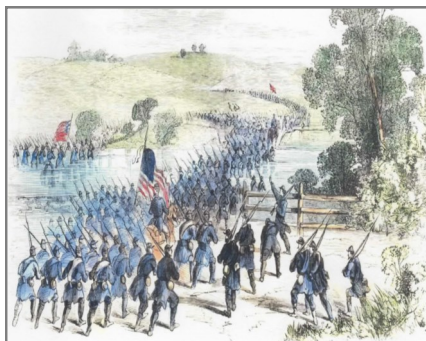


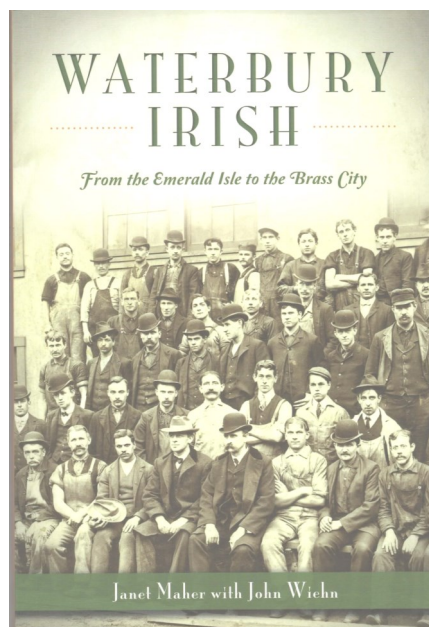
Do your Christmas shopping here

Surprise your Irish friends
with a gift of these new books
— See page 2-3 —



Connecticut's Irish in the Civil War

By Neil Hogan



Historic ledger donated to CIAHS

A forgotten Irish-American occupation

You may not even find the word “cartman” in your dictionary today, but time was when cartmen were a vital cog in the economy of every city and every nation.

Before the advent of railroad freight cars, 18-wheeler tractor-trailors and cargo airplanes, cartmen were the folks who did the essential work of transporting goods and people.

The jacket of a history book about New York City's cartmen from 1667 to 1850 summarizes their importance: “The cartmen — unskilled workers who hauled goods on one-horse carts — were perhaps the most important labor group in the cities of early America ... These ubiquitous white-frocked laborers moved almost all of the nation's possessions, touching the lives of virtually every American.”

While not generally thought of as such, the occupation of cartman was as universal among Irish immigrants as the jobs they are most often associated with: digging canals and laying railroad track.

In New Haven, cartmen drew the attention of city fathers as early as 1784. On Sept. 17 that year, the Court of Common Council adopted “A By-Law on Carts and Carmen.” Its provisions regulated the cartmen. The by-law read, in part: “That no person whatever shall act as a cartman, carter, drayman or carman within said city without having first obtained a licence for that purpose from the Mayor of said city or one of the Aldermen thereof; which licence shall not be granted until the person applying for same shall have given bonds ... in the sum of one hundred pounds lawful money ...”

The by-law provided that the license was to be for only one year and had to list the number and kind of carts or drays the cart-

man could use. The license was recorded in the office of the city clerk who then issued a number. The cartman was required to pay a fee of three shillings for the numbering and another shilling for the recording. The cartman then was required to brand on each of his carts his name and the license number.

In 1857, a group of cartmen composed mostly of Irishmen organized the Cartmens Benevolent Society of New Haven. A ledger book that was maintained by the society from the time of its founding up into the 1880s recently was donated to the Connecticut Irish-American Historical Society.

The donor is Mary Frances Looney Wilkinson, a native of New Haven and now a resident of Stonington.

The ledger is now part of the ever-growing collection of materials about Connecticut's Irish Americans in the CIAHS library at the Ethnic Heritage Center. The center is located at 270 Fitch St. on the campus of Southern Connecticut State University in New Haven.

The first page of the ledger, written in longhand script, lists the names and ages of the charter members of the society with the date May 24, 1857:

“Pledge — We whose names are hereunto affixed pledge ourselves to each other for mutual benefit to sustain and support the following Constitution, By Laws and Rules of Order.

“Bernard Reilly, 44; Thomas Reilly, 34; Thomas Nolan, 37; Patrick Hackett, 28; Michael Malone, 35; Garet Bermingham, 30; John Hackett, 21; Martin Kennedy, 31; James Bermingham, 29; Philip Reilly, 28; John Molloy, 40; Patrick Flaherty, 46; Patrick Cummins, 33; Michael Kelly, 30; and Owen Ward, 50.”

For some reason, the following names
(Please turn to page 5)

Do your Christmas shopping right here

If you are stumped about a Christmas gift for an Irish friend or relative, you may find the answer here. Two books have just been published about the Irish in Connecticut. One tells the story of how Irish men and women converted a Connecticut city into a veritable Dublin in the Naugatuck Valley. The other describes the role of Connecticut's Irish in the American Civil War. Either or both of the books is a bargain and will be a pleasant surprise under the yule tree.

“Connecticut’s Irish in the Civil War”

Irish participation in the Civil War is often and unfortunately measured only in so-called Irish regiments and companies. In fact, large numbers of Irish natives and sons of Irish immigrants served, not only in outfits composed mainly of Irishmen, but also in hundreds of regiments from every state, North and South.

Connecticut mustered more than 30 infantry regiments as well as assorted cavalry and artillery regiments. One of them was an Irish regiment and large numbers of Irish natives and descendants can be found on the rosters of most of the others. In addition, Connecticut Irishmen served in regiments of many other states, both North and South. One historian estimated that all told between 7,000 and 8,000 Connecticut Irishmen served during

The price of Connecticut’s Irish in the Civil War is \$18 per copy. To order copies, send a check made out to CTIAHS, to: The McMahons, 640 Arrowhead Drive, Orange, CT 06477.

the war. The Connecticut Irish-American Historical Society has published a new book in memory of the service of the state’s Irish soldiers. Titled *Connecticut’s Irish in the Civil War*, the 325-page book is filled with stories and pictures of Connecticut’s Irish soldiers.

The first 50 pages of the book are about the political and religious turmoil in the United States in the years before the Civil War. In Connecticut specifically, that in-

cluded a large influx of Irish immigrants fleeing the Great Hunger of the late 1840s and early 1850s, an increase in nativist responses to that influx and the even more difficult injustice of slavery prospering in a country that prided itself as a land of the free.

Also described in the first part of the book is the story of the significant role of Irish people from the very start: A Connecticut Irishman was among the settlers caught up in the hostilities in “Bleeding Kansas” even before the war began. The bombardment of Fort Sumter which started the war was an Irish fight on both sides.

The first Connecticut volunteer to enlist was Samuel Horne, a native of Tullamore in County Offaly.

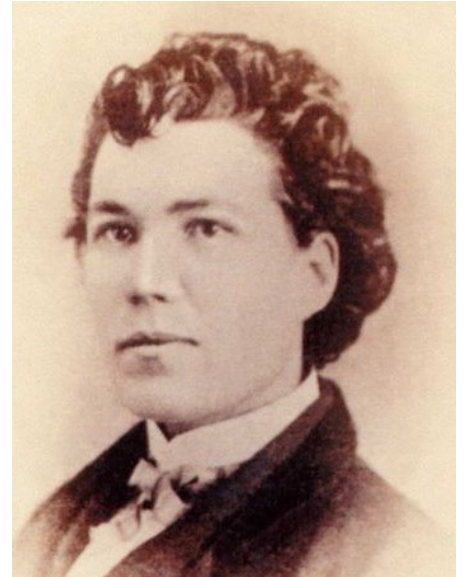
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Samuel Horne, a native of County Offaly and a resident of Winchester, was the very first Connecticut soldier to enlist.



Col. Timothy Ryan of Norfolk, CT, was a West Point graduate who was killed leading the 140th New York Infantry in Virginia in 1864.



Sarah Edmonds, a resident of Hartford and a daughter of Nova Scotia Irish parents, nursed the wounded at Bull Run.



Two of the many pictures in the book *Waterbury Irish: A member of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Chambery, Sister De Pazzi (Margaret Mary Murphy) was the daughter of County Kerry immigrants. She is with her four nephews on the grounds of St. Mary's Hospital in Waterbury in the early 1940s. Waterbury soldier Cpl. Lenny McGarty was awarded the Bronze Star for meritorious service in Italy in 1945.*

“Waterbury Irish: From the Emerald Isle to the Brass City”

Artist, educator and author, Janet Maher has published her second scholarly book about the Irish: *Waterbury Irish: From the Emerald Isle to the Brass City*. An obsessive researcher about the Irish since 2006, she has scoured a wide and varied range of archives throughout Connecticut. She has transcribed tombstones, including one entire cemetery, and massive amounts of baptism, marriage and birth records for Naugatuck, Waterbury, New Haven and areas of Ireland that connect to her research. Exhaustive reading about Ireland and Irish-Americans and two research trips to Ireland have informed her work, as has friendships she developed with others interested in sharing information about these topics. She has produced and/or restored equally massive numbers of her own original photographs and historic photographs from her and others' collections. Throughout this long project her quest has been to find bridges between the early New Haven County Irish settlers and their specific origins in Ireland, then followed their progress through generations.

For *Waterbury Irish*, Maher enlisted the help of the director of the Prospect, CT, Library, John Wiehn, to work with her in

For more information about *Waterbury Irish*, go to www.waterburyirish.com.

To order a copy of *Waterbury Irish*, send a check for \$25 (which includes shipping cost) either to Janet Maher, P.O. Box 40211, Baltimore, MD 21212 (janet@janetmaher.com) or to John Wiehn, Prospect Library, 17 Center St., Prospect, CT 06712 (wtbyirish@att.net).

expanding her research with stories in the modern era. Past state president of the Ancient Order of Hibernians, Wiehn has served in all elected offices and been involved with the AOH for more than 20 years. He reached out to his AOH friends to share some living knowledge of Waterbury Irish individuals. He shared some of his own information gleaned from newspaper clippings saved through the years and created the index for the book. As the two research friends grew up in different eras and different parts of Waterbury, one having remained all his life here, the other having left Connecticut at 25 years old, each had a different base of contacts and family to bring into the project. Maher also called the current mayor and city clerk for their sto-

ries and continued to research the included families and their times, weaving all into her text that came to include politics, sports, the famous and infamous, enlivened with myriad family memories.

The 180-plus pages of the book are filled with stories and photos of the individuals, families, institutions and neighborhoods that comprised Waterbury's Irish community over the years. The stories begin as early as the American Revolution with Joseph Rourke, an Irishman who served with Connecticut troops commanded by Gen. Israel Putnam. After the war, Rourke was for 12 or 13 years a shoemaker and repairer in Waterbury.

In the early 1800s, there were established the first of the manufactories that earned Waterbury international fame as the “Brass City.” The machinery and the skilled workers for “casting and rolling brass, making brass and copper wire, brass and copper tubes ... were imported from Birmingham, England, in the years 1831 and 1832.”

One worker was Timothy Corcoran, an Irishman who was employed as the “head wire drawer,” in what became the famous Scovill Manufacturing Company.

(Please turn to page 4)

“Waterbury Irish: From the Emerald Isle to the Brass City”

(Continued from page 3)

In Waterbury, Corcoran married a native of Birmingham, Sara Glover. The Corcorans had six children. By the time Timothy died in 1850, their Pine Hill neighborhood was thick with Irish families: Byrne, Kilduff, Moran, Martin, Claffy, Kelly, Neville, Bannon, Beahan, Delaney, Loughlin and Reed.

Corcoran also is credited with being the “prime force in bringing the Catholic Church to Waterbury at a time when it was not welcomed. (He) lived on the second story of a three-family house. It was in this apartment that the first Mass was celebrated by visiting priests.”

In 1855, Father Thomas F. Hendricken, a native of County Kilkenny, began a 17-year pastorate in Waterbury, which the book describes as “intricately woven into Waterbury’s early Catholic history. He deserves particular note for his contributions to the spiritual, educational and architectural growth in the vastly expanding place.”

Hendricken’s achievements included construction of the first Immaculate Conception Church, the founding of Notre Dame Academy and the establishment in Waterbury of a convent of the Sisters of Notre Dame based in Montreal, purchase of prop-



Waterbury native J. Farrell MacDonald, center, had a film career spanning half a century beginning with silent movies in 1906. He was featured in 150 films.

erty on which was built in 1886 Saint Mary’s School and purchase of the land for Saint Joseph Cemetery. “With his vision and guidance, Father Hendricken grew his parish in Waterbury until it was regarded as among the best examples of a thriving Catholic community in New England,” say the authors.

One less tangible, but equally significant, achievement of Hendricken’s time in Waterbury was his guidance of a young parishioner, Michael J. McGivney, into the priest-

hood. In 1882, Father McGivney led a group of his parishioners at St. Mary’s Church in New Haven to organize a mutual benefit society that became the Knights of Columbus.

McGivney is only one of many famous and successful offspring of Waterbury’s Irish community. Among those whose stories are told are —

Rosalind Russell: The famous actress was the daughter of Waterbury Irish lawyer James Edward and Clara McKnight, who was of Scots-Irish descent.

John S. Monagan: The son of Dr. Charles A. Monagan, one of the founders of St. Mary’s Hospital in Waterbury, John was chairman of the city’s Board of Aldermen, two-term mayor of the city and a congressman for seven terms from 1959 to 1973.

Joan Joyce: The granddaughter of Killarney native and Waterbury firefighter Thomas Joyce, Joan was born in Waterbury in 1940 and became “the greatest female softball player ever.”

Roger Connor: The son of Irish immigrants, Connor was the home run king of major league baseball before the advent of the lively ball and Babe Ruth. He is in the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, N.Y.

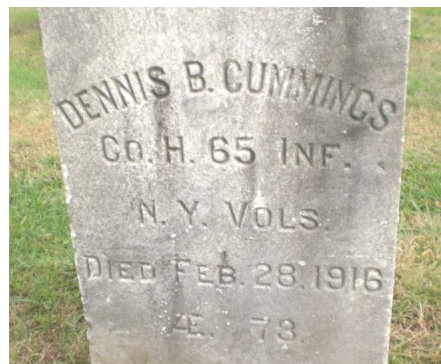
“Connecticut’s Irish in the Civil War”

(Continued from page 2)

A Connecticut Irish woman was among the very first war widows.

A large segment of the book tells the story of our state’s Irish regiment, the 9th Connecticut Volunteer Infantry. Fifty pages tell the history of the 9th Connecticut: recruiting throughout the state, training in New Haven, assignment to the Gulf Coast theatre of the war, capture and occupation of New Orleans, disastrous campaign against Vicksburg in 1862, warfare in Louisiana, campaign in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia in 1864, service in Savannah, Ga., until the end of the war.

Ten pages contain charts with names and data about more than 560 soldiers of the 9th who were born in Ireland. There are entries from every one of Ireland’s 32 counties. The data include place of birth, age,



The graves of Irish Civil War soldiers can be found throughout Connecticut. That of Dennis Cummings, who served in the 65th New York Infantry, is in Mount St. Benedict Cemetery in Bloomfield.

company, rank, occupation and place of residence in Connecticut.

The final portion of the section about the 9th Regiment contains excerpts from an extremely valuable collection of 170 letters that were exchanged by Col. Thomas Cahill, commander of the regiment, and his wife Margaret Lanin Cahill during his three

years in service. The letters provide an entirely different dimension than that of battlefield accounts and campaign records of most wartime history. Their content ranges from everyday family details to expressions of love and devotion to roller-coaster emotions as the tide of war rose and fell.

Another 70 pages of the book are devoted to individual stories of Connecticut Irish soldiers and sailors in other regiments. They include everything from family tragedies to medals awarded for gallantry to prison deaths and survivals to draft-dodging and desertions.

Twenty-five pages of the book contain thumbnail sketches and portraits of 125 Connecticut Irish veterans whose stories are told in albums compiled by Grand Army of the Republic veterans posts throughout Connecticut. And the final section of the book contains some pictures of gravestones and brief summaries of the service records of more than 300 Irish Civil War veterans buried in cemeteries throughout Connecticut.

Most 19th century New Haven cartmen had Irish roots

(Continued from page 1)

were written sideways to the right of the first column, but also with the notation May 24, 1857. These names are more difficult to read and may contain errors: Patrick Healey, 47; James Reilly, 24; Michael Healey, 25; John Meagher, no date; Patrick Conlan, 31; William Corbett, 23; James Flaherty, 29.

At the bottom of the first page of the ledger are written a number of names of those who joined thereafter with the notation "July 23, 1858." That date might signify that they joined on or after that date or that they were the additional members on the roster as of that date.

The names include: John Bohan, no age; Michael Corcoran, 24; Thomas Bermingham, 38; Patrick Kieran, 25; Matthew Fagan, 21, preceded by the number "27th"; Michael Burke, no age; Thomas Connelly, no age; T. Finegan; no age

The names of the charter members were actually written about a month after the first regular meeting was held on April 21, 1857. The minutes of that meeting state the purpose of the organization:

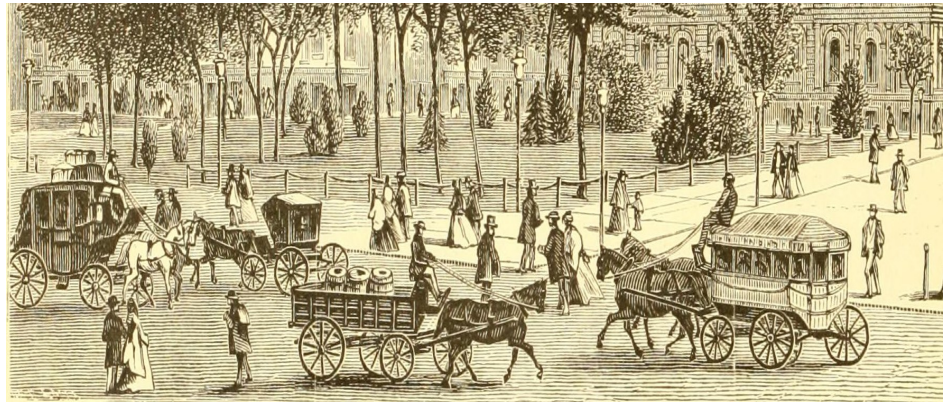
"The important object of the society is mutual benefit in securing to each of its members support and relief in times of sickness and distress and in the event of death of one of its members to carry into effect the decent observance of the necessary funeral obsequies by rendering aid to his widow and orphans and by paying the last sad rites to a brother member by following his remains to that bourne from whence there is no return."

The benefit society, according to the by-laws written in the ledger was "open to members without regard to religion or politics, but of good moral character and free from all bodily diseases or infirmities." Members were required to be under 21 or not more than 50 years of age.

Meetings were to be on the fourth Tuesday of each month at 8 p.m. commencing in the month of March and at 7 p.m. commencing in September.

A standing committee of eight members would act as a ways and means committee, visit the sick and disabled, award disbursements to families of deceased members, and inquire into the character of applicants for membership.

The society's income would come from initiation fees, monthly dues and interest accumulated from money loaned and fines levied against members. The insurance feature of the organization was evident in a sliding initiation fee: those who joined between the ages of 21 and 35 paid a \$3 initiation fee, while those who joined from 35-50 were charged \$5.



This sketch from the 1881 edition of the New York Illustrated reveals some of the variety of carts and wagons that crowded American city streets in the 19th century.

Monthly dues were 25 cents. Various fines were levied: 6 cents for missing a regular meeting; 12 and one half cents for missing a special meeting; 50 cents for not attending a funeral; and \$1 for circulating a false report about another member.

Members who claimed a benefit from illness "shall not be engaged in any lucrative business whatever, nor during his sickness be found visiting porterhouses nor drinking in bar rooms. Neither shall he play at games of any kind whatever and on conviction by the evidence of two or more witnesses of either of the above offences he shall forfeit his benefit." Upon the death of any member, the society would pay \$15 to the family or friends for funeral expenses plus \$20 for a death benefit.

At the first meeting in military hall on April 21, 1857, officers were elected: President Martin Kennedy; Vice President Bernard Reilly; Secretary Philip Reilly; Assistant Secretary Patrick Cummins; Treasurer Thomas Connelly.

Also elected that evening was the standing committee including: John Molloy, Thomas Kelly, Patrick Flaherty, John Cahill, Michael Burke, Robert Blakeslee, Thomas Nolan and William Bourn.

The ledger book contains a written treasurer's report dated July 24, 1857, just three months after the first monthly meeting. The report lists a "whole amount received" of \$77.77. Expenditures included: Paid use of hall, \$21.50; Babcock Williamson, bill of printing, \$9.00; E. Downes, papers, \$1.98; Journal & Courier printing, \$9.00; Register printing, \$5.00 and S. Babcock for books for

society, \$8.00. Total payments, \$54.48. Balance, \$23.29.

The organization grew and expanded its membership and activities, but not without some of what might be considered the normal obstacles and crises of any group. For example, at the Oct. 27, 1857, meeting, Thomas Nolan introduced Matthew Fagan as an applicant and those attending voted him to be a member.

At the same meeting, however, the minutes state that Patrick Cummins, "being called upon by the president to come to order and for not obeying he fined him 50 cents, for a second and third offence fined him 50 cents each time."

Two months later, on Dec. 22, 1857, Cummins stated that he "wished to pay his arrears to the society provided the president would exempt him for a fine which he imposed on him at a previous meeting." The president said he had no objection to such a settlement and the members approved it with their vote.

At the Jan. 26, 1858, meeting, Robert Blakeslee's request to be excused from the standing committee was granted, and Patrick Bohan was chosen in his place.

(Please turn to page 6)

Irish cartmen worked and paraded on New Haven streets

(Continued from page 5)

At the February meeting that year, members "discussed the question whether we should or should not celebrate the 17th March as a society. It was finally moved and seconded that it had better be postponed for some future time."

A special meeting was then held on Feb. 23 to reconsider that decision. At the second meeting, "Robert Blakeslee took the floor and made some lengthy remarks in favor of us celebrating 17th March as a society." He was supported by Thomas Bermingham and others, but the vote was once again against participation.

The meeting notes indicate that some members opposed participation not be-

cause of disapproval of the St. Patrick's Day activities, but because they believed the organization could not muster enough members to make a good showing.

However, a third meeting was held on March 10 and members agreed to take part in the parade "with appropriate uniforms provided that we number from 40 to 50 men."

It appears that not enough members were available because there is no mention of the cartmen in accounts of the 1858 St. Patrick's Day parade.

At the April 1858 meeting, the society's election brought some changes in the leadership. Surprisingly, Patrick Cummins, who had caused problems at an earlier meeting, was elected president.

The other officers who were elected included: Vice-President John Molloy; Secretary Martin Kennedy; Assistant Secretary Thomas Kelly; Treasurer Philip Reilly.

In June, the cartmen discussed another opportunity for a public appearance, this time in the city's Fourth of July parade. Again they postponed any decision, presumably for want of sufficient numbers.

In 1859, however, the cartmen responded unanimously to an invitation from the Hibernian Provident Society to join the parade. The cartmen's society minutes state that they assembled on Custom House Square 54-strong "all well mounted generally speaking on large, high-spirited cart horses." The men were all attired in white frocks and neatly trimmed shirts decorated with green ribbons.

The minutes said they "made a fine appearance and the good order and decorum that prevailed in the ranks ... received both admiration and applause."

The society's presence in the parade was even noted in an item in the *New York Irish American Weekly*. In its March 26 edition, the popular weekly observed that the New Haven parade was growing. It even credited the cartmen as having more marchers than listed in the minutes.

"Eight years ago," said the *Irish-American Weekly*, "the Hibernians (Provident Society) first turned out with 19 members. They were treated with the utmost derision, scoffed at, insulted and scorned at every turn. (This) St. Patrick's Day, they mustered 250; another younger society about 150, and another younger still — the cartmen — nearly 100."

By 1860, the organization had become a regular fixture in the parade, the *New Haven Register* commenting, "The mounted cartmen were a prominent feature of the occasion."

The ledger book that has been donated to the historical society follows the members and the fortunes of the cartmen up to 1883 when it appears that the society was disbanded.

Sources: *Graham Russell Hodges, New York City Cartmen, 1667-1850, New York, 1986; Ledger of the Cartmen's Benevolent Society, in the archives of the Connecticut Irish-American Historical Society.*

1870 directory listed cartmen's names, addresses

In a section listing the various industries in the city, the 1870 New Haven directory printed not only the names, but the addresses of 75 residents engaged in the carting business. Most of them were Irishmen. In alphabetical order they included:

T. Bermingham, 70 Columbus; Robert Blakeslee, 214 Wallace; Patrick Boland, 164 East; Patrick E. Brady, 51 Oak; Patrick Burns, 29 Broad; John Cahill, 28 Putnam; James Campbell, 340 Wallace; George Carr, 165 East; Frank Carter, 28 Wallace; Owen Clarkin, 197 Hamilton.

Patrick Colwell, 19 Rose; John Condon, 17 Grand; Peter Cornell, 25 Portsea; John Courtney, 21 Oak; John Coyle, 22 Hill; John Coyle, 29 St. John; Timothy Crowley, 116 Day; Cornelius Crowley, 133 Wallace; Thomas Dean, 55 Oak; Edward Dillon, 565 State.

Martin Donahoe, 103 State; Michael Dunegan, 131 Martin; Edward Dowling, 47 Hill; Joseph Dunn, 191 Hamilton; John Dunlay, 155 State; Patrick Dwyer, 93 Whalley; William T. Effort, 242 Orchard; Lawrence English, 207 Wallace; James Farrell, 157 Hamilton; John Falkland, 226 Hamilton.

James Flaherty, 93 Elliot; Michael Flannery, 209 Hamilton; Christopher Flood, 290 Wallace; Michael Flynn, 7 Nicoll; James Gaffney, 248 Wallace; Michael Gallagher, 7 Rose Court; Thomas Gallagher, 11 East; James Gorman, 81 Martin; James Grady, 186 East; John and Thomas Gunney, 109 Lafayette.

William Hall, 199 Wallace; Michael Healy, 66 St. John; Patrick Heslin, 117 Oak; John Higgins, 8 Dover; Archy Hurd, 45 Garden; Peter Ingoldsby, 58 Oak; Dennis Jones, 145 State; Thomas Judge, 31 Rose; Edward Keating, 111 Lafayette. Martin Kennedy, 160 State.

Thomas Kelly, 32 Putnam; James Kileran, 63 Wallace; Michael Kileran, 217 Franklin; Jessie Lay, 10 Thompson's Block; Patrick Leonard, 19 Chatham; Patrick Lines, 146 Lafayette; Michael Maxwell, 21 Portsea; Edward McGann, 312 East; James McGuire, 5 Dean; Bernard McLaughlin, 5 Summer Court. Robert McNulty, 289 Hamilton.

Patrick Mooney, 152 Washington; Francis Mullen Jr., 39 Gilbert; John Mulligan, 85 Washington; John O'Brien, 250 Wallace; John H. Ray, 255 Orchard; Thomas Reynolds, 185 Congress; Barney Shanley, 255 Franklin; James Smith, 66 Putnam; Patrick Smith, 170 State; Benjamin Steadman, 25 Winter; Jeremiah Sullivan, 144 Wallace; Owen Ward, 21 Portsea.

Waterbury gave de Valera a warm welcome in 1927

By John Wiehn

"Ireland needs your loyal support in its great fight for freedom. You must work, help in every way possible so that in our struggle for recognition as a republic we will be victorious." Those were the words spoken by Irish patriot Eamon de Valera to a receptive crowd of more than 2,500 at the Buckingham Hall in Waterbury on April 26, 1927.

Born in New York but brought up in Limerick, Eamon de Valera studied mathematics at the Royal University of Ireland. In 1908, he joined the Gaelic League and remained dedicated to the Irish language. He joined the Irish Volunteers in 1913 and in the rebellion of 1916, commanded the 3rd Battalion at Boland's Mill. Sentenced to death, he was reprieved, in part because of his birth in the United States.

On his release from prison in 1917, de Valera was elected member of parliament for East Clare and became president of both Sinn Féin and the Irish Volunteers. In 1918, he and other Sinn Féin leaders were arrested for complicity in an alleged German plot. He escaped from Lincoln jail in England in February 1919 and was elected president of the first Dáil Eireann. In June 1919, he visited America and raised more than \$5 million for the republican cause, but failed to obtain American recognition for the Irish republic. His visit also led to a bitter power struggle with the leaders of the Irish-American movement, John Devoy and Judge Daniel Cohalan.

After his return to Ireland in December 1920, de Valera's relationship with Michael Collins, who had effectively masterminded the IRA campaign in his absence, came under strain as differences emerged over the conduct of the Anglo-Irish War.

These were accentuated when de Valera decided not to lead the Irish delegation that negotiated the Anglo-Irish treaty. There have been two opposing interpretations of his decision. The more hostile view is that

he allowed Collins to take responsibility for what he knew would be a partial surrender. His explanation was that by staying in Dublin he could better preserve national unity and ensure general acceptance of any agreement reached.

De Valera rejected the Anglo-Irish Treaty and resigned as president following its acceptance by the Dáil. In the run-up to the Civil War, he found himself sidelined by more hard-line opponents of the treaty, who distrusted his alternative of external association, while attracting fierce criticism from pro-treaty supporters for his inflammatory speeches.



Eamon de Valera

After the civil war broke out in June 1922, his attempts to maintain a republican political organization were rebuffed by the republican military leaders, particularly Liam Lynch.

Lynch's death enabled de Valera to reassert some control and in May 1923 the war ended.

In August 1923, he was arrested and spent a year in jail. After his release, he became increasingly dissatisfied with Sinn Féin's political abstention and in 1926 he formed a new party, Fianna Fáil.

Early in 1927, de Valera embarked on a two-month tour of the United States to raise funds for his political campaign as a Fianna Fáil party candidate in the Dail election that June. He also wanted to gather money to start his own newspaper, which would later become the *Irish Press*.

When it learned of de Valera's upcoming tour, the Kevin Barry Council of the American Association for the Recognition of the Irish Republic, or AARIR, invited him to speak in the Brass City.

De Valera had created the AARIR on Oct. 20, 1920. The purpose then was to support and fund Ireland's fight for independence. After the passage of the London treaty and the establishment of the Irish Free State in 1923, the purpose of AARIR had changed to funding de Valera's political goals of republicanism.

According to the *Waterbury Republican*

of April 27, 1927, the greatest gathering ever assembled outside the train station on Meadow Street greeted de Valera. While hundreds were inside the station when he disembarked from the train at 3:47 p.m., as many or more waited outside. Included among them were a local reception committee and the Fulton American Band.

The band, playing such Irish rebel songs as "O'Donnell Abu," "Sinn Féin Awan" and "Soldiers of Erin," led a parade of more than 70 cars up Grand Street, with de Valera in the first car. The parade route was lined with thousands of supporters, many cheering and trying to get the visitor's attention.

The first stop was City Hall where Waterbury's Irish-American mayor, Francis Patrick Guilfoile, presented de Valera with the keys to the city. "It is with pleasure we greet you," said the mayor. "Waterbury is proud to have you as a guest. We have heard much about you and we are in sympathy with your cause."

After a short meet-and-greet in the mayor's office with a visiting business delegation from Australia, the parade continued down Grand Street to Bank, then to Exchange Place and up East Main to Crosby High School and finally to the Elton Hotel where de Valera would rest, have dinner and meet with more of his people and followers.

During his short stay at the Elton, the "chief," as de Valera was called by his followers, was interviewed by a local reporter. He stated that political and economic conditions in Ireland were very unstable. The reasons, he stated, were the Anglo-Irish Treaty signed by British and Irish representatives in 1921, which had interrupted trade and caused unnecessary expense to the people of Ireland. He hoped the election in June of 1927 would rally the people of Ireland to the cause of independence. Asked his thoughts of America, de Valera smiled and said, "Well, America is America."

On his thoughts of Waterbury he commented, "Though the day is cloudy and the skies suggest rain, what I have seen of Waterbury and its people has impressed me greatly."

(Please turn to page 8)

(Continued from page 7)

At 8:15 p.m., de Valera and his party entered Buckingham Hall to a full two-minute ovation. Sitting on stage with the famous visitor were state and local officers of the American Association for the Recognition of the Irish Republic. After local resident Marie Buckley sang the Star Spangled Banner and the Soldiers Song, speeches were given by two of de Valera's supporters: his secretary Francis Gallagher and John Hughes of Boston, one of the founders of AARIR.

As de Valera stood up to speak, he again got a great burst of applause from the 2,500 people attending. He waved them quiet and began to speak in Gaelic, which disappointed some in the crowd who did not understand the language. When he began to speak in English, the crowd listened intently. He explained that he opened his speech in Gaelic because he had heard that

Waterbury was a great Irish city and that he wanted to address those whose native tongue was Irish. Discussing Irish freedom, he said, "Freedom means that you can have that which you desire." Then he shouted, "We can never be free until we are separated from England." The crowd roared with approval.

He noted that the Irish had always been fighting for their freedom. De Valera spoke about the 1921 treaty that had been imposed on the people of Ireland by Britain. Again he restated information about the great financial burden the treaty had on the Irish and said the taxation had resulted in such poor economic conditions in Ireland.

Concluding his speech, he asked the people of Waterbury to aid in the Irish fight, to receive the real report of conditions through the Irish papers. He then outlined the republican plans for the June election, which he expected to be a great step in making Ireland a republic.

He closed by stating, "As long as we able to draw breath we will fight for the independence we have declared."

In response to his speech, a collection was taken for de Valera's cause. The total was more than \$1,000, which included \$500 from the Waterbury Kevin Barry Chapter of the AARIR.

The next morning de Valera and his party left Waterbury for New York City where more speeches were planned. Further stops in Hartford, Providence and Boston were scheduled before he sailed back to Ireland on May 1.

Editor's note: John Wiehn collaborated with Janet Maher in writing the recently released book, "Waterbury Irish: From the Emerald Isle to the Brass City."

Sources: Waterbury Republican, April 27, 1927. David Hannigan, De Valera in America: The Rebel President and the Making of Irish Independence. www.ucd.ie/archives/html/collections/devalera-emon.htm.

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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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