

*With cutting torches and arc welders*

## Coventry sculptor created rich legacy of artwork

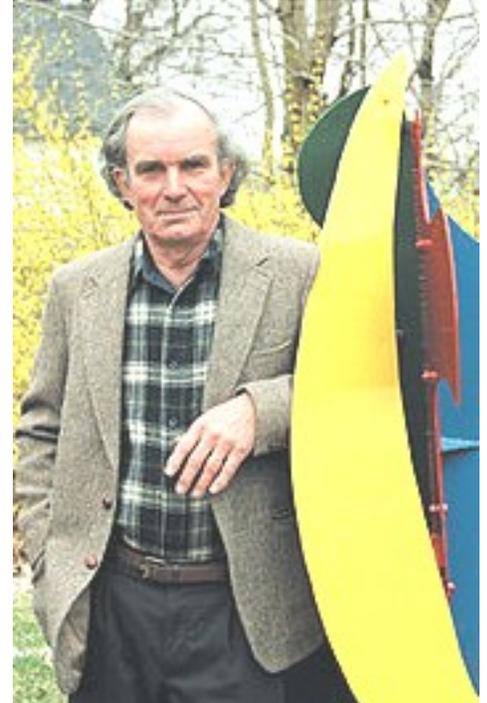
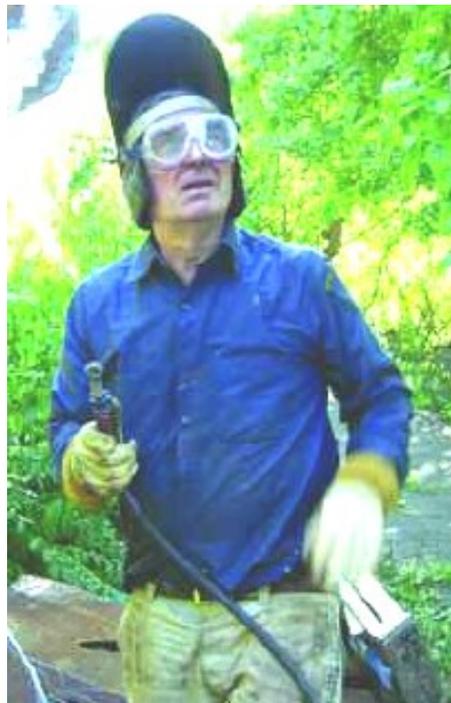
From the 1950s until his death in 2013, a Connecticut Irishman used the tools of ordinary craftsmen — cutting torches and arc welders — to create extraordinary artwork that today is displayed throughout the nation and abroad.

Fashioned from heavy steel, the sculptures of David Hayes are on display — to name just a few of many places — at the Guggenheim Museum in New York City; National Museum of American Art in Washington, D.C.; Musee des Arts Decoratifs, Paris; Museum of Modern Art, New York; Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh; Dartmouth College, N.H.; Williams College Museum of Art, Williamstown, Mass., Hartford Public Library; and on the campus of his alma mater, Notre Dame University.

### *Entire city of Hayes creations*

In 2013, almost as if in a parting tribute to his contribution to the world of art, Dothan, Ala., sponsored a yearlong and citywide outdoor exposition of Hayes sculptures. “The 20 works,” explained the director of the Dothan Wiregrass Museum of Art, one of the sponsors of the event, “have been installed across the community. Located in public parks and gardens, college campuses and in front of municipal buildings, all are accessible to allow for interaction and the freedom to enjoy ... Imagination is what the museum wanted this exhibition to bring to our city.”

A booklet published for the Dothan



*The grandson of immigrants from County Cork and son of a father who was a gridiron star for Notre Dame’s Fighting Irish, David Hayes, shown at work and with one of his sculptures, won national and international honors for the artwork he fashioned out of industrial steel.*

citywide exhibit, described the sculptor and his work: “A master of his media, Hayes’ sculptures, unique in color, size and composition, stand tall and proud around Dothan’s parks and campuses. Some are painted flat black and stand nearly 10 feet tall while smaller works are painted bright blue, red and yellow. All are abstracted using various organic and geometric forms

giving each piece, no matter its size or palette, a bold presence in the community ...”

Dothan is not the only city to have benefited from Hayes’ imagination. In 1998, Stamford on the Connecticut shoreline selected Hayes to help usher in spring at its annual downtown Sculpture Walk. The

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# Hayes family excelled on gridiron and in world of art

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result was hailed by the *Stamford Advocate*: "Spring has come with its natural burst of colors and textures delighting the eye and nurturing the soul, but throughout Stamford's downtown area metal shapes in a variety of Crayola hues are vying for the passerby's attention. Like crocus and daffodils, these organic shapes thrusting out of the urban ground have their start in nature, but they are enhanced by the hand of man ... The fanciful forms are the work of David Hayes, a Coventry, CT, sculptor whose list of past achievements reads like an artist's dream.

"Discovered early in his career by a panel of traveling jurors from the Museum of Modern Art, Hayes' colorful, abstract towers of welded steel have gone on to appear in more than 80 one-man shows throughout America and more than 130 national and international group exhibitions. His work has garnered awards that include a Guggenheim Fellowship and a Fulbright scholarship. His sculpture has been the subject of several documentaries, including 'Welded Steel Sculptures with David Hayes,' and a PBS broadcast, 'The Sculptures of David Hayes' ..."

## Roots in County Cork

David Hayes the sculptor was the grandson of Irish immigrants Martin Hayes and Margaret Fahey Hayes who were married about 1876 in County Cork and came to America in the early 1880s with three sons. The 1900 census returns for Manchester, CT, list Martin as 45 years old and a teamster. The three sons born in Ireland were Daniel, 21, a day laborer; Michael, 19, a motorman; and John, 17, still in school. And, by that time, the Hayes household included six more siblings all born in Connecticut: Martin Jr., 12; Margaret, 10; Patrick, 8; Da-

vid, 6; James, 4; and Mary, 1. Members of the Hayes family were hard-working and upwardly mobile. By 1910, Martin Sr. was superintendent in a "sewer fitter beds" company. Michael was a civil engineer for a steam railroad and John was a lawyer.

Their younger brother David, the father of the sculptor, was similarly resourceful. He studied at Philips Exeter Academy in New Hampshire. A football player as well as a student at Exeter, David Sr. was determined to enter Notre Dame University, maybe because during his high school years the Fighting Irish had become a gridiron powerhouse. In 1913, the Irish stunned Army 35-13 in a huge upset at West Point. The star end in that victory was Knute Rockne, who by 1916 had become head coach at Notre Dame.

That year, David apparently resorted to freight train hopping or riding the rails to make the long trip from Connecticut to South Bend, IN. Once there, he succeeded in finding employment in a bakery, convincing Notre Dame administrators to enroll him as a

student and earning a spot on the freshman football team.

In 1917, David made the Notre Dame varsity as a starting end on a team that included early grid greats like halfback George Gipp. That year, the Irish won six of eight games, including another victory, 7-2, over Army. They played to a scoreless tie with Wisconsin and suffered only one loss, 7-0 to Nebraska.

However, the academic and gridiron careers of David Hayes Sr. came to a sudden standstill after the 1917 season. The United States entered World War I in April that year and Hayes was inducted into the U.S. Army on March 29, 1918. He was assigned to Company A of the 326th Infantry Regiment, 82nd Division. The division arrived in France in May and began sending detach-

ments into the trenches soon after. The 326th went over the top in August, advancing behind an artillery barrage to capture three German machine gun positions.

On Sept. 12, the regiment was exposed to a mustard gas attack in the Battle of Saint Mihiel. A month later, the 326th suffered heavy casualties during the Meuse-Argonne offensive, the last campaign of World War I. Hayes was wounded in the left leg in an attack on a German machine-gun nest on Oct. 20. He was evacuated back to the United States and after hospitalization in New York City returned to Notre Dame and its football team in 1919.

## Notre Dame championships

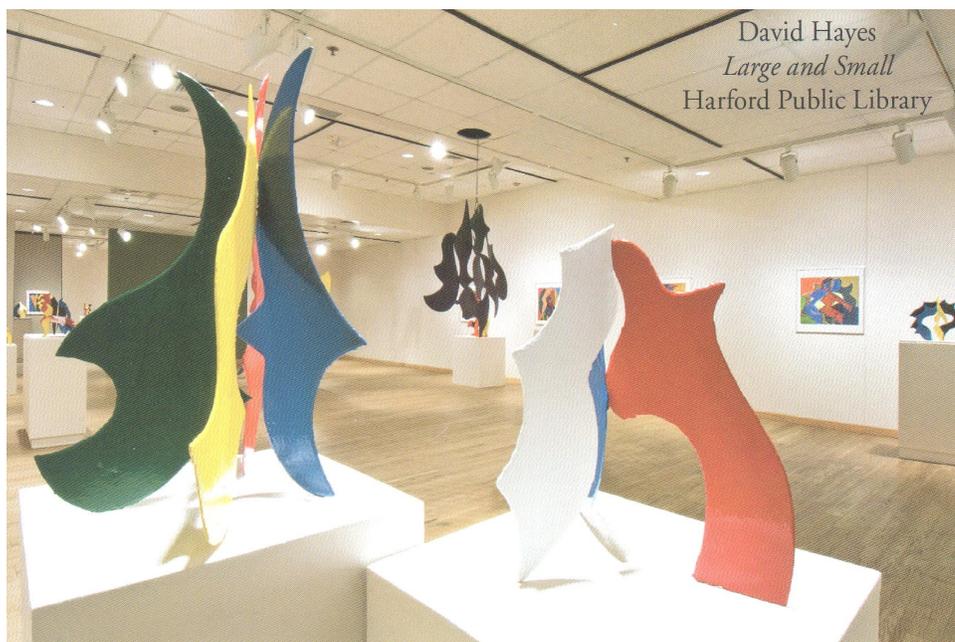
That season Notre Dame was undefeated and won a national championship. After the season, the university published a football review with drawings of the players and under the sketch of Hayes a caption stating, "Back from the front and full of pep! Two seasons ago Dave made his name on the grid and he has lived up to it this year."

In Hayes senior year, 1920, the Irish were undefeated again. The postseason review summarized Hayes' career at South Bend: "Wandered out to Notre Dame from the bleak shores of Connecticut ... and proceeded to set Cartier Field afire with his football feats ... The next year found him with some two million others in France ... As an end, he is a personified reason why Notre Dame teams are called 'The Fighting Irish.' He has done a big part in winning two championships and in making South Bend and Notre Dame world famed ..."

That same year, a group of free-lance, semi-pro grid teams, mostly in the Midwest, organized the nation's first professional gridiron league. It was named the American Professional Football Association, but soon was renamed the National Football League. One original franchise, the Green Bay Packers, coached by former Notre Dame star, Earl "Curly" Lambeau, was sufficiently impressed by Hayes to sign him as an end for the 1921 season. He was a starter at that position for the first two seasons of the Packers, and also played a few games for the Rock Island, Ill., Independents.



This photograph of David V. Hayes Sr. appeared in the 1920 edition of the *Notre Dame University Football Review*.



*Sculptures by David Hayes are eye-catching whether inside or out. Above, is a roomful of his small works in many different colors and shapes in an exhibit at the Hartford Public Library in 2015; at right, a tall black sculpture in downtown Longview, Texas, in 2006.*

David Hayes Sr. eventually returned to Connecticut and in 1928 married Adelaide Brown, a native of Newark, N.J., and the daughter of a father born in England and a mother born in Ireland. When the 1930 census was taken David and Adelaide were living in Manchester with a year-old son, Martin, who apparently was named for his grandfather. David's occupation was proprietor of a coal company. City directories during the 1930s list him as president and treasurer of the Sullivan Hayes Coal Co.

David V. Hayes Jr. was born in March 1931, and began his education at Hollister Street School in Manchester. There he had the good fortune to cross paths with Hazel Lutz, a dynamic educator who not only taught art in all Manchester's schools, but designed art lessons for the town's classroom teachers and even wrote the elementary art curriculum for the Connecticut Department of Education.

Lutz's students remembered her as an advocate of hands-on techniques to encourage them. She traveled widely and collected all kinds of souvenirs which she brought to class for students to touch and hold as models for their artwork.

In 1949, his appetite for art having been whetted by Lutz and having graduated from Manchester High School, David Hayes Jr. followed his father's footsteps to Notre

Dame University. Years later, another Connecticut Notre Dame art student, Richard A. Byrnes, wrote, "I remember shaking his hand in O'Shaughnessy Hall where the new Art Department was located. It was immediately obvious he was as seriously a committed artist as I was."

Hayes received his bachelor's degree from Notre Dame in 1953, and immediately began postgraduate art studies at Indiana University, Bloomfield. There he was tutored by David Smith, a visiting professor and a pioneer in welded steel sculpturing. After graduating from Indiana in 1955 with a master's degree in fine arts, Hayes served two years in the U.S. Navy.

### ***Nationwide acclaim***

In the late 1950s, David's artistic sculptures began to win recognition at such varied venues as the Silvermine Guild in New Canaan, CT, the New Haven Festival of Arts, the Boston Arts Festival, and the Museum of Modern Arts in New York City. The very nature of his works — composed of steel and often in large scale — guaranteed that they would be exhibited both in traditional museums and outdoors.

Hayes relied upon nature and commonplace things for inspiration. He kept a notebook in which he sketched whatever caught his eye in his everyday travels. "That's how the work comes out," he said. "You can't sit

around and think that you will be suddenly inspired. If you are an artist, you must work at it everyday."

His daily routine was to transform the original sketches into small cardboard replicas, then weld them piece-by-piece in quarter-inch steel plates. Many were painted black, many in a variety of bright colors. Some were small enough to be attractive on a table top, others massive enough to loom over an entire landscape.

In 1957, David Hayes Jr. married his high school sweetheart, Julia Moriarty, the daughter of Matthew and Julia Sheridan Moriarty. For more than a half century, the Moriarty family were proprietors of an automobile dealership in Manchester and Matthew was active in civic organizations like the Chamber of Commerce.

Julia Moriarty Hayes was a graduate of Albertus Magnus College in New Haven. She taught science at Manchester High School, earned an advanced degree in biochemistry and became chairwoman of the Science Department at East Catholic High School in Manchester.

In 1961, David Hayes Jr. received a Fulbright Award and a Guggenheim Fellowship to continue art studies in France. He and Julia with their sons David and Brian, pulled

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up stakes and lived in Paris for seven years. When they returned, their family had grown to include a daughter, Mary, and another son, John.

Julia had spent the years overseas immersing herself and her family in European culture. Upon returning, she taught French cooking at the University of Connecticut, wrote a book titled *French Cooking for People Who Can't* and in later years published a collection of poems, *What to Say of Garlic Mustard*.

### **David Hayes Sculpture Fields**

When the family returned to Connecticut, David and Julia purchased an early 18th century home on a large tract of land in Coventry. David turned the property into what today is known as "David Hayes Sculpture Fields." The property was described by Richard Byrnes, David's Notre Dame comrade, as "the engine room of his creative soul, over 57 acres where David worked his magic, a sculptor up at dawn cutting sheets of raw steel with his torch, assembling fluid shapes into signature works of art. A collection of tall, slender, black, geometric free-form clusters are reflected in a secluded dark pond. Red, blue and yellow interlocking angular and curvilinear forms create a border of large and colorful sculpture around a sunny 10-acre opening in the woods. Walking down the rugged path, you can catch a glimpse of black steel clouds, defying gravity and dangling from sturdy branches."

The Coventry Sculpture Fields were

among five venues picked for a CBS television feature: *Top Outdoor Art in Connecticut*. "While the works of renowned and prolific sculptor David Hayes can be found in some of the world's leading galleries and museums," the program stated, "the largest single collection of his art is on display outdoors on the grounds ... Most of the sculptures are tucked away in a fruit orchard, around a pond, and on paths throughout the property, and their arrangement is itself a work of art."

In his later years, the works of Hayes and his reputation blossomed in projects and exhibits far and wide: a one-man show at Fordham University Downtown, New York City; an outdoor sculpture at Bradley International Airport in Windsor Locks; Exhibition Without Walls, 40 sculptures in downtown Fort Pierce, Fla.; Eight Vertical Motifs at the Mobile, Ala., Museum of Art; 12 sculptures at Hartwick College in Oneonta, N.Y.; Louisiana State University Museum in Baton Rouge; Museum of Fine Arts, in Longview, Texas; an honorary doctorate degree and outdoor exhibit at Albertus Magnus College, New Haven; Downtown Sculpture in Syracuse, N.Y.; Hayes Family Show: Three Generations at White Plains, N.Y., Library; Outdoor Sculpture at the Connecticut Governor's Mansion in Hartford.

In October 2012, Hayes was diagnosed with leukemia. He underwent chemotherapy and was hospitalized several times, but continued to be involved as much as he was able in keeping with his own rule that an artist must work at it everyday.

He celebrated his 82nd birthday on March 15, 2013, with his family at home in Coventry, and on April 5 he attended the opening reception of an exhibition at Lutz Children's Museum on South Main Street in Manchester. It was a special event for him because the museum — a place where children could immerse themselves in hands-on artwork — was a cherished dream of Hazel Lutz, the teacher who had encouraged him in his youth to do just that. Fittingly, the exhibition at the Manchester museum featured his works. His son David M. Hayes, said, "That was an especially nice opening ... It was an opportunity for family and friends to see him and talk to him. It was an absolutely splendid day. The sculptures were twirling in the trees in the breeze."

Just four days later, on April 9, David Hayes died. His funeral Mass was celebrated at St. Thomas Aquinas Church on the campus of the University of Connecticut and his remains were buried in St. Mary's Cemetery in Coventry. Just a month later, another particularly significant exhibition opened at the Snite Museum of Art at his alma mater.

It was not the first time Notre Dame had spotlighted his works. In fact, in 1990 the university introduced an exhibit with the comment: "Ever since the opening of The Snite Museum of Art in 1980, we have been searching for the sculpture for one of the most visible spots on campus, the front lawn of the museum. It would be the hallmark of the fine arts experience awaiting the museum visitor and would be done by



*Sculptures by David Hayes decorate public places from coast to coast in the United States. At left, is a large circular Hayes sculpture on the grounds of the Burt Reynolds and Friends Museum in Jupiter, Fla. At right, a similarly creative Hayes work stands on the lawn of the governor's mansion in Hartford.*

*(The Hartford photograph is by Ryan Caron King, WNPR.)*

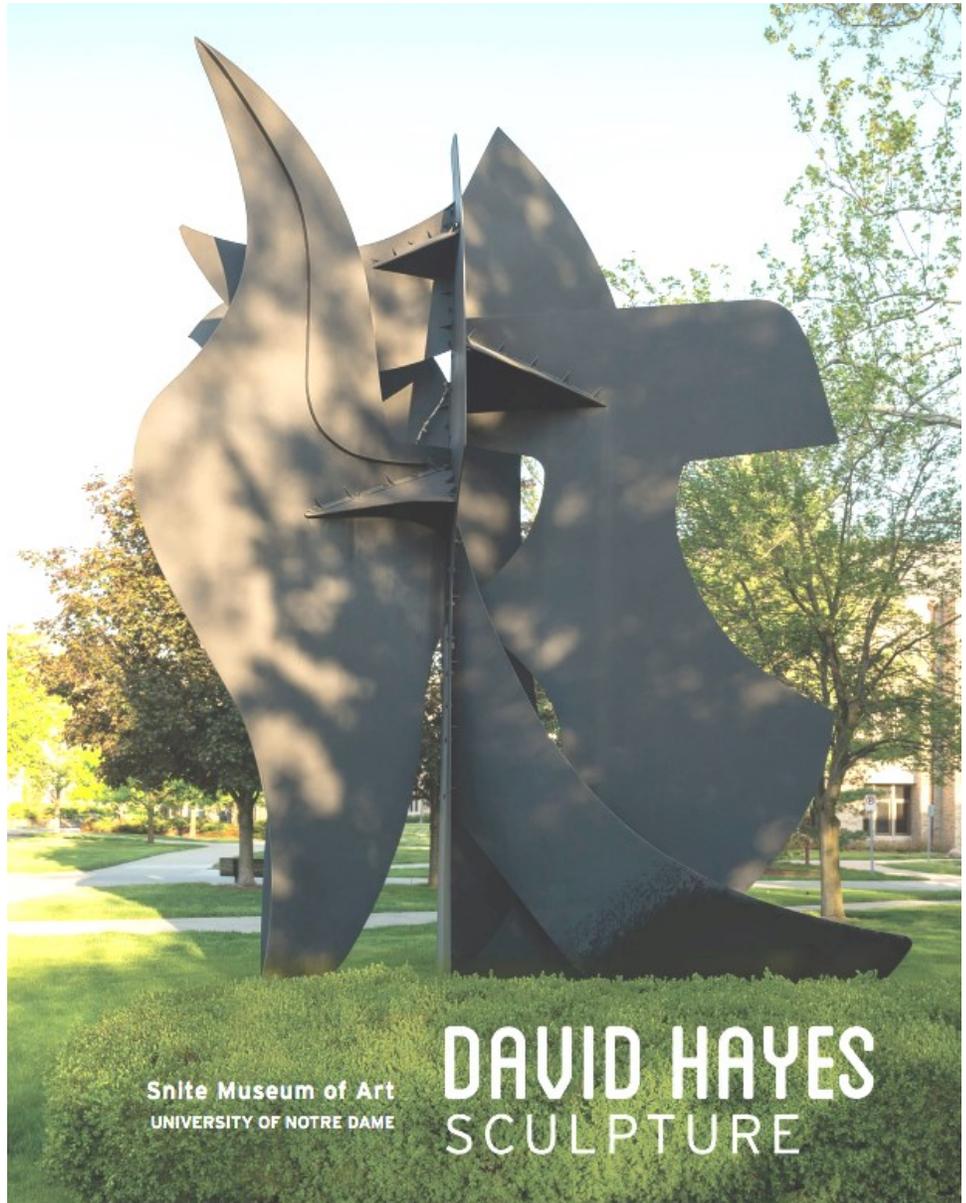


an outstanding artist. Museum staff and the Campus Sculpture Committee discussed several candidates ... One sculptor's name came up repeatedly, that of David Hayes ... When we began viewing David's work for this second exhibition, we asked him to create maquettes, small-scale studies, for a large outdoor piece to be permanently installed on campus ..."

The Hayes sculpture that was eventually selected stands in front of the Snite Museum. A photograph of it, shown at right, appeared on the cover of the booklet published for the exhibit. David named the 27-foot-tall sculpture the Griffon: Head of a Lion and Wings of an Eagle because it reminded him of the mythological creature.

According to son David, that fit well with his father's philosophy. "He was committed to creating pieces that could live outside the static environment of a formal art institution," says his son. "It's hard to get people to walk into a gallery or museum, but if you put it into a public setting where anybody can just walk around and like it or not like it, my father enjoyed that. That was an intellectually satisfying process for him."

Sources: Peggy Ussery, "Steel Sculptures Become Public Art," *Dothan, Ala., Eagle*, Oct 17, 2013. "Art Around Dothan, Sculpture by David Hayes," booklet produced with Dothan, Ala., exhibit in 2013. Carolee Ross, "Sprouting Steel, Sculpture Walk features work by David Hayes," *Stamford Daily Advocate*, May 3, 1991. Frank Graham, "A Guy as Game as That!" *Boys Life* magazine, November 1938. [www.sports-reference.com/cfb/schools/notre-dame](http://www.sports-reference.com/cfb/schools/notre-dame). [www.davidhayes.com](http://www.davidhayes.com). [www.pro-football-reference.com/players/H/Hayea20.htm](http://www.pro-football-reference.com/players/H/Hayea20.htm). Dan Uhlinger, "David Hayes," *Hartford Courant*, July 27, 1999. Sherry Koonce, "Local Sculpture Garden Blooms," *Longview, Texas, News-Journal*, Oct. 4, 2006. Hartford Public Library, [www.hplct.org](http://www.hplct.org), "Large and Small, The Sculpture of David Hayes," June-August, 2015. [www.sniteartmuseum.nd.edu/exhibitions](http://www.sniteartmuseum.nd.edu/exhibitions), 2013. *Hartford Courant*, April 11, 2013, "Coventry Sculptor David Hayes Dies." Carol Schaal, "The Modernist Davis Hayes," and Richard A. Byrnes, "The Art of Friendship: David V. Hayes," both articles in *Notre Dame Magazine*, Autumn 2013. Julia Hayes obituary, May 28, 2016, *Legacy.com*. [www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com), Hayes family entries, 1900, 1930 U.S. census; Manchester, CT., and directories in 1930s; David Hayes, World War I draft registration card.



A modest rough-hewn burial stone marks the graves of David and Julia Hayes in St. Mary's Cemetery in Coventry. On the stone is a small metal sculpture typical of the hundreds of acclaimed works that were designed and created by David Hayes.



# Son's sacrifice in Civil War provided pension for widowed mother

By Paul R. Keroack

In 1860, Michael and Thomas Carver, brothers in their late teens, lived with their widowed mother and two older sisters in Greeneville, a heavily Irish-American mill village in Norwich. Michael, 17, was a marble cutter, a skill he may have learned in Vermont where Thomas, 16, was born. Thomas was an "operator," a mill worker. "Operator" was a step above "laborer," the typical job classification of Irish immigrants in that era.

Their father William died in 1850, place unrecorded. He and his widow Honora (Casey) Carver were born in Ireland, she in Glanworth, probably the village near the northern Cork-southern Limerick border where the Carver name is primarily found. Their daughter Mary, who died in Norwich in 1858, had been born in nearby Ardpatrick, County Limerick. Their youngest child, and perhaps others, was born in Vermont, but it is not known when the family relocated to Connecticut.

As with many Irish immigrants, extended families lived close by. The 1860 census of Norwich lists a John Carver, a mechanic, and his wife, Mary Casey, young parents with one child. In the same dwelling was John B. Carver, 30, a laborer, his wife Margaret, and four children. The two Johns were likely cousins. The latter was probably the older son of William and Honora. A Richard Carver, perhaps not as close a cousin, came to Norwich about 1850.

In autumn 1861, Michael joined a cavalry battalion formed in West Meriden, but including recruits from throughout the state. Members were more educated than the norm though few were trained as horsemen. Michael's occupation given on his enlistment papers was teamster. On Oct. 26, he was mustered as a private in Company A. Later expanded to a regiment, the First Connecticut Cavalry was the state's only mounted unit in the Civil War.

As with many unmarried recruits, Michael directed that \$7 a month of his pay be sent to his mother, presumably to compensate for the loss of his civilian income, which had been the primary support of the family. His mother and sister Eliza had given up their residence to save money when Michael joined the army. They boarded elsewhere

with the military wages he sent home. Older brother John was struggling to support his wife and children on the wages of a "helper." Thomas apparently had his own lodgings. In a Dec. 28, 1861, letter home from Camp Tyler, Va., Michael asked his mother to "give my love to John and family and to Wm. Cunningham and family, to Bridget and Eliza and Thomas."

The cavalry unit was first deployed in Western Virginia pursuing guerillas from Wheeling though the Potomac Valley. After some battles in northern Virginia, it was stationed in Baltimore while being refitted



and augmented. On Aug. 15, 1862, Thomas Carver joined his brother in Company A as the regiment was again assigned to northern Virginia. Michael was promoted to corporal on Oct. 1 that year.

On Jan. 3, 1863, as later reported by Capt. Joab B. Rogers of Norwich, Cpl. Michael Carver, only 19 years old, led a four-man squad operating between the lines of the opposing armies near Stafford Court House, Va. On a patrol, he entered the house of J. Herndon, a parolee, where rebel soldiers were rumored to be concealed. While ascending the stairs, he was shot in the head and killed instantly. The remaining squad members went for reinforcements, not knowing how many rebels were inside. In retaliation, Gen. Burnside ordered the property burned and its owner arrested. In his later report, Capt. Erastus Blakeslee said, "Carver was a brave, good soldier; always cheerful and full of spirit; never shirking

duty but often volunteering to perform extra duty for others."

On Aug. 7, 1863, Pvt. Thomas Carver was captured with others near Waterford, Va. and interned in Virginia's Belle Isle prison camp and later in Andersonville, Ga., where at least one other member of his company taken that day died. The worst had happened for Honora. The son she depended on for support was dead and soon after, her other soldier son was a prisoner.

In April 1862, Congress had begun a process of accepting pension applications from disabled soldiers and dependent survivors.

If there was no wife or children, widowed mothers of the deceased were eligible. Due to the number of documents and amount of evidence required, the process was not speedy. The Carver file alone includes 34 images.

Honora Carver's formal declaration was made at the Superior Court in Norwich on July 21, 1864. In her application, Honora, age 59, stated that Michael had been her primary support, that she had been married to the late William Carver since 1826, that after his April 14, 1850, death she had never remarried, and that another son, Thomas, was then a prisoner of war.

Witnesses Joseph Connor and Isaac Johnson, both grocers, attested that Honora had been dependent upon Michael for her support. Before enlistment, Michael had contributed his entire pay to the household and since entering the army had sent sums of money to support his mother and sister.

In one penciled letter in February 1862, submitted as evidence, Michael told his brother (John) that he had enclosed "\$20 for mother." Apparently his request for automatic assignment of his \$7 monthly pay to be sent home was not always honored, despite the form he had signed at enlistment.

Testimony on Aug. 3, 1865, from William Cunningham and Thomas Bourke stated they knew Honora Carver, a "poor woman in feeble health and unable to support herself." Cunningham, an express man, was both a neighbor and son-in-law, married to Honora's oldest daughter Hannah.

All four witnesses to these several documents knew each other. Bourke was a clerk for, and boarded at Johnson's home. Connor's business was located near Johnson's on Water Street. Cunningham delivered goods, perhaps to or from these wholesale grocers.

In Oct. 31, 1865, Honora provided a personal summation of her situation. Since Michael's death, she had survived on charity and what little she was able to earn. Her older son was a laboring man with a large family to support. Although Thomas survived the war, "he will never be as strong and vigorous as before he was a prisoner," due to his "over 15 months at Belle Isle, Andersonville and other rebel prisons," and was living on the remainder of his back pay.

At the end of this professionally handwritten narrative was Honora's small shaky signature. Johnson and Connor stated below that they were "well ac-

quainted with Mrs. Carver and with her son Michael," and that they were not interested in her claim for a pension, by which they meant they had no financial claim on it.

On Jan. 16, 1866, Honora was awarded a pension of \$8 monthly — a corporal's pay — retroactive to his death in 1863. By 1868, Thomas was listed as a machinist, living at 9 Cliff St. No longer listed in the city directory, Honora may have been living with Thomas.

Honora died on Aug. 8, 1871, at the age of 67 — of "old age." The following day in Probate Court a bond was issued for Thomas Carver and Joseph Connor to administer her estate. It would seem from this that she probably had been able to save some of the pension money.

On July 23, 1872, Thomas Francis Carver, age 29, married Elizabeth Rose Carroll in Worcester, Mass., where he worked as a machinist. They had several children, including sons William and Thomas. In 1888, Thomas filed for a Civil War invalid pension, as did many others in later years when infirmities began to restrict their working abilities. He died in Worcester on April 8, 1907, age 59, according to the records, but probably several years older, as he would likely not have entered the Army in 1862 at 14 years of age.

Michael Carver's cousins John and Mary (Casey) Carver, mentioned above, were among those Norwich Irish families who settled in Dawson, Neb., after the Civil War.

## *Clare man was a legend on the Connecticut River*

**I**n the late 19th and early 20th centuries, a native of Ireland was known simply as "Tom the ferryman" by folks all along the Connecticut River in Middlesex County.

Thomas Donnellan was his full name and he was an important figure in daily life in Middle Haddam, a small but significant shipbuilding and industrial village on the eastern shore of New England's longest river. For some 40 years, Donnellan provided an essential transportation service: he ferried people back and forth across the quarter mile of water that separated Middle Haddam and Middletown.

It was perhaps inevitable that Donnellan would end up making a living doing river work in a river town. He was born in 1838 and grew up in the County Clare town of Sixmilebridge on the Gearna River. Just five miles south of that village, the Gearna empties into the mighty and majestic Shannon River near the port of Limerick.

Donnellan came to the United States in 1856 at the age of 18. He found work as a longshoreman in New York, probably because he had some experience on the docks of Limerick. He was introduced to the Connecticut River when working for three years as a deck hand on the steamboats *Granite State* and *City of Hartford*, which plied Long Island Sound linking New York City with the Connecticut shoreline.

In 1864, Donnellan was married. His wife Mary was also born in Ireland and came to America in 1857. The Donnellans had six children: Charles, William, Thomas, Mary E., Michael and Kate.

Donnellan saw an opportunity to begin a ferrying business when in 1871 the Connecticut Valley Railroad began its passenger service from Hartford to Old Saybrook along the western side of the Connecticut River. Advertisements for the railroad emphasized that arrangements could be made for ferry service to a number of east shore towns including Middle Haddam.

In 1901, after 30 years in the business, Donnellan decided to modernize his operation. The *Hartford Courant* sent a reporter who found Donnellan "at his cozy little home in Middle Haddam just up from the river." The reporter's brief, but well-written biography

Sources: Caulkins, Frances Manwaring, *History of Norwich, Connecticut ... to 1866, 1874*, p. 682. Connecticut Military Department. Units: *History of the First Regiment Connecticut Volunteer Cavalry* <http://www.ct.gov/mil/cwp/view.asp?a=1351&q=271852>.

Connecticut Probate records, 1871, 9 Aug., #2227. *Genealogical and Biographical Record of New London County, 1905*, p. 956 [William R. Carver] <https://archive.org/details/genealogicalbiog1905chic>

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Record of Service of Connecticut Men in the Army and Navy of the United States in the War of the Rebellion, Hartford: 1889, p. 63-64.. *Riding for Uncle Samuel: The Civil War History of the First Connecticut Cavalry Volunteers*, by Robert B. Angelovich, 2014, [quote from Capt. Blakeslee, p. 191]. U.S. Census, 1860, M653, Connecticut, Norwich, p. 322, 333. U.S. Census, 1900, T623, Massachusetts, Worcester. U.S. Civil War Draft Registration Records, 1863-1865. Connecticut, 3rd. Congressional District, v. 1, p. 192. Ancestry.com.. U.S. Civil War Pension Index. General Index to Pension Files, 1861-1934. Thomas Carver, application No. 679445, 22 Nov. 1888. Ancestry.com. U.S. Civil War Widows and Other Dependents Pension Files. RG 15, WC 63091. [www.fold3.com](http://www.fold3.com). "Norwich Families went West," *Shanachie*, Vol. XI, March-April, 1999.

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## Tom the Ferryman

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portrayed an Irish emigrant who had created an entrepreneurial niche for himself in the Land of Steady Habits. It appeared in the March 19, issue of the *Courant*.

The reporter wrote, "After so many years of ferrying ... he will discard his faithful old rowboat and to keep march with the line of progress, use an up-to-date gasoline launch, built after his own ideas and now fast nearing completion at the shop of Adrian Boudreau of Middletown. The launch is 21 feet long with five and one half feet beam and can accommodate a dozen or so passengers

... A three-horsepower gasoline engine with single propeller will furnish motive power for the craft, which will develop at least 12 knots an hour."

The vessel, which cost Donnellan \$325, was launched on Saturday morning, March 23, 1901.

Donnellan told the reporter, "Business now days isn't what it was ... but still I pick up a fair living." The ferryman also reminisced about his years on the river. "Never in all this time did I ever have a serious accident, and never even wet a passenger and I've carried some stylish ones, you bet."

Donnellan continued to operate the ferry until at least 1909 when the *Courant* reported "Capt. Thomas Donnellan ... will

resume the ferry between Middle Haddam and Maromas on March 4 ... (He) is well known to all the river men and many others as Capt. Tom." The 1910 census returns for Chatham list the Donnellan household as including: Thomas, 71, occupation ferryman; wife Mary, age 67; their son William, 44, occupation farmer; and their daughter, Catherine, 23.

Several family trees on ancestry.com state that Tom died in September 1917. His wife Mary and son William are listed on the 1920 census returns living on the farm in East Hampton.

Sources: *Hartford Daily Courant*, Nov. 1, 1900, March 19, 1901, and March 3, 1909. [www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com).

## 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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