public ... to solicit and receive contributions from interested persons to apply to the purchase of the property."

Toumey was elected first president of the association. In his acceptance, he spoke passionately of the mountain and the goal of the organization that he would lead for the next eight years: "There is no other area of land in the vicinity of New Haven or for that matter in all southern Connecticut that appeals more to the general public than the Sleeping Giant. It is an area of nearly 2,000 acres of wilderness, of mountains, trees and precipices, useless for agriculture, but priceless for recreation. It is an area that can bring no adequate financial returns to private owners through crop production, but

which can bring joy and health to populations seeking open spaces for recreation. It is an area that should not be locked up under private ownership but it should be publicly controlled and publicly owned ... Our population is already beginning to crowd, our towns and cities are rapidly increasing in size and landowners no longer look with indifference on city dwellers trespassing in their fields and woods. The private owners are shutting the public out and the time is near at hand when all privately owned woodland ... will be posted against trespass ..."

"Will the citizens of New Haven County, the citizens of this old and rich commonwealth let the opportunity go by for securing the Sleeping Giant with its historical background and its rugged topography, for securing that great imposing figure that our eyes rest on as we face the north, that felt the tread of Indian feet long before the first ship entered New Haven harbor, that your forefathers tramped over hunting the deer and fox and where you as young men and young women went with lunch box for a day with nature?"

"I believe that the appeal of the Sleeping Giant will touch the hearts and purse strings of the people. The Sleeping Giant unposted, unfenced, open for all to enjoy and to have in common ownership. This is the appeal of the Sleeping Giant Park Association of which I have the honor of being president ..."

At meetings on April 1 and May 20, 1924, the 10 members of the association's board of directors took major steps that set the future course of the organization. They voted that the Sleeping Giant would become a state rather than a town or county park, and that any lands that came into the association's possession would be transferred to State Forest and Park Commission.

Membership and donations grew quickly. By June 1924, dona-

tions totaled \$7,650. The donations were large and small. One was of \$3.16 in pennies “from the class of 1924 of the little Mount Carmel School which is located in the shadow of the Sleeping Giant.” By September, the donations reached \$12,000 and 197 acres had been transferred to state ownership.

On Oct. 12, the Sleeping Giant Park Association threw a party, not a banquet in a fancy restaurant, but a basket picnic in an open field on Mt. Carmel Avenue at the foot of the mountain. In keeping with the public ownership that was so important to Toumey, everyone was invited and it was free. The picnic area was so situated that almost the entire length of the mountain could be seen and when the picnic was over, Toumey took a few minutes to show the 300 in attendance the areas then within the park and those that had yet to be acquired. The occasion ended in early afternoon with a tour of the park led by officers of the association. The tour ascended the main trail — named the Heaton trail in honor of J. Edward Heaton who had donated the first land to the park. The trail led to the summit from just beyond the bridge on Mount Carmel Avenue, apparently the very same main trail that is used today.

Despite the encouraging start, it took another eight years of heavy lifting to complete the dream of a Sleeping Giant preserve owned by and open to everyone. During the intervening years, the association labored to raise sufficient funds to purchase land still owned privately, to negotiate and even go to court to bring all quarrying to an end and to provide needed maintenance to fulfill the dream. It was not until 1933 that all of that was accomplished.

Tragically, James W. Toumey, died on May 5, 1932. At the annual meeting in October that year, Arnold G. Dana who had succeeded him as president of the association, detailed the importance of Toumey to the project. He named half a dozen others who had contributed greatly to the cause, then said, “But at the head always was Professor Toumey, the lovable ‘Jim’ Toumey, a huge circle of friends called him, constantly your president until after several months of declining health, he was suddenly called away ... And what a pioneer, a man of action, he was — lover of plant life and discoverer of its secrets, what a devoted friend and perpetuator of the forests of the land. Specializing at the outset of his career in botany and kindred subjects, he became an authority on the cactus ... Tucson, Arizona rejoices today in the cactus garden he established.

“In 1899, realizing that something must be done quickly to preserve to the nation its rich heritage of forests and timber, he plunged into forestry and enthusiastically aided in the establishment and up-building of the Yale School of Forestry. The institution, it seems, owes to his activity the gift of the new central building, Sage Hall, large additions to its library and herbarium and to a sig-

nal degree the Yale Forest in New Hampshire with its 1,400 acres of fine trees — his summer home and place of special research.”

Dana ended his eulogy with a description of Toumey’s gravesite: “Near Keene, New Hampshire, in the heart of the Yale Forest there, stands an oval of stately red pines, forming the perfect apse of a forest cathedral. Here on the late afternoon of Saturday, July 16, 1932, under a granite boulder were deposited the ashes of James William Toumey ... Professor Toumey himself was as straight as a perfect tree, and the enclosing pines seemed to hover over his tomb as though they knew how much he loved them.”

The inscription above that grave in the New Hampshire forest stated: “James William Toumey, 1865-1932, Professor of Forestry at Yale University, 1900-1930. Scholar, Teacher, Pioneer in American Forestry, whose vision and untiring effort inspired the building of this research forest in the heart of which he rests.”

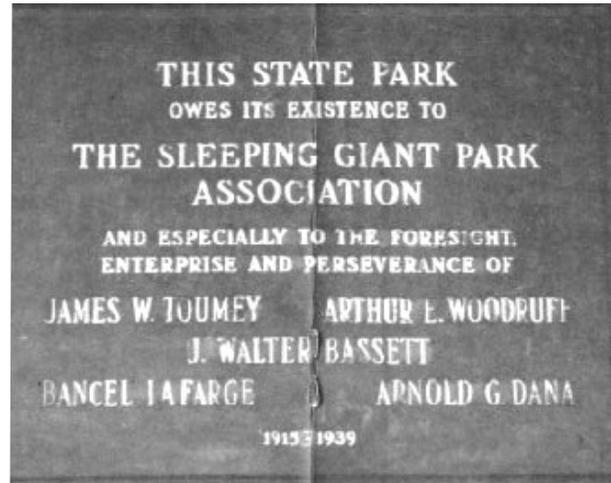
Dana then asked those in attendance to rise and repeat the beautiful words Toumey wrote and often quoted to encourage others to join the crusade for the Sleeping Giant park: “The Sleeping Giant unpost-

ed, unfenced, open for all to enjoy and to have in common ownership; the Sleeping Giant, yours, mine, everybody’s ...” The bugler of the Mounted Troop of the 122nd Connecticut National Guard then played taps.

In autumn 1939, the Norman architecture observation tower that was built as a Works Project Administration initiative during the Great Depression, was completed. On Oct. 12, that year Toumey’s widow, Nanny, had the honor of unveiling a tablet, shown above, commemorating five of the nature lovers who led the Sleeping Giant crusade. The first named was James W. Toumey.

Sources: Collection of Sleeping Giant Park Association papers, upstairs history room, Miller Library, Dixwell Avenue, Hamden, Thanks to Julie Hulton of the association. Especially helpful items in the collection: “Report of the President of the Sleeping Giant Park Association at the Annual Meeting, Oct. 12, 1932.” James W. Toumey, “A Brief History of the Acquiring of the Sleeping Giant for Public Use,” Oct. 11, 1930. James W. Toumey letter to Simeon Baldwin, Nov. 3, 1922. Minutes of the 36th Meeting of the Directors of the Sleeping Giant Park Association, May 25, 1932.

Also, Nancy Davis Sachse, *Born Among the Hills: The Sleeping Giant Story*, 1982. Rachel M. Hartley, *The History of Hamden, Connecticut*, 1943, and *The Story of Hamden*, 1962. Eric D. Lehman, *Hamden, Tales from the Sleeping Giant*, 2010. George M. Ferguson and Michelle M. McMahon, *History of the University of Arizona Herbarium*. University of Arizona library: [www.library.arizona.edu](http://www.library.arizona.edu). Ancestry.com “James William Toumey” in Biography & Genealogy Master Index; U.S. census, 1860-1930. Wikipedia: Yale School of Forestry, Michigan State University, University of Arizona. Smithsonian Institution online: Toumey, James W.



*Toumey's name was inscribed first on the plaque commemorating those who had led the long, hard struggle to save Hamden's oldest and most beloved landmark.*

## Many Hamden Irish served in the Great War

Four hundred men from Hamden served in the United States military during World War I. At least 75 of them were of Irish ancestry or natives of Ireland. Cpl. John F. McDermott, whose gravestone in St. Mary's Cemetery is shown here, was the first Hamden soldier killed in the war. Born in the Mount Carmel neighborhood in 1895, he was the son of Michael and Hannah Dunn McDermott. Michael was born in Ireland; Hannah was the daughter of Irish immigrants. John enlisted on June 18, 1917, and arrived in France in October that year with Company B of the 102nd Infantry Regiment, 26th U.S. Army Division. He fought at Chemin des Dames in February 1918, and was killed in action on April 15 at Seicheprey. Not far from McDermott's gravestone are those of three members of the family of James and Mary Neary Farrell, also of Mount Carmel. Paul Richard Farrell, also of the 102nd Infantry, died on July 21, 1918, of wounds in the second Battle of the Marne. His brother Arthur served with the Medical Corps in North Carolina, and his brother Hugh fought in the Battle of Meuse-Argonne.



### The Shanachie

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*In Ireland, a Shanachie is a folklorist,  
historian and keeper of the traditions of the people.*

"We have kept faith  
with the past;  
we have handed  
a tradition  
to the future."

*Padraic Pearse*

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