

The Shanachie

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Two memorable anniversaries for 2020



Catherine Flanagan, born in Hartford in 1889, was a tireless and effective leader in Connecticut and in other states in the crusade of women for the right to vote. On this 100th anniversary of victory in that crusade in 1920, she will be inducted into the Connecticut Women's Hall of Fame — Page 3.

Father Thomas M. Conway, born in Waterbury in 1908, died a hero's death in 1945, just 75 years ago. He was the chaplain on the *USS Indianapolis* which was torpedoed only several weeks before the end of World War II. Its sinking was one of the worst tragedies in the history of the U.S. Navy. — Page 5.



Thoughts about The Shanachie & the Ethnic Heritage Center

The first edition of *The Shanachie* was published 31 years ago in January 1989. The leading article on page one reported that the newly organized Connecticut Irish-American Historical Society had joined five other groups in the New Haven area to create an unusual kind of history organization: an Ethnic Heritage Center.

The article explained that the purpose of the Ethnic Heritage Center was for African-American, Italian, Jewish, Spanish, Ukrainian and Irish historical societies to establish a single home for their archives and activities. The groups would share space, but keep their own libraries and collections. Together they would fashion exhibits and sponsor speakers with an emphasis on the rich ethnic diversity of the New Haven area and Connecticut.

That first issue of *The Shanachie* — an

Irish word that means storyteller or historian — had only four pages. Most of the articles were about Connecticut's Irish. But one small article was about another Connecticut ethnic group. The article was about the fact that in the mid-to-late 19th century many of the barbers in New Haven were of African-American descent. It told how one of them, Fred Manyard, was in 1894 renovating the Chapel Street shop of "another famous Afro-American barber, Charley Reese." Manyard was busy transforming the business "into a more modern barber shop."

For the first 10 years thereafter, *The Shanachie*, continued to include among the Irish stories in each issue one article about a different Connecticut ethnic group. The reasoning was that the Ethnic Heritage Center was about the reality that our nation is truly a melting pot enriched by people of all

racess and places, not competing against, but appreciating and accepting each other's contributions and flaws.

After the article about African-American barbers, there followed in succeeding issues, but not in exact order, articles about a Spanish sea captain who settled in New London, a Jewish seminary in New Haven, an Italian neighborhood in Hartford, a Ukrainian convention in Connecticut, Polish immigrants in Derby and Romani Gypsy people living throughout Connecticut.

In addition to these quarterly reminders of the contributions and obstacles faced by many ethnic groups, the entire issue of *The Shanachie* of September-October 1992 was devoted to the topic of "Prejudice."

What prompted that was the controversy

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Ethnic heritage, good and bad

(Continued from page 1)

surrounding the 500th anniversary of the voyage of Christopher Columbus to the New World in 1492. Descendants of Europeans saw it as a great achievement, the first exploration of a new world led by an Italian sea captain sailing for the royal family of Spain. American Indians and Black people remembered it as the beginning of centuries of displacement and enslavement.

That special issue of *The Shanachie* included articles about the discrimination a number of ethnic groups have experienced in Connecticut history. The introductory page one article in that edition began: "Few human feelings are as positive and praiseworthy as the love of and pride in one's ethnic and racial heritage. Few human feelings are as ugly and destructive as hatred of and prejudice against others because of their ethnic and racial heritage ..." It ended with "the hope that the examples will encourage all of us to rethink our racial, ethnic and religious attitudes and become more conscious of the terrible price we all pay for prejudice and intolerance ..."

The year 2020 has seen the same type of situation, this time with the additional evil of a brutal coronavirus pandemic that has afflicted and killed millions worldwide, and in which certain races and ethnicities suffer more than others. Also in 2020, we are celebrating the 100th anniversary of a constitutional amendment that gave women the right to vote, even as we know that women still suffer numerous sexual assaults and come up short in pay, job opportunities, etc. If all that is not disturbing enough, 2020 in the United States has also seen a spate of killings of Black people by police, violence on city streets and bitter arguments as to who is to blame.

In the midst of these problems, *The Shanachie* is reviving the practice of having in each issue an article about an ethnic group other than the Irish. The story in the columns on the right of this page is about a colored man who played a positive role in the maritime history of New Haven. It is certainly no big step forward in dealing with our nation's problems, but it may help in some little way. And that, after all, was the idea of establishing an Ethnic Heritage Center in the beginning. It was a good idea then, and remains even more so now.

Black man was industrial leader in New Haven

Almost forgotten in the commercial history of New Haven is the contribution in the early 1800s of a colored man named William Lanson, who was born in 1781, and came to New Haven from Derby about 1803. He settled in the New Town-ship area where the Mill River empties into New Haven harbor.

It was about then and there that the first two ethnic neighborhoods in the city of New Haven were founded: New Guinea by African-Americans, Slineyville by Irish immigrants.

Lanson, a leader in the New Guinea neighborhood, had both business and construction skills. He ran a horse and carriage livery on Fleet Street with a stable close to Yale University. He also built a hotel within a half mile of the steamboat landing in New Haven har-

bor. He was active, too, in the religious life of the city as one of the founders of the African United Ecclesiastical Society and a proponent of a school for colored children. His most significant construction project, however, was the completion in the years 1810-1812 of New Haven's Long Wharf.

Therein lies a centuries-long story. The English Puritans, who in 1638 picked the site of their settlement at what is now New Haven, did so because of its huge harbor. They were businessmen and thought the harbor would make the city a booming seaport. From almost the beginning, however, the shallow depth of that harbor hindered vessels from landing there. During the 1600s, several small wharves were built out into the harbor, but failed to attract oceangoing ships. Through the 1700s, numerous attempts were made with only partial success to build one solidly anchored wharf way out in the harbor. By the year 1801, a wharf made of timber and bridges extended 2,000 feet into the har-

bor and a renewed effort was begun "to thoroughly repair and put in first rate condition" what existed and add 1,500 feet. Historian Thomas Trowbridge wrote, "So much money had been already sunk that many owners declined investing more, while those that were not deterred by the

heavy losses already ... were determined to go on with the work."

Thus, on July 28, 1810, a contract was signed to extend the wharf a distance of 1,350 feet and to raise all of it above high tides. The contractor was William Lanson, described by Trowbridge as "a colored man of remarkable powers and who deserves more than passing notice for his enterprise in connection with this contract."

To complete the final section of the

wharf, Lanson and his crew quarried huge stones at East Rock, the mini-mountain overlooking the city. On the Mill River at the foot of East Rock, he loaded the stones on specially built scows that carried them down into the harbor to the wharf. Among those who marveled was the president of Yale, the Rev. Timothy Dwight, who described the work as "honorable proof of the character which they (Lanson and his men) sustain, both for capacity and integrity ..." In 1825, Lanson also built a retaining wall for the harbor basin into which the boats would come down along the Farmington Canal, some of which was dug by Irish immigrants.

Later in his life, Lanson fell upon hard times. He died a pauper in 1851.

Sources: *Papers of the New Haven Colony Historical Society*, "History of Long Wharf in New Haven," Vol 1, 1865, pp. 97-98; Vol. 5, 1894, p. 89. *New Haven Journal and Courier*, Oct. 16, 1890. *Connecticut Herald*, March 8, 1843. Peter P. Hinks. "Successes and Struggles of New Haven Entrepreneur William Lanson," *Connecticut History.org*.



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WILLIAM LANSON.
New-Haven, May 2: 3m62

Connecticut Herald, May 2, 1820

Women's Hall of Fame will honor suffragist Catherine Flanagan

Catherine Flanagan ruffled a lot of feathers when she took a vacation from her job as secretary at the headquarters of the Connecticut Women's Suffrage Association in August 1917.

Flanagan was 28 years old that summer, the second oldest of seven children of Irish immigrants John J. and Bridget E. Flanagan of Hartford. Like all her siblings, she was born in Connecticut. Her father, who was said to have fled to America because of his involvement in the movement for Irish independence, died when Catherine was only 13.

Catherine finished eighth grade and began working odd jobs to help her widowed mother make ends meet. She continued her education in night school taking practical courses such as shorthand, typing, bookkeeping and dress-making. She spent her Sundays doing laundry, sewing and cooking food for her siblings for the week.

Years later, Flanagan said that her first involvement in the suffrage movement was in May 1914 when she volunteered to help in the preparations for the first annual parade of the Hartford suffrage chapter. She may have been among the hundreds who marched and/or one of the 25 young women who spent weeks making dresses and costumes and more than 100 huge golden and silver banners. More than 1,000 turned out for the parade, which included suffrage groups from New Haven and other towns and cities.

That same day — Saturday, May 2 — suffrage advocates turned out in droves throughout the nation with similar parades and rallies. However, not all Americans wanted to allow women to vote. In Hartford there was some grumbling and suggestions in letters to the editor in local papers stating that suffrage was just another word for socialism.

Whatever her role in the parade, the leaders of the suffrage movement apparently were impressed with Flanagan's enthusiasm and skills for shortly after the event she became secretary and manager of a staff of four at the association's Connecticut headquarters in Hartford.

It might seem that an energetic young lady like Flanagan would spend her vacation at the seashore or in the mountains of



Nightstick in hand, a District of Columbia police officer keeps a close eye on Connecticut suffragist Catherine Flanagan of Hartford, one of the women picketing at the White House in 1917 for the cause of the right to vote. On Aug. 18, she and others were arrested, found guilty of unlawful assembly and sentenced to a month in prison.

New England. Instead, she immediately headed for Washington, D.C., to get involved in what has been described as "one of the most dramatic episodes of civil disobedience in American history."

In January that year, two allied groups — the Congressional Union for Women Suffrage and the National Woman's Party — began picketing the White House in a campaign to pressure the government to recognize the right of American women to vote. At first, they were met with polite indifference. President Woodrow Wilson even

tipped his hat to them when he passed through the White House gates. But after the nation declared war on Germany in April, the female picketers were accused of being un-American and aiding the enemy.

When Catherine Flanagan arrived and began taking her turn at the White House gates on Aug. 5, the situation was tense. The pickets were being harassed by bystanders, among them government and Navy personnel, who ripped banners from their hands

On the afternoon of Aug. 18, the government indicated it would no longer tolerate the picketing because of the danger of people being hurt. No effort was made to exercise better control over the bystanders, but the women who had picketed peacefully every day for more than six months were told to disperse. When they refused, Flanagan and three others were arrested. Taken before a city judge, the women were found guilty of unlawful assembly and disrupting traffic. The sentence was a \$10 fine or 30 days behind bars in the District of Columbia workhouse at Occoquan, VA. "Of course, we refused to pay the fine, which would have been an admission of guilt," Flanagan told a reporter.

Controversy over Flanagan's picketing and arrest erupted not only in Washington, but also back in Connecticut. In an editorial, the *Hartford Courant* commented: "The picketing at Washington was inexcusable and no mere men could have 'got away' with it. Why should women, whose ambition is to be treated like men, escape the penalty they have invited? ... Are the agitating women of America for the country or against it?"

Even the suffragists themselves were divided on the issue. The president of the CWSA, Mrs. Thomas Houghton Hepburn, wrote, "I admire Miss Flanagan very much ... If she prefers to spend her vacation working to make our own country safe for democracy ... it behooves those who are less public spirited to try to comprehend her unselfish devotion." However, the vice-president, Grace Gallatin Seton of Greenwich frowned on the picketing: "The organ-

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ization most emphatically does not endorse picketing at the White House at this time."

Mrs. M. Tuscan Bennett, treasurer of the CWSA, said the country was "indeed in a sad state of affairs when the government uses its strong arm to protect disorderly mobs in a cowardly assault upon American women," who for 50 years had sought nothing more than the right to vote.

Another member of the CWSA, Mrs. Annie G. Poritt wrote of Flanagan's value to the cause: "Long association with Miss Flanagan has made me regard her as a driving force in our association, capable not only of making up her own mind ... but also capable of marshaling other people to carry out duties or activities ... One of the hardest workers in Connecticut in the various patriotic activities taken up by Connecticut suffragists."

While it was at first thought that Flanagan might lose her job, just the opposite happened. She, along with Hepburn and several others resigned from the CWSA and became active instead in the National Woman's Party which had been founded in 1916 with the sole purpose of convincing Congress to ratify a 19th amendment of the U.S. Constitution granting women the right to vote.

Hepburn explained, "Today national work is of first importance ... We have gone to war for democracy, and yet millions of women in our own country are denied the right to vote. Simply mentioning this fact in suffrage journals and to suffrage audiences is futile. We must say it in such a way that all of the world will hear, and that is what the pickets ... have done at Washington ... In my opinion it is through such women as these that we shall secure the suffrage in Connecticut by federal amendment ..."

Flanagan was also immediately hired by the National Woman's Party as a traveling lobbyist to help secure ratification of the 19th amendment by the required 36 states. During 1919 and 1920, she crisscrossed the nation with considerable success in states she had visited: Massachusetts became the eighth state to ratify the amendment on June 25, 1919; Montana, the 13th ratifying state on Aug. 2, 1919; New Hampshire, 16th

CONNECTICUT
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OCT. 22, 2020

6:30 P.M.

"CONVERSATIONS & COCKTAILS"
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7 P.M.

INDUCTION CEREMONY
SHARE THE POWERFUL STORIES OF
EIGHT OF CONNECTICUT'S EARLY SUFFRAGISTS AND HEAR CONNECTICUT
WOMEN ON THE POWER AND
IMPORTANCE OF THE VOTE.

INDUCTEES

JOSEPHINE BENNETT
FRANCES ELLEN BURR
CATHERINE FLANAGAN
SARAH LEE BROWN FLEMING
EMILY PIERSON
CLARA, ELSIE & HELENA HILL

(CONTACT: 203-392-9007)

state on Sept. 10, 1919; New Jersey, 29th state, Feb. 9, 1920; Idaho, 30th state, Feb. 11, 1920; and Tennessee, the 36th and final required state, Aug. 18, 1920.

The going was not always smooth. Flanagan and her comrades were up against powerful opponents. In Trenton, N.J., she and others were "ousted from the Hotel Sterling where they had set up their headquarters" by James Nugent, a county Democratic Party leader and bitter enemy of women suffrage. Nugent told the hotel owners to get rid of the suffragists or lose the support of the party. The suffragists were told to pack their suitcases, banners and signs. They lost that battle, but won the war when New Jersey's legislature ratified the suffrage amendment in spite of Nugent.

In Tennessee, which became the over-the-top state, Flanagan told of numerous obstacles: "Thirty miles on a local train, puffing and wheezing its way among Tennessee hills and stopping at every switch; 10 miles in a Ford slipping from one side to the other

of a wet, greasy turnpike; two miles of climbing up a red clay hill in the midst of a downpour of rain; only able to make the slippery ascent by clinging to wild blackberry bushes and climbing over fences to talk to U.S.G. Ellis, an influential state representative."

Flanagan and her sidekick, Anita Pollitzer, scoured Tennessee and would not take "no" for an answer from influential men or not so influential men. When asked if the latter helped the cause, Pollitzer replied, "Indeed they did, some because they were sympathetic to the cause, and others because we made them help."

In her multi-state crusade, Flanagan was not always victorious. In Idaho, she failed in her main goal to get Republican U.S. Sen. William Borah to vote for the 19th Amendment. Borah actually favored women's suffrage, but Idaho had adopted suffrage in 1896, and he believed that it was up to each state to approve or reject women's right to vote. Flanagan wrote: "I campaigned all over the state getting petitions, and telegrams and speaking on street corners and at the state fair, all to get that scoundrel Borah's vote, but we didn't get it."

Even though the issue was settled by Tennessee voters, the Connecticut General Assembly met in a special session on Sept. 15, 1920, and made the Land of Steady Habits the 37th state to ratify the 19th Amendment by votes of 25-0 in the Senate and 194-9 in the House.

Connecticut Secretary of the State Frederick Perry signed a certified copy of the ratification and Flanagan — in recognition of her contribution to the struggle — was chosen to carry the resolution to the nation's capital. Just three years and a month after she was arrested at the White House and jailed — she returned to Washington to deliver the historic document to the U.S. State Department.

As the struggle for women's right to vote neared its victorious climax, Catherine Flanagan became involved in another civil rights crusade — that of Ireland for its independence. In 1919, the War of Independence had begun in Ireland. In the summer of 1920, English soldiers raided the city hall in Cork and arrested Mayor Terence

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Chaplain from Waterbury gave his life to save Navy comrades

Father Thomas Michael Conway, born in Waterbury, CT, on April 8, 1908, the son of Irish-born parents, died halfway around the world on Aug. 3, 1945, in one of the most tragic events in U.S. Navy history.

Father Thomas was the first of three children of Thomas F. and Margaret Meade Conway. Margaret immigrated to the United States in 1889, Thomas F. in 1899. They were married in 1906 and settled into a home on Cooke Street in Waterbury where Thomas F. was a steam fitter for a plumbing company.

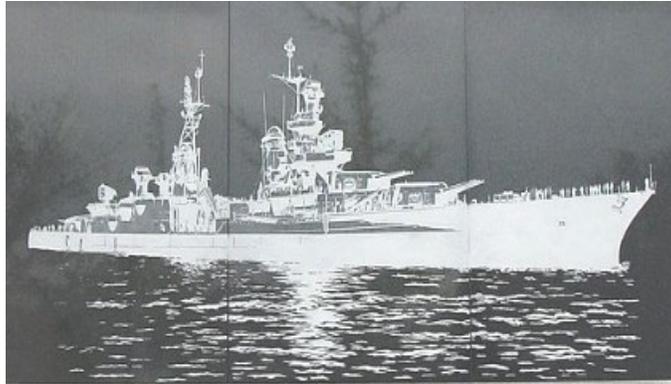
Young Thomas attended primary school in Waterbury and LaSalette Junior Seminary in Hartford. In 1928, he enrolled in Our Lady of Angels Seminary at Niagara University in western New York state. He was ordained a priest in the Buffalo, NY, diocese on May 26, 1934.

One of his first assignments was as a curate at old St. Bridget's Church in Buffalo's First Ward, a waterfront neighborhood filled with Irish immigrants and their descendants, factories, grain silos and maritime history. The First Ward was on the eastern shore of Lake Erie. Beyond were three other Great Lakes — Huron, Michigan and Superior — that spanned the vast midwest of North America. Conway fit right in with that setting for he had a yearning for the sea. He owned a small sailboat and spent his leisure time sailing on Lake Erie. Tied up outside St. Bridget's Church, his little boat became a familiar parish symbol.

Like other young men, priests were required to register for the draft when the United States entered World War II. Conway's card listed him as 32 years old, born in Connecticut and five feet, nine inches tall. In September 1942, the bishop of Buffalo freed Conway from his parish duties to become a Navy chaplain. After serving briefly at naval stations on the east coast, Conway was transferred to California in 1943. He served on the *USS Medusa*, a repair ship, until Aug. 25, 1944, when he became chaplain of the *USS Indianapolis*, a cruiser launched in 1931.

During World War II, the *Indianapolis* became a workhorse of the U.S. campaigns in the Pacific Ocean. The "*Indy*," as it was

known, was the flagship of Admiral Raymond A. Spruance, commander of the 5th Navy Fleet, and was in combat in the Aleutian Islands, Tarawa, the Marshall Islands and Saipan. It participated in a Navy raid on Tokyo in February 1945, the first attack on Japanese soil since the Doolittle air raids in 1942. And it was with the fleet that pounded Iwo Jima and Okinawa for the Marine and Army invasions there that spring.



A memorial to the USS Indianapolis stands on the east bank of the Central Canal in that Indiana city. It was erected and dedicated in 1995 by 316 survivors in memory of their 879 shipmates who perished when the cruiser was sunk by a Japanese submarine just after midnight on July 30, 1945. The base of the monument contains the names of all the crew. Embedded in gray and black granite is this nighttime likeness of the cruiser.

Chaplain Conway was a jack of many trades to the ship's 1,195 sailors. He conducted both Catholic and ecumenical religious services, organized Friday evening talent shows to relieve tensions, prodded young sailors to write letters home, came up with cash to enable the *Indy's* physician, Dr. Drew Haynes, to spend a leave with his wife and children back in Connecticut.

Doug Stanton, author of one of the several books about the *Indy*, wrote, "The boys usually confided in Father Conway ... The kind priest in his early 30s was relentless and fearless in his duty. Once while saying Mass, battle stations had been called suddenly. (Father Conway) shouted out, 'Bless us all, boys, and give them hell.' ... He was a priest with grit."

In late March 1945, the *Indianapolis* was engaged in the shelling of Okinawa prior to the U.S. invasion of that island, which was the final steppingstone on the way to Japan. On March 31, a kamikaze pilot broke through the ship's defenses and just before crashing triggered a bomb that exploded

deep in the belly of the cruiser killing nine crewmen. With major internal damages, the *Indy* limped back across the Pacific to the Mare Island Navy Yard near San Francisco. Repairs required several months during which, it was reported that Father Conway visited the families of the nine sailors killed in the attack.

On July 16, the *Indianapolis* sailed off to war again on a top-secret mission. Even its crew did not know that the ship was carrying the enriched uranium and other components for the world's first atomic bomb. The *Indy* delivered its deadly cargo to the U.S. bomber airfield on Tinian Island on July 26.

The missile was reassembled, and just 11 days later on Aug. 6, was dropped from a B-29 bomber on the Japanese City of Hiroshima. More than 60,000 Japanese were killed. Three days later a second atomic bomb was dropped on Nagasaki and on Aug. 15 Japan surrendered unconditionally.

The *Indianapolis* did not live to share in the victory in which it had contributed in numerous ways. Having delivered its nuclear cargo, the *Indy* stopped to refuel in nearby Guam. On Saturday morning, July 28, it set sail eastward for Leyte in the Philippine Islands, a voyage of about 1,350 miles, four days at a leisurely pace of 15.7 knots. There its crew was to undergo a 10-day training program before rejoining the fleet in Okinawa from which the invasion of Japan was to be launched.

That weekend, a Japanese submarine, the I-58, was prowling westward along that same route known to be the main waterway for U.S. Navy ships to and from the Far East. In the evening on Sunday, July 29, the sky was overcast, the heavy cloud cover opening only occasionally to allow glimpses of a half moon. Shortly after 11 p.m., I-85 Commander Nobuko Hashimoto spotted through binoculars the dim outline of a ship on the horizon. He ordered the I-85 to dive and through the periscope followed the approach of a two-masted U.S. warship. At a range of 1,500 yards Hashimoto fired six torpedoes. At 15 minutes after midnight on Monday, July 30, three of the torpedoes

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exploded on the starboard side of the *USS Indianapolis*, setting off massive geysers of water followed by glowing red flames. In 12 minutes, the cruiser rolled completely over, its stern in the air, and sank carrying with it 300 crewmen. Almost 900 others were left in the ocean. Some were fortunate to find one of the dozen or so lifeboats that had been released. "The rest," wrote one historian of the sinking, "bobbed on the surface, most had lifejackets, but many did not."

As tragic as that was, it was only the first scene in the disaster. Attempts had been made to send an SOS, but with the sinking so rapid it was uncertain the message had reached the airways. In addition, the impending climax of the war had brought so many U.S. Navy ships into the Philippine Sea that it was almost impossible to keep accurate track of their comings and goings. It was not unusual for vessels to be hours early or late. It was the plight of the crew of the *Indianapolis* that their disaster was unknown for four days — from 1:30 a.m. Monday to roughly

"The nights and days in the sea without food or water were horrifying," wrote one historian. "Sharks lurked and took dozens of the men. Sunburn, saltwater and dehydration peeled away the men's skin. Men became delirious, some drank seawater which triggered greater dehydration before they fell into a coma and died. ..."

Father Conway was among the survivors. For three days he was a source of strength, courage and hope just as he had been on the ship. With only a life jacket to buoy him, he made his way among the scattered groups of sailors and marines, offering encouragement for the living, giving last rites to the dying, collecting the dogtags of the dead.

Years later, Frank J. Centazzo, a sailor also from Buffalo, NY, remembered, "I watched Father Conway go from one small group to another getting the shipmates to join in prayer and asking them not to give up hope of being rescued. He kept working until he was exhausted. I remember on the third day late in the afternoon when he approached me and Paul McGuinness. He was thrashing the water and Paul and I held him so he could rest a few hours ... He made us believe that we would be rescued ... He gave us hope and the will to endure ... Later he managed to get away from us and we never saw him again."

In an article in the *Saturday Evening Post*



A park in the old First Ward on the Lake Erie waterfront in south Buffalo, NY, is named in honor of Father Thomas M. Conway, the Waterbury, CT, native who gave his life to save his Navy comrades when their ship, the USS Indianapolis, was torpedoed in August 1945 in the North Philippine Sea. Conway was an assistant pastor at St. Bridget's Church in that ward before he enlisted as a chaplain in the U.S. Navy.

in 1955, Conway's friend, Dr. Haynes, recalled the agony of the *Indianapolis* crew after almost three days awash in the ocean: "All thoughts of rescue are gone, and our twisted reasoning has come to accept this as our life until the end is reached. A life with nothing but the sky, the shimmering horizon and endless wastes of water. Beyond this we dare not imagine ... But we have not lost everything. To the contrary, we have found one comfort — a strong belief to which we cling. God seems very close.

"Much of our feeling is strengthened by the chaplain ... (He) is not a strong man physically, yet his courage and goodness seem to have no limit. I wonder about him, for the night is particularly difficult and most of us suffer from chills, fever and delirium. The moon has been up for some time when I hear a cry for help. It is Mac, the sailor who has given so much to so many. When I swim to him, Mac, is supporting the chaplain, who is delirious. 'Doctor, you'll just have to relieve me for awhile,' Mac gasps. 'I can't hold him any longer.'

"I take the chaplain from him, thrust my arm through the chaplain's life jacket so that I may hold him securely through his wild thrashing ... The chaplain's delirium

mounts ... he cries, a strange gibberish, some of the words are Latin, but in a little while he sinks into a coma. The only sound is the slap of water against us as I wait for the end. When it comes, the moon is high, golden overhead. I say a prayer and let him drift away..."

The next morning, Friday, Aug. 3, a Navy patrol plane flying a routine mission in search of Japanese ships saw in the water below a black streak speckled with projections. When the plane swooped down, the projections turned out to be people all along the length of a huge oil slick. The plane sent an urgent message to headquarters, then made another run and dropped a life raft, life jackets and a keg of water.

In his *Saturday Evening Post* article years later, Dr. Haynes wrote, "And then we heard it ... The roar of a plane. (We) prayed that it was real and not just a last torturous dream. (The plane) came near, passed over us and then grew smaller in the distance."

Shortly, a Navy Catalina pontoon plane landed within the oil slick, took on 56 survivors — some of them even lashed to its wings — and waited for the arrival of the first of six Navy ships that rushed to the scene. By nightfall, they were able to rescue a total of 316 of the approximately 880 sailors set adrift when the *Indy* went down.

In August 2017, after several earlier failed attempts, the wreckage of the *Indianapolis* was discovered. It lies in several locations at a depth of 18,044 feet among the ocean floor mountains of the North Philippine Sea. The remains of the ship are well preserved because of the great depth. The wreckage was revealed to the public on Sept. 13, 2017 in a PBS television program titled "*USS Indianapolis, Live from the Deep*." A second PBS program titled "*USS Indianapolis: The Final Chapter*," was aired on Jan. 8, 2019.

Sources: Dan Kurzman, *Fatal Voyage*, 1990. Wikipedia, "*USS Indianapolis*." Lynn Vincent & Sara Vlado, *Indianapolis: Survivor Accounts from the Worst Sea Disaster in U.S. Naval History*, 2018. Richard A. Hulver & Peter C. Luebke, *A Grave Misfortune: The USS Indianapolis Tragedy*, 2019. Thomas Helm, *Ordeal by Sea: The Tragedy of the USS Indianapolis*, 2014. Lou Michel, *Lives of two Buffalo sailors converge on USS Indianapolis*, 2014. Bill Millhomme, blog. *The Priest Aboard the Doomed USS Indianapolis*, Feb 6, 2009. Ancestry.com, census returns of family of Thomas F. and Margaret Meade Conway, Waterbury, CT.

U.S. sailors among first victims of 1918 pandemic in Ireland

Given the close ties between Ireland and its diaspora over the centuries, it is no surprise that the United States was involved in Ireland's first contact with the Spanish flu in 1918.

The first outbreak of flu cases reported in Ireland was aboard the United States Navy ship *Dixie*. A destroyer tender, the *Dixie* had arrived at Queenstown in County Cork on June 12, 1917, just two months after the United States went to war. It was part of the fleet of American ships sent to protect the coast of the British Isles. In May 1918, the flu flared up on the *Dixie* afflicting 77 sailors, 11 percent of the entire crew.

The outbreak apparently was contained on the ship, but the disease remained in that region of Cork because during June and July, 87 soldiers with influenza were admitted to the Queenstown military hospital and another 119 to the military hospital in Cork city.

At Berehaven in Bantry Bay along the coastline west of Queenstown, there was another U.S. Navy base. The flu struck there in October 1918 among the crews of American submarines and battleships. From a third to a half of the submarine crews were afflicted and on three battleships — the *Utah*, *Oklahoma* and *Nevada* — there were numerous cases with 11 deaths on the *Nevada*. The lines of sailors waiting at sickbay were said to be between 50 and 60 feet long. "One can tell by the expression on each face," reported one officer, "that they are battling to their utmost to stave off the disease."

In early summer, Belfast at the far northern tip of Ireland was besieged. Newspapers in that city reported on June 11, 1918, that schools and businesses in that area were closing due to the flu. The papers soft-pedaled the topic. "There is no reason for the general public to become unduly alarmed," commented the *Belfast Evening Telegraph*, adding that medical professionals doubted the outbreak was of "any serious disease."

Before the end of the month, however, thousands of workers in the city's shipyards and on its trams were stricken by the flu. Another Ulster seaport, Londonderry, was at the same time having the highest mortality in Northern Ireland from pneumonia which often followed the flu.

In Ireland as elsewhere, the first wave of the pandemic faded in early summer but returned with a more virulent wave in autumn 1918. Leinster and again Ulster were most affected. A third wave, almost as strong as the second, lasted from mid-February to mid-April 1919.

World War I and the flu pandemic occurred at a critical moment in Irish history. Having been governed for centuries as a colony to be exploited rather than a neighbor to be cherished, Ireland was in the midst of a political revival when the war began.

The revival was born in the mid-19th century with a fantasy that England out of the goodness of its heart would agree to home rule. The fantasy went up in the smoke it was made of when in 1914 England begged Ireland to join its war and forget freedom until later. Many Irish trusted England one more time; many went ahead with their plan for independence. It is tough to win a war, much tougher to win a war within a war. Many Irish lost their lives in each of those wars.

The World War and the pandemic were always linked. The largest number of Irish flu cases were in seaports like Cork, Dublin and Belfast where Irish volunteers were garrisoned to leave for the war and were returned by ship or train dead, wounded or alive from the battlefield.

A particularly heart-rending case of Irish courage and patriotism is that of Charles Heatley and Catherine Moran who were married in 1910 in Dublin. Charles went off to war in 1914, survived battles, came home on leave, went back to war. In late summer 1916, Catherine learned Charles was missing in action. Sometime in 1917, she received a telegram saying he was believed dead. In late October 1918, Catherine came down with influenza, struggled for a month and died Nov. 4, 1918, with her three young sons at her bedside.

All told, it is estimated the pandemic afflicted 800,000 Irish people, about 23,000 died. About 200,000 Irish fought for England in World War I, 49,000 died.

Source: www.ouririshheritage.org, National Museum of Ireland, *The Enemy within: The Spanish Flu*. Eimear Flanagan, "Spanish Flu: Belfast newspapers." David Durnin & Ian Miller, "Medicine, Health and Irish Experiences of Conflict, 1914-1945." *History Ireland*, "Greatest Killer of the 20th Century: The Great Flu of 1918-19." March-April 2009.

Rebel & physician

Among the Irish medical professionals who put themselves at risk for the good of their nation during the 1918 flu pandemic was one of the most militant rebels of the Easter Rising in Dublin on Easter Monday 1916

Born in Killala, Co. Mayo in 1874, Kathleen Lynn was the daughter of a Church of Ireland priest, Rev. Robert Lynn, and his wife Catherine. A graduate of the Catholic University Medical School in Dublin, Lynn was denied a position in the Adelaide Hospital because of her gender, but became a visiting doctor in several Dublin hospitals.

Politically a nationalist, suffragist and supporter of organized labor, Lynn in 1916 joined the Irish Citizens Army at the request of her friend, James Connolly, the commander of that military group. Connolly was among those the English executed after the Easter Rebellion.

Lynn taught members first-aid and used her car to run guns into Dublin. During the Easter Rising, she was chief medical officer for the rebels in Dublin City Hall. After English troops recaptured the position, she was arrested and imprisoned at Kilmainham and Mountjoy Gaol.

When World War I began in 1914, England used wartime strictures to imprison Irish nationalists whether they committed crimes or not.

Among them in October 1918 was Dr. Lynn. With the increasing ills and deaths from the flu, Lynn was released on the condition that she work among the victims. It was work she had been doing all along focusing especially on Dublin's children. She set up a vaccination center on Charlemont Street and in 1919 established Saint Ultan's Children's Hospital.

Source: "Kathleen Lynn," *Wikipedia*.



Kathleen Lynn

Catherine Flanagan honored

(Continued from page 4)

MacSwiney. In Brixton Prison, MacSwiney began a hunger strike that ended with his death on Oct. 24. Shortly after, his sister, Mary MacSwiney, came to the United States as an envoy of the Irish Republic. Flanagan was in Washington at that time and was asked by the American Association for the Recognition of the Irish Republic to serve as secretary/traveling companion for MacSwiney in a speaking tour across America. MacSwiney spoke in cities from the east to west coasts and at the first American convention of the AARIR in Chicago.

When the two returned to Washington, the AARIR hired Flanagan as secretary of its Legislative Committee which hoped to

convince the U.S. Congress to recognize the Irish Republic. Her work was once again lobbying politicians for a worthy cause.

This time the opposition was the English embassy which used all its influence to prevent recognition of Irish independence. In June 1921, Flanagan wrote, "The two resolutions which so vitally affect the Irish Republic are tied up in the Foreign Relations Committee. We have as yet ... been unable to arrange public hearings on the Irish question." A month later, the issue was resolved when a truce was reached between the Irish Republic and the English government. On Dec. 6, 1921, the Anglo-Irish Treaty was signed leading eventually to independence for Ireland.

A nice footnote: At a rally in Salt Lake City

on behalf of Irish independence, Flanagan met William Leary, a Connecticut-born law professor at the University of Utah. They struck up a correspondence friendship and were married in December 1921.

Sources: The Shanachie, Nr. 1, 2006, Nr. 1, 2007; Bridgeport Weekly Herald, Sept. 23, 1917; Hartford Courant, Aug. 18-25, Sept. 13-16, 1917. New Britain Herald, Feb. 19, 1919. Washington, D.C., Herald, Aug. 29, 1920. Library of Congress, Records of the National Woman's Party, American Memory Project. Linda J. Lumsden, Rampant Women, Suffragists and the Right of Assembly. Catherine Flanagan, "Demonstrations and Their Use," in The Suffragist, Aug. 10, 1918.

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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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