

The Shanachie

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POSTPONED

Our program on Sunday
April 19, 2020,
about Irish courtship,
marriage customs & traditions
has been postponed
until further notice
as the nation and world deal
with the coronavirus.
In the meantime,
do not forget to check out
our new website
www.ctirishhistory.org

Tolland County

Many Irish footprints then & now

In an issue of the *Hartford Courant* 170 years ago, there was printed a touching tale that accurately explained why Irish men and women had begun to flock to America, and why many of them settled in Tolland County in north central Connecticut.

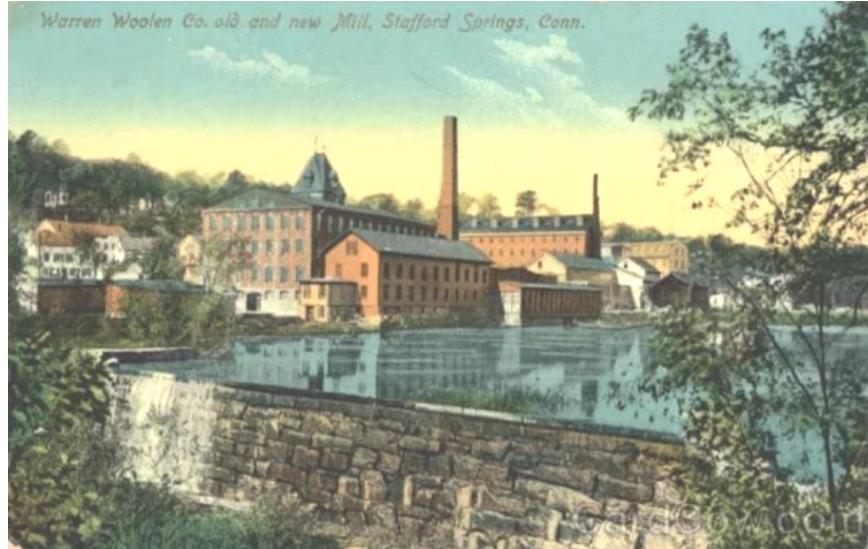
Just several paragraphs in length, the tale appeared in the issue of Sept. 1, 1849. It was written by an unnamed New York journalist who had visited the mineral springs that earned the town of Stafford Springs in Tolland County a reputation as "the nation's first health spa."



Having enjoyed the medicinal benefits of bathing in and drinking from the mineral springs, as did thousands of visitors in the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries, the New Yorker discovered "about a half mile from the springs a famous whortleberrying place."

Whortleberries are a type of fruit that originated in hilly areas of northern Europe. The whortleberries are very similar to blueberries except that they grow singly rather than in clusters. In Ireland, whortleberries are well known as bilberries or "fraochan"

Please turn to page 2



Stafford Springs in Tolland County was a busy textile mill town in the latter years of the 19th century and early 20th century. It was also a town of great natural beauty with rugged hills, the Willimantic River and mineral springs. Many poverty-stricken Irish men and women immigrants found it a good place to settle.

Irish roots deep and plentiful in Tolland County

(Continued from page 1)

and much appreciated there as a tasty fruit delicacy.

The New Yorker found them growing in abundance on Crow Hill, which rises to an elevation of 948 feet. The view from that promontory was "of a very extensive hill-country, melting away and made beautifully blue in the distance which is one of the great charms of mountain scenery."

In such an enchanting place where the "faochan" grew, it was perhaps little wonder that the journalist should come upon "an Irish factory girl with her mother picking berries."

They struck up a conversation and the mother, the journalist wrote, "told me that Ireland was a bonny land in her young days when every woman spun her flax at her own house door and always got paid for it. But now it was all done in factories and a deal the worse for it were the poor people. They could not work and so they could not eat, and therefore had she come to America, .. and a right good land America was for working and living ..."

Yet, said the Irish mother, America was not without its faults one of which was that "she thought her daughter's years would not be so many for being rung up in the morning at half past four, and keeping her all day long in the clattering factory. But it was good wages she got, and she was a nice, good girl, bless her heart, and never had she (the mother) mourned the day that she brought her here."

Timewise, the whortleberry tale fits perfectly with the published history of the Hartford diocese and with census data. Father James O'Donnell wrote in the history, "The first Catholics in Stafford Springs were Stephen Jackson, Jeremiah O'Brien, Thomas Hassett, Tim Desmond, Daniel Hurley, William Tracey and their families. They came in 1849 and in November that year Father Luke Daly celebrated the first Mass in Stafford."

In 1850, the year after the Irish mother and daughter picked whortleberries on Crow Hill, the census returns found 138 Irish natives living in Stafford — 53 females

and 85 males. Residing in all of Tolland County that year were 644 Irish natives, 383 males and 261 females.

What was happening was that the picturesque village of Stafford Springs, located just below the Massachusetts border, and all of Tolland County were experiencing a period of rapid industrial growth.

In 1839, the first woolen mill, the Mineral Springs Manufacturing Company, was incorporated in Stafford Springs. In 1848, a fire destroyed that first mill, but a new and larger one was built immediately. About the same time, the New London, Willimantic and Palmer Railroad was built through the town facilitating shipping of the woolen goods to New Haven and other ports on Long Island Sound.

As the number of immigrants multiplied, priests from Windsor Locks and other nearby towns said Mass as often as they could in Stafford at Oronoco Hall, a community meeting place. In October 1866 construction was begun on a Catholic church. It was completed a year later and dedicated March 10, 1868, to St. Edward. The first resident pastor was Father P.P. Shahan. He constructed a school with the faculty comprised of Sisters of Mercy from Hartford.

By the end of the 19th century, the historian of Tolland County would write that Stafford Springs "has long since outgrown the proportions of a village ... Two streams enter the borough and unite just below and upon these streams the large woolen mills, the principle manufacturing interest of the town are located"

The factories that attracted so many Irish immigrants included: Warren Woolen Company, Rawitser & Brother, the shoddy mills of Smith & Cooley, a mill for the manufacturing of worsted goods operated by Fox and Co. and the Granite Mill Company.

In 1880, U.S. census returns list entire neighborhoods of Irish mill workers and their families. In one such Stafford neighborhood, lived Roseanna Roche, 53, a widow born in Ireland and her son Charles, 15, born in Massachusetts. Boarding with them were Irish mill workers John Casey 24, George Kane, 21, and Michael Kelley, 48.

Next door lived Thomas Mullin 26, born

in Ireland and his wife Mary, 24, both woolen mill workers, and their children, Rosa, 2, and Mary, 1, born in Connecticut.

Nearby were saloonkeeper, David Conway, 27, and his wife Margaret, 27, both Irish natives, and their son, James, 1, born in Connecticut, as well as David's brother, Patrick, 32, a woolen mill worker. And boarding with the Conways were Michael Slattery, 30, a fireman, and his wife Alice, 28, both Irish natives, their son Edward, 4, and William Slattery, 27, another woolen mill worker.

Next door lived Martha Brennan, 29, born in Rhode Island, and her four children: Mary, 7, Edwin, 5, William, 4, and Louis, 1. Living in the same house was the family of Martin Costello, 49, and his wife Ann, 45, both of them woolen mill workers; their sons Martin, 23, and James, 15, also woolen mill workers; and their son Thomas, 8, too young to work.

Next door was Ellen White, a 43-year-old native of Ireland, who was a laundress, possibly for the whole neighborhood. Living with her were her children, John, 14, Michael, 9, Annie, 17, a worker at the woolen mill, Nellie, 13, at home; and Mary Roche, 19, keeping house, and her husband John, 18, working at the woolen mill.

On and on it goes right into the 21st century when the U.S. Census Bureau in 2010 estimated on its online Fact Finder feature the proportions of various ethnic groups living in Tolland County.

The Fact Finder estimated that 22 percent of the county population were of Irish descent and that another 2 percent were of Scots-Irish descent. That total of 24 percent was well above that of other ethnic groups: 16 percent Italian, 16 percent French and French Canadian, 14 percent English, 14 percent German and 10.6 percent Polish.

Sources: *Hartford Courant*, July 24, 1766; Sept. 1, 1849; *U.S. Census, Stafford, 1850-1880*; J.R. Cole, *History of Tolland County, Connecticut, 1888*; Rev. William Byrne, *History of the Catholic Church in the New England States, Vol. 2, 1899*, Rev. James H. O'Donnell, "Diocese of Hartford."

Scots-Irish were founders of the town of Union

Union is the only one of Connecticut's 169 municipalities whose founders were born in Ireland.

James McNall, a native of Ireland whose family had emigrated to Ulster from Scotland, came to Union from Bedford, Mass., in 1727. He built a cabin on one of the rugged hills in the north of town.

Shortly after, James was joined by his brother William, who had been living in Worcester, Mass. A year later, John and Janet Lawson and their four children arrived. Lawson was born in Linlithgow, 20 miles from Edinburgh, Scotland.

In succeeding years, more Scotch-Irish arrived in Union. Among them were several Moore families. James Moore, who was born in Ireland in the late 1680s, lived to see his son John born on the passage to America in 1717. There were also several Paul families. Robert Paul Sr. and John Lawson were among the selectmen who petitioned and negotiated with the colonial General Assembly when Union was incorporated in 1734.

Hugh Crawford, born in County Donegal in 1716, died in Union in 1776 at the age of 60. He and his wife, Margaret Campbell, born in Ireland in 1715, are buried in the Union Center Cemetery. James Armour, who was born in Ireland was called a "bog trotter" in later life in Union.

By 1738, when the first meetinghouse in Union was organized, there were about 19 families totaling 130 persons in Union. On the 150th anniversary of that event, the speaker, Dr. George Curtiss described the Scots-Irish among those families as "from the North of Ireland, but not of a race indigenous to that soil but of a stock transplanted from Scotland, Presbyterians in religion who were persecuted to force them into the Church of England."

With reference to the rugged hills of Tolland County, Curtiss said those Scots-Irish "had seen hills before in the Emerald Isle but not such hills as these rocky, ledgy hills covered with interminable thickets instead of the velvet sod found in Ireland's pasture grounds."

At the time of the construction of the first



Capt. John Lawson, son and namesake of a founding father of Union, was one of the Connecticut minutemen who answered the Lexington alarm in 1775. He is buried in Union Center Cemetery. The date and age do not seem to fit. Photo by John Miethner, Find-A-Grave.

meetinghouse there was friction among the settlers, who were about equally split between the Scots-Irish Presbyterians and the descendants of the English Puritan Congregationalists who had settled in Massachusetts before moving on to Connecticut.

When the men of Union met in 1741 to raise the frame of the meetinghouse onto its foundation, the two factions had a tense moment. The Rev. Charles Hammond, author of *The History of Union, Connecticut*, wrote: "... it was proposed that a prayer be offered before the men separated to their homes. This being agreed, it was suggested that Deacon Humphrey Cram should offer prayer, as he was an officer in the church and a helper in the work even though he lived in South Brimfield, his farm being just over the line."

Cram was of the Congregationalist faith, "whereupon," Hammond wrote, "James McNall of the Scotch-Irish residents and land proprietors, objected and said,

'Deacon Cram must not pray for he does not own a foot of land in the town.'" The Scots-Irish apparently were in the majority, for Robert Moore, the son-in-law of William McNall, finally offered the prayer, "and so on the 14th of August 1741, the first meetinghouse, which stood for about a hundred years, was raised."

There was no question the Scots-Irish were strong in their beliefs and especially proud of their Scottish origins. Hammond went out of his way in his book to impress that on readers: "Their homes in Scotland were in the southwestern counties, Argyllshire and Ayrshire, where William Wallace, the Washington of Scotland was born and where Burns sang on 'the banks and braes of Bonny Doon.'

"Hence they were genuine Scotchmen," he wrote, "and had no trace of Ireland in their temperament, their sympathies, their prejudices, their language, their politics or their religion. They left Scotland about the same time that the Pilgrims and the Puritans came to New England. They carried with them to the north of Ireland, and they brought with them here, their native Scotch qualities of industry and thrift, frugality and personal independence. They were in general persons of comfortable estates and friends of good learning and education ... There was among their little company of emigrants here a professional schoolmaster by the name of McVine, who kept school summer and winter ..."

Hammond did give a slight tip of the hat to the Emerald Isle. "Coming from Ireland," he added, "the Scotch brought with them to America two institutions which were pure Irish and not Scotch and which were soon universally adopted. These were the Irish potato as food for man and the foot-wheel for spinning flax. These soon proved to be of very great value to the country."

Sources: ancestry.com: posted by Karen Chaffer, "The Immigrant William McNall"; Find-A-Grave; U.S. census, 1790-1840. Rev. Charles Hammond, *The History of Union, Connecticut*, 1893. Fred R. Crawford, *The Early Ancestors of the Crawfords in America*.

Irish studies programs blossom on UConn campuses

The study of Irish literature, history, language and culture is thriving at the University of Connecticut in Storrs, and at UConn campuses in Hartford and in Waterbury. The UConn, Storrs, comprehensive Irish program is led by two distinguished scholars, Prof. Mary Burke of the English Department and Prof. Brendan Kane in history.

A native of Reading, PA, Kane earned a master's degree in Irish studies from the National University of Ireland, Galway, and a doctoral degree in history from Princeton.

Burke is a native of Galway and was educated at Trinity College, Dublin, and Queen's University Belfast. Both she and Kane have held the National Endowment for the Humanities fellowship at the Keough-Naughton Institute for Irish Studies at the University of Notre Dame.

At the UConn Waterbury and Hartford campuses, Prof. Rachel Lynch, a native of Dublin, and Prof. Tom Shea teach courses such as contemporary Irish women's writing and the writing of the Blasket Islands.

In addition to undergraduate and graduate classes with a focus on things Irish, guest speakers on Irish themes and celebrated Irish writers are regularly hosted by Irish Studies at UConn, which also coordinates the participation of faculty and graduate students at regional and national Irish conferences.

At any one time, as many as seven students in the English Department are working on dissertations with an Irish literature focus. And UConn Irish Studies alumni include the director of Irish Studies at Villanova and English Department heads at Miami University, William Paterson University and the University of New Haven. The History Department hosts graduate students working on Irish topics ranging from the medieval era to the 18th century to contemporary times.

The Irish Studies Alliance, a graduate student organization, schedules a working papers series and two of its officers, Irish literature graduate students, Mollie Kervick

and Sarah Bertekap, organized a Graduate Irish Studies Conference at the Hartford Public Library in 2018.

All Irish literature graduate students are eligible to apply for the Timothy F. Moriarty Award, the result of a generous donation by Irish-American Janet Moriarty. That funding has allowed many graduate students to travel to Ireland for archival research or

Link with Ireland forged more than half century ago

Born in Massachusetts in 1912, Mary Lavin and her mother went to live in Galway in 1922. Mary studied at both Loreto and University College, Dublin. Then she began to write short stories. She did not stop until she had completed nine books of them and won world acclaim. She was in great demand both as a guest speaker and as writer-in-residence at universities. Thus it was that in 1967, the University of Connecticut even created such a position just to have her on campus for a whole semester. She came back in 1970-71.

Mary died in 1991, but in recent years, was honored along with her daughter, Caroline Walsh, who had been literary editor of the *Irish Times*. The occasion was the 2013 Gerson Irish Reading at UConn. The reading was initiated in 1997 thanks to a generous donation by the late UConn Prof. Louis Gerson in honor of his Irish wife, Elizabeth Shanley Gerson, herself a graduate of UConn with two degrees in social work.

The event attracted an unusually large number of famous Irish writers: Colm Tóibín, James Ryan, Anne Enright and Belinda McKeon.

Source: Irish America, June-July 2013.

language study. At the 2019 meeting of the American Conference for Irish Studies, the largest and most prestigious annual Irish Studies conference, Matthew Shelton, a UConn Ph.D. candidate in Irish poetry, was awarded the Krause Research Fellowship for his translations of Irish-language poet Ailbhe Ní Ghearbhuigh. In addition, Dr. Brian Sneeden, whose recent dissertation was on contemporary Irish and Greek poetry, has published two books of poetry.

Prof. Burke joined the UConn English Department in 2004 and has published numerous articles on Irish literature and Irish and Irish-American identities and cultural studies. She is a current member of the Fulbright National Committee for Ireland and held a Boston College-Ireland Visiting Fellowship in 2010. In most semesters, she offers a 35-student upper-level undergraduate course in Early and Modern or Contemporary Irish Literature and regularly offers graduate classes on Irish and Irish-American literature and culture. Her book, *Tinkers: Synge and the Cultural History of the Irish Traveller*, received the UConn Research Excellence Award in 2009.

She is currently working on a book-length cultural history of the Scots/Scotch Irish, descendants of the first wave of Irish immigrants in the American colonies. It is a topic geographically close to UConn because a number of Scots-Irish in that first wave in the early 1700s settled in northeastern Connecticut.

Prof. Burke also has given talks on the topics of her publications at universities all over North America and Ireland, at New York's Lincoln Center, and at Carnegie Hall's 2019 "Migrations" festival where she spoke on the topic of the Irish in colonial America. Burke has contributed to the *Irish Times* and to Irish and American national radio. She is also a published creative writer and a former *Sunday Tribune* (Dublin) New Irish Writing Award nominee and most recently read at an Irish Studies event at the Irish Embassy, Washington D.C.

Please turn to page 8

Dodd Research Center focuses on human rights

Ground was broken at Storrs for the University of Connecticut's Thomas J. Dodd Research Center in 1993. The center was dedicated in October 1995 by President William J. Clinton. The focus of the dedication and that of Sen. Dodd's papers, which became the first collection there, was and remains on human rights.

The senator was named for his father who was a native of the parish of Bunratty, County Clare, Ireland, and who came to America in the 1850s in the wake of the famine that took the lives of a million Irish and scattered another million to the far corners of the earth. The senior Thomas Dodd was an entrepreneur. He established both stonemason and teamster businesses in Norwich, CT. The future senator, worked with his father in those businesses before entering Providence College and the Yale Law School.

For UConn, the founding of the Dodd Center marked the beginning of an initiative that would make human rights research, teaching and outreach a priority at the Storrs campus. In 2003, the university established the Human Rights Institute and housed it in the Dodd Center. The institute hosts numerous conferences and lectures on genocide, discrimination, poverty, political and economic rights. It also sponsors the Gladstein Visiting Professorship which arranges for internationally known scholars in the field of human rights to spend a semester at UConn.

The university also moved its Center for Judaic Studies & Contemporary Jewish Life, which was inaugurated in 1979, to the Dodd Center. In addition to offering undergraduate and master's degree courses on Jewish history and culture, the center sponsors the Mitzelman Lecture Series, the Academic Convocation on the Holocaust, forums for faculty and students to present their writing and research, and a Yiddish Tish Discussion in which topics or literature are presented and debated in Yiddish.

In 1996, the university also moved its Archives & Special Collections department into the Dodd Center opening up to students, researchers and visitors a treasure chest of extremely valuable collections. They range — just for starters — from children's literature of the 1840s-1920s, to oral history interviews of Connecticut people of many ethnic backgrounds, Connecticut labor and business history, African-American Music, Latin American and Caribbean newspapers, records of some Connecticut families going back to the 1700s and literary collections of the personal papers and manuscripts of more than 100 American and English writers.

Special events at the Dodd Center keep a focus on human rights. The annual Thomas J. Dodd Award was presented in November 2019 to Bryan Stevenson, founder of the Equal Justice Initiative, for representing individuals on death row. The Raymond and Beverly Sackler Lecture Series brings to UConn twice a year internationally renowned speakers to discuss human rights issues. The center has offered teachers of all grades training in how to integrate human rights into their classrooms lessons.

Irish-Americans have contributed to and benefited from the Dodd Research Center. Seven Irish contributors are listed in the right-hand column of this page. The four whose pictures are shown have collections of their papers and documents in the archives. The three at the bottom are among a group of Irish immigrants who were interviewed in 1975 for the Peoples of Connecticut project.

Sen. Thomas J. Dodd: In 1945-46 at the Nuremberg Trials in Germany, Dodd was the second ranking U.S. lawyer and supervisor of the day-to-day management of the U.S. prosecution of Nazi leaders for crimes against humanity. He focused on the charge of waging aggressive war and cross-examined German industrialists as well as military and political leaders.



Josephine A. Dolan: She was the first professor in the UConn School of Nursing where she taught for 35 years beginning in 1944. Her book *Nursing in Society: A Historical Perspective* was used for decades nationwide. Her collection of nursing artifacts is displayed in the School of Nursing. She helped transform the training of nurses to a university education.



U.S. Rep. Bruce A. Morrison: During his years as a Connecticut congressman from 1983 to 1990, Morrison was a leader in the efforts to end the sectarian violence in Northern Ireland. His papers describe his role in the 1998 ceasefire and signing of the Good Friday Agreement that ended 30 years of war that killed 3,500 Irish men and women.



Louise Gaffney Flannigan: Born in 1867, she was a sister and a wife of railroad brakemen. She wrote many poems and reflections about railroad workers, particularly members of the Brotherhood of Railroad Brakemen in New Haven. Her works are memorials to those who died on the job and celebrations of their good work, bravery and fellowship.



1975 Oral Histories in Dodd Center

Christine Archambault, born in Killarney, Co. Kerry; at the age of 16 and by herself immigrated to Haverhill, MA, where her uncle lived; took a course and became a telephone operator, married a French American, moved to Waterbury and Norwich.

James Droney, native of Bellharbour, County Clare; worked the farm at age 14, immigrated at 19 in 1947 in an old troopship; aunt in Hartford met him in New York; quickly "found out you have to go by the clock here, which you never did in Ireland."

Father Patrick O'Carroll, born in 1929 in Borrisokane, Co. Tipperary to a farm family; mother's family ran a store in town; ordained a priest and signed on to go to Diocese of St. Augustine, FL; immigrated in 1954; came to Hartford diocese in 1973.

Rockville is home of extraordinary Civil War museum

The Tolland County village of Rockville is home to a treasure house of Civil War and Connecticut Irish history. In the late 1880s, the residents of Rockville, a borough of the town of Vernon, decided to honor their veterans not by a monument but by a building.

The proposal was hailed, scorned and debated at length until a Memorial Hall was built downtown at 14 Park Street. The cornerstone was laid on Memorial Day 1889. Built of Connecticut River valley brownstone, Memorial Hall is three stories tall with a tower that soars to a height of 150 feet. When opened, the ground floor housed — and still houses — some town offices. The second floor became the home of Thomas F. Burpee Post 71, Grand Army of the Republic, the national organization of Civil War veterans. The post was named for the lieutenant colonel of the 21st Connecticut Infantry, a Vernon resident who was killed at Cold Harbor, VA, on June 9, 1864.

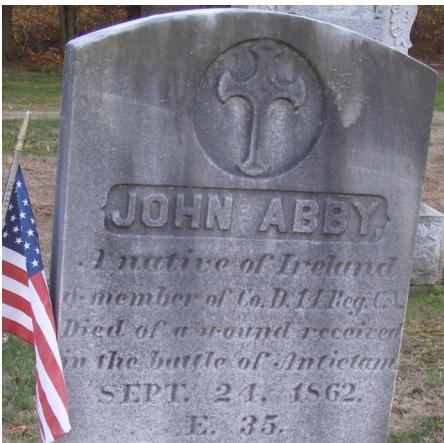
Early on, post members had in mind a more permanent use for their quarters. In 1896, they voted, "The members of the post desiring to perpetuate the memory of its dead for all time believe the rooms ... should be used as a place for relics ... contributed by the friends of the post. In this way a museum might be created which would be of interest to future generations."

Over the years, valuable items — uniforms, weapons, diaries, pictures, paintings, collections of letters, newspaper clippings, regimental records and Civil War books — were, and continue to be, donated.

In 1934, when the last member of Post 71 died, its quarters in Memorial Hall fortunately passed into the hands Alden Skinner Camp, Sons of Union Veterans. That organization of descendants continued to sponsor Veterans Night activities and to maintain the archives and museum. In 1993, the Sons of Union Veterans incorporated the GAR quarters as the New England Civil War Museum. The O'Connell-Chapman Library at the museum has grown to more than 1,000 Civil War books, and the museum continues to sponsor Civil War programs. The Sons of Veterans — today grand-, great- and great-great-grandsons — have performed a won-



Rockville's memorial to Civil War veterans was a large building that housed its GAR post. Today the post's meeting rooms are preserved as a museum and a library. Among the Civil War graves in St. Bernard's Cemetery in Rockville is that, below, of Irish native John Abby of the 14th Connecticut Infantry. He was mortally wounded at the battle of Antietam in September 1862.



derful service by simply maintaining the Burpee Post meeting rooms just as they were in the late 1800s and have continued to collect both relics and archival materials.

After the Civil War, GAR posts in hundreds of communities across the nation were a final chapter to that conflict. The quarters in Vernon are among a very few GAR clubrooms that have been maintained.

The home of the Vernon GAR also is a reminder of the role of Irish people in the Civil War. The membership list of Burpee Post includes a number of Irish-born veterans: Henry Doyle of Windsor, Company C, 25th Connecticut; John McPherson of Belfast, Ireland, Co. D, 14th Connecticut; James Stark, musician, Co. C, 20th Connecticut; Walter Rourke, musician, Co. A, 4th Rhode Island Infantry; James Farrel, wounded at Spotsylvania, Co. H, 22nd Connecticut.

In addition, the executive director of the museum, Matthew Reardon, is an Irish-American descended from a fifth great-grandfather who served in a Connecticut regiment in the Civil War. Reardon is a graduate of Sacred Heart University with a bachelor's degree in history and a master's degree in education. He teaches at Vernon Center Middle School and has been director at the museum since 2007.

Reardon's fifth generation grandfather, Michael Farley, was born in County Leitrim about 1840. Michael enlisted in the 8th Connecticut in the summer of 1862, just in time to fight in the most bloody battle in the war. In September that year, Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee invaded Maryland in the hope of winning a decisive battle on northern soil. He was met by an equally determined Union army at Antietam in a daylong battle in which 22,700 were killed, wounded, captured or missing. Lee was turned back. In the fighting for a bridge over Antietam Creek, the 8th Connecticut suffered its greatest losses of the entire war: 33 killed, 145 wounded, 23 captured. Farley lived to fight another day, but in an almost equally bloody fight at Drewry's Bluff, VA, in May 1864, he was captured. He survived four months and a malaria attack at Andersonville prison in Georgia.

After the war, Farley married Irish immigrant Ann Gilmartin in Stonington where he worked as a laborer. The Farleys had 13 children. Ann died in 1887 and Michael in 1917. They are buried in Old St. Michael's Cemetery in Pawcatuck, CT.

Sources: Interview with Matthew Reardon. ancestry.com: census and veterans collections. Blaikie Hines, Civil War Volunteer Sons of Connecticut, 2002.

From Ireland to Connecticut to Pennsylvania by 1900

By Paul R. Keroack

Having relocated from Stratford, CT, to Collegeville, PA, I am reminded of a similar path taken more than a century ago by a grand aunt and her husband.

Catherine Agnes Downes¹ was born in Norwich April 4, 1876, one of 10 children of Irish emigrants John and Johanna (Costello) Downes. As a young adult, Catherine was employed in the nearby Chelsea Paper Mill where her father also worked.

James McGough was born in the townland of Lisdoonan, Donagh-moyne parish, near Carrickmacross in County Monaghan on Sept. 17, 1864, according to the Irish civil birth record.² He was the son of Thomas and Mary (McKevitt) McGough. He immigrated to New York in the 1880s. Joining a probable cousin Richard McGough in Holyoke, MA, he is listed in the 1890 Holyoke city directory as boarding with his brother Peter, also a paper mill employee. Holyoke mills were then the largest producers of paper in the United States.³

McGough followed the paper trade to Norwich by 1894. Leading publishers such as Harper & Brothers in New York obtained their paper stock from the Chelsea Paper Mill. There James McGough, then a foreman at the mill, met Catherine Downes. On 29 June 1897, Kate and James were married at St. Mary Church. He was naturalized on Oct. 22, 1898 in Norwich.⁴ Local city directories in 1898 and 1899 also list Peter McGough as a paper mill employee boarding in Greeneville. Peter returned to Holyoke in the latter year, boarding with his sister Annie and brother-in-law John Hickey.⁵

By the end of 1899, James and Kate moved to western Pennsylvania where he found employment at the Clarion Paper Mill in Johnsonburg, then the nation's largest producer of coated paper for printing popular magazines. James was apparently ambitious, improving his skills as a foreman in successively larger mills. However the town, located in a narrow valley surrounded by forested mountainous wilderness was uncongenial to Kate, who was raised in the Greeneville mill village, surrounded by family and a large Irish-American community.⁶

The couple's first child, Thomas, born in Johnsonburg on Feb. 23, 1901, was named after James's father as well as Catherine's younger brother then studying for the priesthood in Ellicott City, Maryland. Catherine took her young son back to Norwich for frequent extended visits in the early 1900s, listed there in the city directories of 1904 and 1905 at her parents' address as "Mrs. James McGough." Tom later recalled exploits there such as breaking his arm falling



The McGough family: Catherine, Father Thomas, James, Madeline (Sister Regina Caeli), and J. (John) Francis, in 1932 at the ordination of Father Thomas in Harrisburg, PA.

off a wall at age nine.⁷

In a 1906 letter from Johnsonburg to her brother Con (Cornelius), Kate expressed her desire to live back in Connecticut, "Oh how glad I'd be if I was only getting ready to go home - you can't imagine the longing I have in my heart to be back again if it was only for one week ... well, what's the use of talking nonsense. So I'll have to make up my mind and stay among the tall timbers for ... at least another year." Holidays in Pennsylvania could be difficult, "the mill will be down for three days [at Christmas] and I dread it for I'll be pestered and won't accomplish nothing with Jim hanging around ... Jim hasn't drank anything since the fourth ... next Saturday night he says he's going to start in then and will have a continual performance for three days."⁸

Births of daughter Madeline on Oct. 4, 1910, and another son John Francis on Jan. 21, 1916, busied her and perhaps filled some of her desire for congenial company. Thomas in 1918 went to St. Bonaventure University in Olean NY, some 60 miles north of Johnsonburg. An avid football player there, he later decided to study for the priesthood. After several years of inactivity at a tuberculosis sanitarium in New York State, he continued to visit Connecticut relatives during his renewed studies prior to his leaving for advanced study in Rome.

His parents moved in 1928 to Lock Haven, PA, when James was transferred to a newer paper mill owned by the same corporation which owned Clarion.

Thomas was ordained in Harrisburg on May 21, 1932. His father was severely injured when hit by a car in Lock Haven on Jan. 12, 1933, and died three days later. On May 19, 1935, his mother died at age 59 of complications of appendicitis. They are buried together in St. Mary's Cemetery in

Norwich, CT, beside her parents and two of her siblings who died as young adults.⁹ Madeline McGough worked as a social worker until she joined the Sisters of St. Dominic at age 45. Younger brother John Francis, also a social worker, married and raised his family in Illinois.

Father Tom, as he liked to be called, pastored in Harrisburg, Steelton, York, and Hanover, PA. He was created a monsignor in 1962. I visited him in Pennsylvania and later visited his sister in New York and corresponded with both. Their shared reminiscences form the basis of this family's story.

J. (John) Francis McGough died in Danville IL, Oct. 2, 1980. Madeline (Sr. Regina Caeli) died in Newburgh, NY, Jan. 1, 1995, and Msgr. Thomas J. McGough died in York PA on 29 Aug. 29, 1997.¹⁰

¹ Date entered in the Downes family bible, held by my Madigan cousins, confirmed in letter Oct. 9, 1973, from her daughter Madeline (Sr. Regina Caeii)

² Baptisms in Donaghmoyne RC parish Peter in 1866 and Owen (Eugenius) in 1868, only civil records exist for James, 1864, Anne, 1870, Michael, 1876, Carrickmacross. Several church records show birth places as Cashlan or West Cashlan where an Anne McGough held property. Note on photo of James in Holyoke says Lisdoonan, which borders Cashlan West. Massachusetts marriage record 2 July 1889 shows a Patrick J., 23, about same age as brother Peter, parents Thomas McGough & Maria McKevitt, wed Joanna Maloney.

³ Photo note cited says James to U.S. in 1881. Later censuses James's emigration year as 1883-84-86, ship passenger entry is 12 April 1888 (N.Y. N.Y.; Microfilm: M237, 1820-1897; Microfilm Roll 517; List: 441). Brother Peter landed N.Y. 13 June 1881. Richard 1881 through Boston, destination Holyoke.

⁴ Norwich marriages, v. 15, p. 230; Ancestry.com, Immigration & Naturalization, 1791-1992, Oct. 22, 1898, Norwich Superior Court, v. 3, p. 431.

⁵ Peter "Removed West," 1907 Holyoke directory. Died, typhoid fever, Spokane, WA,....., death cert., 1907,#226. www.familysearch.org.

⁶ 1900 US Census, PA, Elk Co., Johnsonburg, p.23: as James McGoff.

⁷ Thomas Joseph Downes, 1880-1902. Correspondence, Rev. T. McGough, 29 Oct. 1973; Greeneville column, *Norwich Bulletin*, 22 July, 1909.

⁸ Letter Kate McGough to Cornelius J. Downes, Dec. 16, 1906.

⁹ Ancestry.com, Pennsylvania death certificates: 1933 #5508; 1935, #50309. Findagrave.com/memorial 200240176, Norwich burial.

¹⁰ Births, death dates: public records or family correspondence.

UConn Irish studies

(Continued from page 4)

Both Burke and Prof. Lynch have served as presidents of the New England chapter of the American Conference of Irish Studies, co-hosting a major Irish Studies conference at UConn in 2006 that featured a memorable keynote talk by Colm Tóibín.

Thanks largely to Prof. Kane, UConn is also leading an international effort to recover and codify the Irish language, which is one of Europe's oldest extant written vernaculars, as it evolved in the medieval to early modern period. Initiated in 2012 at UConn, the project now involves Notre Dame University, Harvard University, the Catholic University of America, Trinity Col-

lege in Dublin, University College in Cork, the University of Edinburgh and Aberystwyth University in Wales.

The initiative has led to the creation of a website, *Leamh.org*, with an online dictionary, grammar and reading guide in Early Modern Irish. This project has had the extra benefit of creating many links for UConn's graduate and undergraduate programs.

For example, the National University of Ireland in Galway has initiated an online exchange program with a strong emphasis on Irish language learning.

Besides teaching introductory Irish at UConn for a couple years to help shore up the program, Professor Kane will co-teach a course on Irish language and its historical contexts at Harvard in autumn 2020.

Scholars like Burke and Kane, have made UConn a beehive of Irish studies. Students can receive a Concentration in Irish Literature certificate on graduating by taking four courses in Irish literature, history, or language. It is one of the rare places in the United States where students can study the Irish language from the earliest period (Old Irish with Professor Fred Biggs) to modern Irish (with the UConn Fulbright Language Instructor and, in the past, with Prof. Kane). This year's Fulbright in Irish is Sinead Murray, a schoolteacher from Dublin.

Prof. Burke organizes numerous Irish literature and culture events that are free and open to the public, and is happy to hear from anyone interested in getting on her mailing list: mary.burke@uconn.edu.

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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