



## Irish groups to commemorate 125th anniversary of monument

*On Sunday, June 17, the Connecticut Irish-American Historical Society, Irish History Round Table and Ninth Regiment Connecticut Volunteers will mark the 125th anniversary of the dedication of New Haven's Soldiers and Sailors Monument with a program at the summit of East Rock Park. See page 2 for details of the events.*

On Friday, June 17, 1887, New Haveners were awakened by the roar of cannons fired from three warships in their harbor. There had been nothing like it since the Revolutionary War when the British invaded the city in July 1779. This time, however, it was friendly fire. The guns of the U.S. Navy's ships Yantic, Galena and Richmond were firing blanks. The warships had been detached from the Navy's North Atlantic Squadron and sent to New Haven on a peaceful and joyful mission to participate in the dedication of the city's Soldiers and Sailors Monument.

The monument, built after years of debate and negotiation and even a lawsuit, stood on the summit of East Rock, 400 feet above downtown New Haven and visible for miles



around and far out into Long Island Sound.

The primary contractors, John Moffit and Alexander Doyle of New York City, had designed a 110-foot-tall pillar carved out of granite from the famous Hallowell, Maine,

quarries. Atop the pillar stood a bronze statue of an angel of peace.

The four sides of the square granite base of the monument were designed to represent the major wars of the United States up to that time: the Revolutionary War, War of 1812, Mexican War and Civil War.

The four sides also were adorned by fe-

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## Civil War hero led campaign for memorial

Almost a quarter of a century after he was a hero at Chancellorsville in 1863, John McCarthy became a hero to New Haven's veterans when he led the campaign to construct a veterans' memorial monument in the city.

At the battle of Chancellorsville, McCarthy, who was bandmaster of the 14th Connecticut Regiment, marched his trombonists and drummers into no-man's land and struck up the music in a successful attempt to slow the advance of Stonewall Jackson's brigade. Jackson had turned the Union flank and was threatening to

route the federal army. For 20 minutes, McCarthy's bandsmen stood their ground playing medley after medley of patriotic songs.

The colonel of a Pennsylvania regiment witnessed the impromptu concert. "One of the most heroic deeds I saw done to help stem the fleeing tide of men and restore courage," he later wrote, "was not the work of a battery nor charge of cavalry, but the charge of a band of music. The Band of the 14th Connecticut went right

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# Thousands gathered to dedicate war memorial

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male statues representing Patriotism, History, Victory and Prosperity.

The celebration of the completion of the monument actually started on the evening of June 16 with a spectacular display of fireworks and illumination. "The display began at 8:30," reported the Journal Courier, "when an immense bomb was exploded sending a ball of fire soaring into the darkness which concluded its career by bursting into a thousand scintillating sparks of dazzling brilliancy." The display continued at intervals for two hours.

## **Galaxy of generals**

That same evening, the grand spectacle around the new monument was mirrored at New Haven's Union Armory where an estimated 4,000 gathered to welcome to their city what was described as a "galaxy of generals." The brightest stars in the galaxy were Gen. William Tecumseh Sherman and Gen. Phil Sheridan. Many who attended the reception were themselves veterans, readily identifiable because they "wore the badge of a soldier of the republic on the left breast."

In the morning, the city's population grew by as many as 100,000 more visitors who came by everything from trains to hay wagons. By 9 a.m., thousands of people were milling about downtown admiring the decorations at every storefront and intersection.

The parade they came to watch was massive: seven marching divisions featuring four regiments of the National Guard and the Colored Battalion; 500 sailors and marines, along with their mascot goat, from the Navy ships in the

## **June 17, 2012, East Rock**

*The tentative schedule for the commemoration of the 125th anniversary of the Soldiers and Sailors Monument at East Rock Park in New Haven follows. On Sunday, June 17, the actual times may not coincide exactly with the listings. But, then, this is an Irish-sponsored event and "being on Irish time" means "perhaps a little later than scheduled." So please bear with us, and enjoy the beauty of East Rock and the recollections of the sacrifices of our citizen soldiers.*

- ◆ *About Noon — "Coffee and" at the small pavilion near the monument, for sponsoring groups: Irish History Round Table, Connecticut Irish Historical Society, Ninth Connecticut Regiment descendants, Ancient Order of Hibernians.*
- ◆ *About 1 p.m. — Civil War melodies by folklore singer and guitarist Tom Callinan.*
- ◆ *About 1:45 p.m. — Brief talks about the history of the monument, the details of its design and its dedication on June 17, 1887.*
- ◆ *About 2:30 p.m.— Laying of wreath ceremony at the base of the monument.*

harbor; 27 delegations of Grand Army of the Republic posts from throughout the state, and a Civil War veteran riding a horse that was said to have been in 17 engagements with the Army of the Potomac and still carried three rebel bullets.

The parade included more than 20 bands, 48 carriages of dignitaries and 38 "barges" or floats representing every state in the Union. The barges were a project of Sunday and parochial schools with each one featuring historical scenes from a different state, north and south alike.

Ethnic groups were well represented by the Viking Swiss Society, the Garibaldi Society and Fratellanza Italiana society, the brass band of the Italian societies, the

Sarsfield Zouaves and Emerald Guard and half a dozen German singing societies and clubs.

The Journal Courier described the scene: "The river of moving blue coats, brass buttons and the various uniforms of the civic societies presented a magnificent appearance as they moved out of the north gate of the Green and up Elm Street ... to Howe, to Chapel, to Orange, to Farnham Drive to the monument."

## **Ascent to the peak**

Up Farnham Drive to the summit was a tough three-quarters of a mile ascent and it was mid-afternoon when the actual unveiling and dedication began with the singing of the National Anthem by the grand chorus of the Memorial Guard.

The ceremony at the summit

gave more evidence of the growing diversity of New Haven's population. The chorus of the German societies sang "This is the Day of the Lord." Jewish Selectman Louis Feldman accepted the monument from Gen. Samuel Merwin of the Monument Committee, a descendant of some of the earliest English settlers of Connecticut. Feldman, in turn, presented the monument to James Reynolds, the Irish-born town agent.

## **Oration of the day**

In the oration that he delivered after the unveiling, the Rev. Newman Smyth, pastor of Center Church on the Green, emphasized the wartime contributions of all of New Haven's peoples.

He spoke of the sacrifices of descendants of the earliest settlers and, added, "Upon that ever growing list of the lost in battle with names of our native born, appeared in one and the same glory of obedience unto death names of men who had made our country their country and our people their people: Germans like Capt. Sweitzer who fell at Fredericksburg, and many a son of Ireland, cheerful in camp, enduring on the march and left dead on the battlefield with musket grasped, bayonet fixed and face toward the foe ..."

Smyth also spoke of sacrifices made by the women of New Haven who "worked for the relief of soldiers at the front, and hospitals where her loyal women, rich and poor, in one common ministry, cared with loving hands for the wounded and watched with tears and prayers at the cots of the dying ..."

The contemporary newspaper accounts of the oration contain no reference to soldiers

of two Connecticut regiments. These were the 29th and 30th Volunteers, regiments comprised mostly of African-Americans.

### Black heroes

The 29th and 30th were raised in 1864. Only four companies of the 30th were filled, and those companies subsequently merged with other black outfits to form the 31st United States Colored Infantry. The soldiers of both the black regiments served with as much bravery and distinction, and suffered as many casualties, as any other Connecticut regiments in the war.

Listed on the bronze tablets on the Soldiers and Sailors Monument are the names of men from these two regiments who died in the war. Typical among them was Tilghman S. Wood.

Of Wood, one Civil War historian wrote: "Among the colored martyrs who sealed their devotion with their blood was Orderly-Sergeant Tilghman S. Wood of Capt. Woodruff's company — a quiet, faithful and fearless man ..."

Wood was killed on July 30, 1864, at the battle of the Crater at Petersburg, Va. On that day, the 31st Colored Infantry suffered 82 casualties — 17 killed, 44 wounded and 14 missing.

Later, Companies C and G of the 29th Connecticut had the distinction of being the first infantrymen to enter Richmond when the Confederate capital finally fell on April 3, 1865.

*Sources: New Haven Journal Courier, June 17-18, 1887; New Haven Register, June 17, 1887; New York Times, June 18 1887; William A. Croffut and John M. Morris, The Military and Civil History of Connecticut During the War of 1861-65; David F. Ransom, "The East Rock Soldiers and Sailors Monument," Connecticut Historical Society Bulletin, Number 46, April 1981.*

## Armless veteran given the honors

What perhaps were the most dramatic and meaningful moments of the entire celebration received little attention in the contemporary accounts.

When the marchers reached the summit of East Rock, four Civil War veterans stepped forward to unveil the four statues on the base of the monument.

The veterans were George W. Warner, a private in Co. B, 20th Connecticut; Almarine Hayward, a sergeant in Co. E, 27th Connecticut; Wiegand Schlein, a native of Hesse in Germany who fought at Bull Run in 1861 as a private in Co. H, Third Connecticut; and H.P. Crafts a veteran of service in the Navy.

Warner's story is one both of the terrible brutality of war and of the bravery and suffering of the rank and file of those who bear the burden of the fighting.

In 1860, Warner was a 28-year-old millworker living in Oxford. He had married an Irish girl, Catherine Doherty, 25, and they were the parents of four young children: Alice, 5, Charles, 4, George, 2, and Margretta, just nine months old when the census was taken that year.

On Sept. 8, 1862, Warner enlisted in Co. B of the 20th Connecticut, a regiment raised mostly in New Haven and Hartford counties. Nearly 300 men from Naugatuck Valley towns enlisted in the new unit.

At Gettysburg, on July 3, 1863, the final day of that decisive battle, the 20th suffered 28 casualties. A correspondent of the Derby Transcript who was with the regiment wired home a dispatch that said, in part, "On the 2nd of July, while the Union forces in front of Little Round Top were hard pressed ... a portion of the line holding Culp's Hill, including the 20th, was ordered across to reinforce Little Round Top and the wheat field nearby, leaving the eastern part of the Culp's Hill line

unprotected ... By the morning of the 3rd, the troops ordered away on the preceding day had returned to find their old line and the woods occupied by the Rebels ...

"At daybreak of the 3rd, the 20th was ordered to drive the Rebels back and occupy their old position ... Aided by a battery, placed on a hill in the rear, they accomplished this after five hours of severe fighting among

the trees and rocks, up a gentle slope, ending by a furious charge which drove the Rebels over the entrenchments and down the hill."

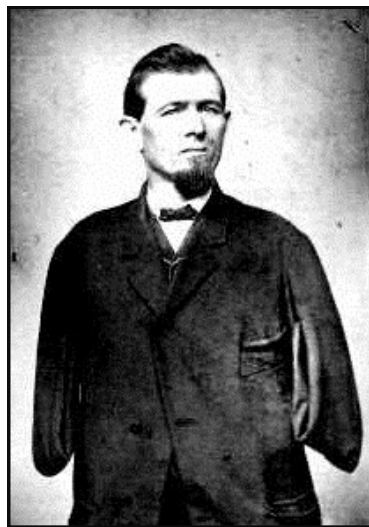
The regimental history describes the scene: "... as the first faint streaks of light became visible in the eastern horizon, the men in the Union ranks were roused and ordered to stand to their arms; and the artillery ... began its thunders, sending solid shot, shell and canister over the heads of the men in our infantry line into the woods among the rebel masses ...

"Then began a contest as fierce and bloody as any that occurred during

the three days of battle ... as the rebels fell back, pressed hotly by our infantry, our artillery would cease firing, and then again as our line was forced back the artillery opened, the shells passing just over the heads of our men and exploding in the rebel ranks."

The regimental history also recalls the sounds and sights of the engagement: "The sharp and almost continuous reports of the 12-pounders, the screaming, shrieking shell that went crashing through the tree tops, the deadened thud of the exploding shell, the whizzing sound of the pieces as they flew in different directions, the yells of the rebels when they gained momentary advantage, the cheers of our men when the surging tide of battle turned in our favor, the groans of the wounded and

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*George W. Warner, who lost both arms at Gettysburg, was one of four Civil War veterans who unveiled the statues on the pedestal of the East Rock soldiers monument on June 17, 1887.*

# Regimental bandmaster beat the drums for vets

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out into that open space between our new line and the rebels with shot and shell crashing all about them ... they never played better ... Imagine the strains of our grand national anthem, 'The Star Spangled Banner,' suddenly bursting upon your ears out of that horrible pandemonium of panic-born yells, mingled with the roaring of musketry and the crashing of artillery ..."

When he came home from the war, McCarthy mingled civic, musical, religious and political interests. He was organist at the Church of the Messiah. The members of the church were so appreciative of his work that they presented him an elegant hunting-case Waltham watch in 1878. He also won appointments as superintendent of the census for New Haven and inspector of customs for the port of New Haven.

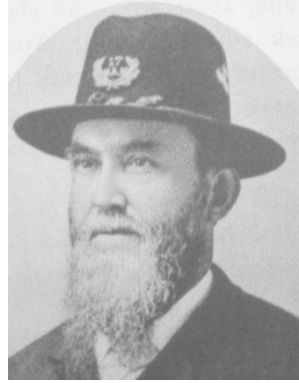
## Active in Masons, GAR

He was active in the Masons, was immensely proud of his 50-plus years in the temperance movement and was a state and local officer in the Grand Army of the Republic, the veterans organization of that era.

In 1881, he spoke eloquently at a public dinner of the two great divisions of the Grand Army, the living and the dead of the war, and then mentioned a third division composed of the wives, mothers and sisters of the soldiers. "To that third division," he said, "we look with hope for the future of the republic – the mothers who shall guide and bless the Lincolns and Garfields, the Grants and the Sheridans to be born."

In the late 1870s and early

*During the Civil War, John McCarthy was the bandmaster of the 14th Connecticut Infantry Regiment. After the war, he became an advocate for a veterans' memorial in the city of New Haven.*



1880s, McCarthy marched at the head of the column calling for a veterans memorial in New Haven. He was as determined and persevering as he was at Chancellorsville in his efforts to win approval, raise funds and oversee the building of what today is one of the most cherished monuments in New Haven.

## Memorial proposed

The proposal to construct a municipal monument to veterans came from McCarthy's outfit, Admiral Foote Post, Grand Army of the Republic. On April 5, 1879, at a largely attended meeting, the post adopted a lengthy resolution calling for construction of a public memorial in honor of city residents who had served in the nation's wars.

The resolution requested the city's Common Council "to set apart and dedicate the five-sided lot of ground just south of the liberty pole on the old green on the site for a monument fountain or monument" to those who served in the Revolution, War of 1812, Mexican War and Civil War.

The GAR committee to promote the monument included several Irishmen: McCarthy, Col. John G. Healy, Town Agent James Reynolds and former state Sen. J.D. Plunkett.

"This committee had before it a hard task," commented the New Haven Register. "There were several schemes and the parties interested in them were before the committee often and with long and earnest pleas. There were a great many who favored a memorial hall ... others wanted a public library attachment. Some wanted a monument and others opposed it as a sheer waste of money."

Still the project moved ahead. McCarthy was named chairman of a five-member committee to sell the idea to the Common Council. At a hearing in mid-April, McCarthy "made a telling speech in its favor."

The Common Council voted to give the GAR post the plot on the Green. On Memorial Day 1879 a grand celebration was held on that site. Mayor H.B. Bigelow presided and dedicated the five-sided plot to Admiral Foote Post for its memorial fountain.

After the echoes of the patriotic speeches and stirring songs died away, however, the project lost momentum and eventually the idea of a fountain on the green passed forever.

Then at a town meeting in December 1882, the monument issue was raised once

more. Veterans presented a petition and asked for an appropriation of \$50,000 for a war memorial. Opponents quickly called for a motion to table, but their opposition ran into a solid wall of support from veteran activists. One veteran said he "had seen the sufferings of the wounded soldiers in the hospital and the dead piled in trenches." and asked, "Did not New Haven owe something to the memory of these men?"

## Intense debate

The debate was intense, but the motion was approved. The project was entrusted to another committee that included John McCarthy. The committee was given "power to procure designs and erect the monument."

At that point, there still was no consensus on the location or even the form the monument should take. The Green was no longer an option. However, the city's public library was in need of expansion and many, including McCarthy himself, favored the veterans memorial to be a new wing on the library. The other option was for the memorial to be a statue atop New Haven's newest park on East Rock. The park was proving to be extremely popular. Several thousand city dwellers were visiting it on summer weekends.

The climax of the agitation for a memorial came in the spring of 1884. On April 30, the monument committee went up to East Rock to see for themselves. They "were much pleased with the grand and picturesque view obtained from the top of the rock." Well might they be impressed. The view of city and sound is breathtaking.

Gen. S.E. Merwin Jr. chairman, informed members that a committee of the free public library wished to meet with the monument committee to discuss use of the \$50,000 memorial appropriation for a library expansion. McCarthy voiced support for that. A vote was taken and the majority favored a monument on East Rock, but agreed to meet with the library committee anyway.

#### Library or monument

The joint meeting took place on May 2 and both sides of the issue were given opportunity to make their case. After the joint meeting, the veterans committee went into closed session and voted 6-2 in favor of a monument at East Rock Park. At long last, the path was open for the cherished goal of a veterans memorial for the city.

The New Haven Register breathed a sigh of relief. "It has been definitely decided to erect the proposed soldiers monument and entirely divorce it from the public library question. While this is to be regretted, there is a measure of relief in the final disposition of the matter. Inasmuch as we are to have the monument, the committee have decided wisely in selecting the summit of East Rock as the site. Now let the work go bravely on!"

Even though an advocate of the library proposal, McCarthy devoted himself fully to the East Rock project. He drew up an elaborate scheme for grading and terracing the site and surrounding the monument with walkways. And he called for a public subscription to pay the cost of the landscaping.

The monument committee put the project out to bid and received 50 design proposals. It selected the proposal of the New York firm of Moffitt &

Doyle. A construction contract was signed in mid-April 1885. The contract called for a granite pillar topped by a bronze statue of an angel of peace.

The four sides of the monument were to be dedicated to New Haveners who served in the Revolutionary War, War of 1812, Mexican War and Civil War.

The laying of the cornerstone took place on June 17, 1886, exactly one year before the dedication of the completed monument.

At the time of construction, it was hoped that bronze tablets listing the names of soldiers who died in service in the Civil War would be affixed to the base. That addition to the monument was postponed. But after the monument was completed, McCarthy again took up the cause of the tablets. In 1894, two tablets with the names of 522 Civil War servicemen were attached to the northwest and southeast sides of the pedestal.

McCarthy's final campaign had ended successfully.

#### McCarthy's death

John McCarthy died on Nov. 24, 1910, at the Masonic Home in Wallingford. He was buried in Evergreen Cemetery in New Haven. His obituary said he was one of the oldest and best known Masons in the state, and added, "He was a veteran of the Civil War, and he started the movement which resulted in the placing of the soldiers monument on East Rock."

*Sources: Stephen W. Sears, Chancellorsville, New York, 1996, p. 284ff; New Haven Register, April 6, 1879, April 12, 1881, Dec. 7, 1882, May 2, 5, 1884, March 27, April 15, 1885, June 18, 1887; Hartford Courant, Nov. 25, 1910.*

## Some Irishmen felt left out

A number of Irish New Haveners were involved in the Soldiers and Sailors Monument project. In addition to John McCarthy, Col. John G. Healy, commander of the Ninth Connecticut in the Civil War, Town Agent James Reynolds, a Fenian leader, and former state Sen. J.D. Plunkett were all active in the cause from the first time it was brought up until it became a reality.

As the time approached for dedication of the memorial, however, there were rumblings that the city's Irish were being shortchanged. The dissatisfaction broke out at a meeting of San Salvador Council, Knights of Columbus, in late May when David O'Donnell balked at a motion that the council should march in the parade on June 17.

O'Donnell said "the gentlemen on that committee who have the power of appointing the various subcommittees have ignored the Irishmen of New Haven in the matter of appointing aides to the chief marshal. They have appointed ... only one man of our nationality as aide to the chief marshal. I believe that in a community where there are 20,000 or thereabouts of the population who are of the Irish race that they are entitled to more representation than a solitary one in the list of marshal's aides."

O'Donnell's fellow knights agreed with him and voted not to march.

Apparently, the first list of aides to be announced had included, not just one, but three, Irishmen: Maj. J.H. Keefe, Capt. Lawrence O'Brien, both formerly in the Ninth Connecticut, and Lt. James T. Mullen, one of the founders of the Knights of Columbus. All were veterans.

One observer described the situation as "this evident brushing aside of the Irish." And, he asked, "Was it because the Irishmen of New Haven cannot sit gracefully on the back of a prancing steed that there were so few of them in the first batch of appointments ...? Or was it the opinion of the appointing powers that an Irishman looks better in the ranks as a private?"

Those in charge of arrangements vigorously denied any bias against the city's Irish. However, almost immediately, a number of names were added to the listing of aides: Maj. Patrick Maher, Capt. Samuel Bolton, Lt. John J. Brennan, William M. Geary, John T. Doyle, Thomas K. Dunn, John Clancy, James I. Hayes, Michael Dillon, James P. Landers, Bernard J. Shanley, James J. Kennedy, William Gleason, Frank E. Craig, James P. Bree and Dr. M.C. Cremin. "Today, when it became generally known that a dozen or 15 names of leading representatives of the Irish race had been added to the list," reported the Register, "the increasing number of Mr. O'Donnell's admirers laughed and concluded that their leader had already won."

In any event, most Irish groups agreed to march on June 17, and the parade included a large number of them.

*Source: New Haven Register, May 20-21, 1887.*



## Sheridan and one of his boys shared a memory

For two old veterans, the dedication of the monument on East Rock in June 1887 brought with it a poignant personal memory and a tender moment of fellowship.

One veteran was an unidentified rank and file soldier; the other was the famous cavalry leader, Gen. Phil Sheridan, the son of John and Mary Meenagh Sheridan from County Cavan, Ireland. Sheridan had fought on the western front under Gen. Ulysses Grant.

He came east with Grant in 1864 and was ordered by Grant to once and for all destroy Confederate forces that had menaced federal armies since 1861 from the safety of the Shenandoah Valley tucked behind Virginia's Blue Ridge Mountains. Sheridan's forces included six Connecticut units: the First Artillery, Second Heavy Artillery, Ninth, Twelfth and Thirteenth Infantry.

After defeating Gen. Jubal Early's Confederates at Winchester on Sept. 19, and at Fisher's Hill on Sept. 22, Sheridan's army was encamped at Cedar Creek while the general went off to Washington for a conference on strategy at the War Department.

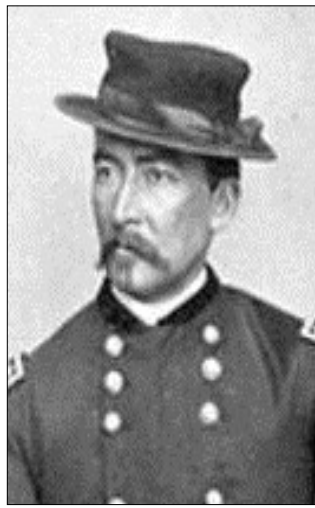
Not expecting any rebel activity, the troops were enjoying a respite. The battlefront was so quiet that on Oct. 18, the gunners of the Second Heavy Artillery had time to cast their votes for president. The votes were sealed in envelopes and turned over to commissioners who had come down from Connecticut especially for that purpose and who were to carry the envelopes back to the hometowns of the soldiers.

Little did the Union troops realize that even as they were voting, Early's 20,000 Confederates were preparing for a night march that would bring them into position for a surprise attack at dawn the next day. So furious was their assault that in 15 minutes an

With a wave of his hat, Sheridan yelled to them, "Face the other way, boys, face the other way! We are going back to our camp. We are going to lick them out of their boots."

Encouraged by their general's confidence, the troops began to regroup and by mid-

*At the monument dedication in New Haven, Gen. Phil Sheridan shared an emotional reunion with one Connecticut veteran who had served under him in the 1864 Shenandoah Valley campaign.*



entire federal corps was shattered and thrown back upon the other two corps in Sheridan's army.

The Twelfth Connecticut was one of the units caught in the assault and, according to its historian, "the far superior weight of the enemy crushed them as an elephant would trample down a bulldog."

The Union troops fled headlong toward Middletown, five miles to the rear where it was hoped a new defensive line could be formed.

Meanwhile, Sheridan on his return from Washington had spent the night in Winchester. In the morning, he heard the sounds of the distant battle and galloped toward Cedar Creek.

Along the way, he encountered at first small groups and then entire regiments of Union soldiers in full retreat.

afternoon they mounted a counterattack that drove the Confederates all the way back to Cedar Creek and so devastated Early's army that it could no longer offer any resistance to Union movements in the valley.

Connecticut's Irish battalion, the Ninth, did itself proud in the counterattack. Lt. Col. Healy, commanding the Ninth, wrote in his report, "We now received the orders to charge. My men went at it with a will, the colors of my battalion being always in the advance ... The chase was kept up until dark. The enemy being driven from the field, we were now ordered to occupy our old camp."

When he came to New Haven 23 years later, Sheridan was a sick old man within a year of his death. For him the monument dedication was a

tiresome chore. There was a welcome-to-the-city reception, meetings with local and state officials and, finally, the night before the dedication a banquet at Union Armory.

After sitting through toasts and speeches, weary Sheridan at length edged away from the head table and tried to make his way out of the armory, only to find his ways blocked by well wishers who wanted to get a glimpse of him.

Sheridan, said one journalist, wore a tired expression and stood patiently "as a matter of duty shaking hands perfunctorily. Then, suddenly, there broke through the crowd a tall old veteran who reached down and grasped Sheridan's hand and exclaimed, "Hullo, old Cedar Creek. I was there with you."

"Sheridan was electrified," wrote the reporter, "by the informal reference to this battle and his old soldier's air.

"A peculiar smile lighted his face, his eyes flashed much as they did when he rode into his flying routed army at Winchester ... and he shook the ungainly fellow's hand like a pump handle with a clasp and cordiality that had been denied aldermen and the wealthy on the platform and ... from that minute he seemed to be happy all over and with both hands right and left shaking for 15 minutes until pulled away by the committee."

*Sources: New Haven Register, June 17, 1887; Blaikie Hines, Civil War Volunteer Sons of Connecticut, Thomaston, Maine, 2002. Thomas Hamilton Murray, History of the Ninth Regiment, Connecticut Volunteer Infantry, New Haven, 1903.*

## Another monumental achievement for Little Phil

A chance meeting with Gen. Phil Sheridan after the Civil War changed the life of a “barefooted shanty-Irish kid,” from East Windsor’s Warehouse Point neighborhood.

Half a century later, that same kid was the driving force behind construction of a grand monument to the general in Chicago.

The Irish boy was Michael J. Faherty, the first child of Galway native Patrick Faherty and his Irish-born wife, Bridget.

Michael was born in 1859 in Ireland as were his siblings, John and Timothy. His sisters Mary and Margaret and their youngest brother Patrick were born in Connecticut. Their ages and birthplaces reveal that the family emigrated between 1863-1869. Patrick, the father, worked as a farm laborer in Warehouse Point.

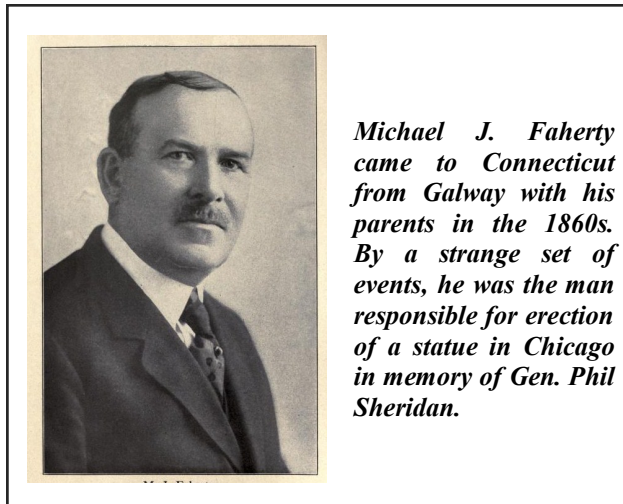
Several years after the Civil War, when Michael was about eight, Sheridan, known as Little Phil for his diminutive stature, paid a brief visit to Warehouse Point.

“Young Mike,” a newspaperman wrote later, “early had the idea that, perhaps, after all, he and his kind didn’t count for much. Then one day, the whole Point went up to the little depot to welcome Gen. Phil Sheridan.”

Michael went with his friend Paddy Sweeney, “to see what a famous Irishman looked like,” he would say in later life. “There was such a big crowd that we had to climb up a tree to get a sight of him. And when that train

came in, there was Gen. Sheridan, an Irishman, and all the men cheering him and trying to shake his hand, and all the women running up with their babies for him to kiss.”

The village folks showered



*Michael J. Faherty came to Connecticut from Galway with his parents in the 1860s. By a strange set of events, he was the man responsible for erection of a statue in Chicago in memory of Gen. Phil Sheridan.*

him with genuine adulation. They tried to touch his raiment and some tried to implant a kiss on his Irish face. “I went back to the shanty,” recalled Michael, “and I began to think that this Sheridan was an Irishman. And I began to think to myself, maybe we ain’t such a bad lot.”

Michael worked in the textile mills of East Windsor where he learned a valuable trade “from an old north of Ireland machinist.”

In 1880, he went West to Chicago. A venture in manufacturing machines to make barbed wire failed, and for a time young Faherty roamed around the West from California to Oregon and Washington and then to Mexico.

Returning to Chicago and the machinist’s trade in 1883, he was able to save enough

money to invest in real estate, acquiring lots in Lakeview, just north of Chicago on Lake Michigan. He also became involved in politics and led a successful campaign for the annexation of Lakeview by the

was \$500,000,000.

A project close to Faherty’s heart was the construction of a bronze statue of Gen. Sheridan on his horse during the Battle of Cedar Creek. The project was a personal tribute from Faherty in gratitude for the inspiration Sheridan gave him in that visit to Warehouse Point more than half a century before.

During the ensuing years, Faherty’s determination had grown to “build a monument to this man Sheridan in Chicago if I have to do it myself for the sake of old Warehouse Point as well as Chicago and the nation.”

In 1924, Faherty had the satisfaction of unveiling the statue in Lincoln Park.

Throughout his life, Faherty often returned to Warehouse Point. He maintained a home on lower Water Street and his family summered there. In 1938, he was one of the benefactors who made possible to construct a monument on the village green in memory of veterans of all wars.

The explosive mix of politics and real estate eventually hurt Faherty. He was sued on charges of graft, unauthorized payments to contractors and fraud. But, a jury cleared him of the charges.

Faherty died in Chicago on Feb. 27, 1950 at the grand old age of 91.

*Sources: Hartford Courant, March 2, 6-7, April 28, July 26, 1924; Dec. 25, 1927; May 30-31, June 12, 1938, New York Times, Feb. 28, 1950.*

city of Chicago.

In 1887, Faherty returned briefly to Connecticut to marry his childhood sweetheart Mary O’Reilly. A native of the Hazardville section of Enfield, Mary had moved to New Haven, and the couple was married in New Haven.

Over the years, Faherty’s real estate dealings enriched him and he rose in the city’s political hierarchy. In 1915, he was appointed president of the Chicago Board of Local Improvements. He served from then until 1922 and again from 1927 to 1931.

The board oversaw a massive program of street widening, sewer and water line installation, transportation improvements including a subway system and public monument construction. One estimate of the cost of the work

## Disabled Gettysburg veteran chosen to unveil monument

*(Continued from page 3)*

the ghastly disfigured forms and blackened faces of the dead ...”

Amid that chaos, one of the Union artillery shells fell short and in its bursting, Pvt. Warner suffered the terrible loss of both his arms. Warner stood up bravely to his misfortune and became a symbol of fortitude to his comrades.

He reportedly was conscious and said to the doctor treating him, “Why, surgeon, I’ve lost my right arm, too. I thought I had only lost my left.”

Warner and his wife later settled in New Haven. Despite his handicap, he earned a living as a salesman to support his family. He also was active in veterans’ affairs as a member of Admiral Foote Post 17, GAR, in New Haven.

In July 1885, Warner was among veterans of the 20th Connecticut who returned to Gettysburg to dedicate a monument on Culp’s Hill to the regiment. At the Gettysburg dedication, he was chosen to unveil the monument. The regimental history explained how it was done. The

American flag that was draped over the monument “was raised by means of a rope running through a tackle block in a tree nearby, the end of the same being attached to the body of George W. Warner ... who by walking away from the stone lifted the flag.”

Warner also unveiled the soldiers monument at the Broadway Park in New Haven in 1905. The method was different: “The string which held the flag covering was tied to a small flag, and as he slowly moved this with his teeth, the monu-

ment was brought to public view.” He used that method at East Rock too.

*Sources: The Twentieth Connecticut, A Regimental History, by John W. Storrs; ancestry.com, George W. Warner entry; ancestry.com, 1860-70-80 census; New Haven Morning Journal and Courier, June 17, 1887; New Haven Morning News, June 18, 1887. Program of Exercises at the Dedication of a Soldiers’ Monument at the Broadway Park, 1905.*

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we have handed  
a tradition  
to the future.”  
— Padraic Pearse

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