

Irish freedom fighters had loyal allies across the Atlantic

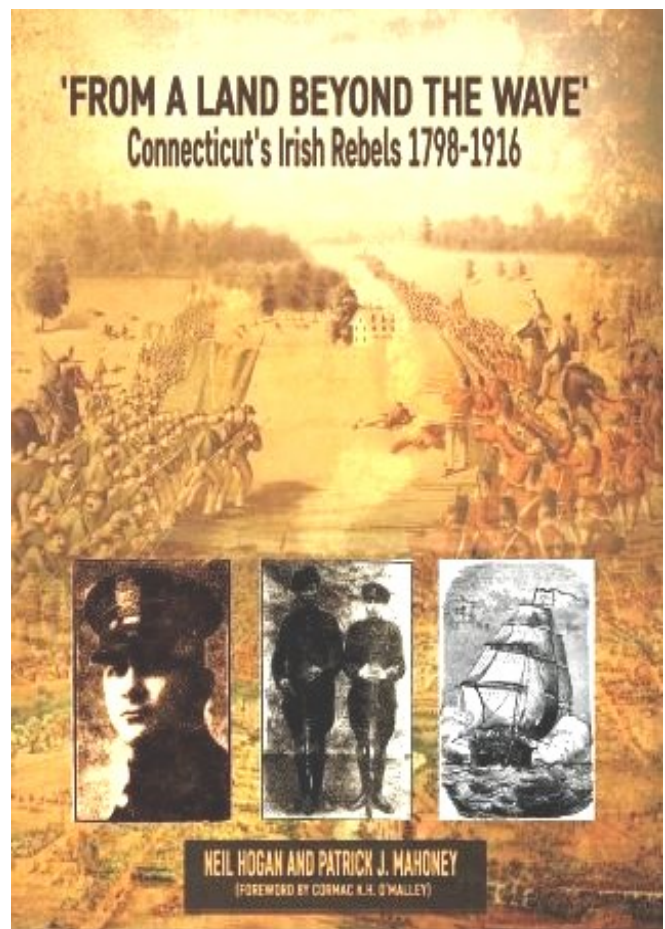
Our new book commemorates the role of Connecticut in Ireland's long struggle for independence

As a contribution to the 2016 centennial celebration of the Easter Rising in Dublin, the CTIAHS decided to attempt to tell the story of Connecticut links to more than a century of risings and rebellions in Ireland. The end product is a 233-page book — *'From a land beyond the wave,' Connecticut's Irish Rebels, 1798-1916.* Shown at right is a black and white picture of the book's cover which in reality is in full color. The authors are Patrick J. Mahoney, a PhD student at Drew University in New Jersey and a regular columnist for the *West Cork People*, and Neil Hogan, editor of our newsletter, *The Shanachie*.

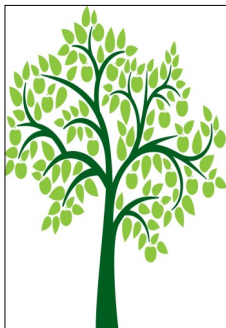
The book contains more than 50 articles about the involvement of individual Connecticut Irish men and women in the long struggle to win Ireland's independence. Their involvement included everything from writing poetry to delivering orations to raising funds, rescuing prisoners, dynamite attacks in England and military invasions of Canada.

Also described in the book are activities of various Irish organizations in Connecticut to further the cause of Irish independence including the Emmet Monument Association, Clan na Gael, the Ancient Order of Hibernians and its women's auxiliary, the American affiliate of the Irish Land League and the Friends of Irish Freedom.

The book also tells the story of how numerous Irish nationalist leaders visited Connecticut and other areas of the United States to strengthen the bonds between Irish immigrants and those they left behind. Each narrative has a Connecticut connection and demonstrates the alliance of patriots in Ireland and across the Atlantic Ocean in America. In fact, the title for the book is taken from



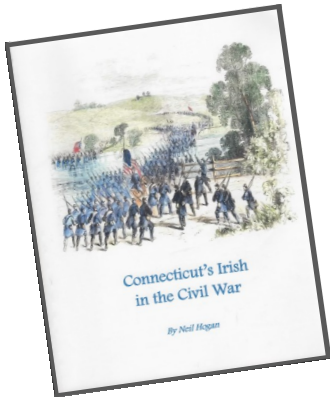
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A couple of fascinating family trees

Traceys: An Irish doctors dynasty in Norwalk — page 3

Fords: 85 descendants rediscover clan roots — page 5



Early Christmas shopping

Members who want to get their Christmas shopping completed early might find on our book list a gift for an Irish friend who is interested in the history of Irish people in Connecticut. In addition to the book we have just published about Connecticut's Irish rebels, the Connecticut Irish-American Historical Society has published five other books on Irish topics. They include:

*Early New Haven Irish and Their Final Resting Places:
The Old Catholic and Saint Bernard's cemeteries*

Connecticut's Irish in the Civil War

*The Cry of the Famishing, Ireland, Connecticut and the
Potato Famine*

Green Sprigs from the Emerald Isle

*The Wearin' o the Green, St. Patrick's Day in New Ha-
ven, 1842-1992*

Great Hunger Museum

The Great Hunger Museum at Quinnipiac University is sponsoring another event that is appealing for Irish gift givers.

The museum gave details in a recent message: "Get started on your Christmas shopping while joining us for a festive afternoon at the museum on Sunday, December 4, from 1 to 5 p.m.



"Lucky Ewe, a local Irish gift shop, will have a selection of its wares available for sale at the museum. A portion of the proceeds will benefit the museum. Read more about the Lucky Ewe at www.luckyeweirishgoods.com/.

"The museum will also have merchandise for sale, including the newest series of award winning Famine Folios publications. In addition, we will serve coffee and cookies. Come enjoy the art and atmosphere of the museum during this festive event. All are welcome. Admission to the museum is free."

The museum is at 3011 Whitney Ave., Hamden.



Wreath laying ceremony on Nov. 6

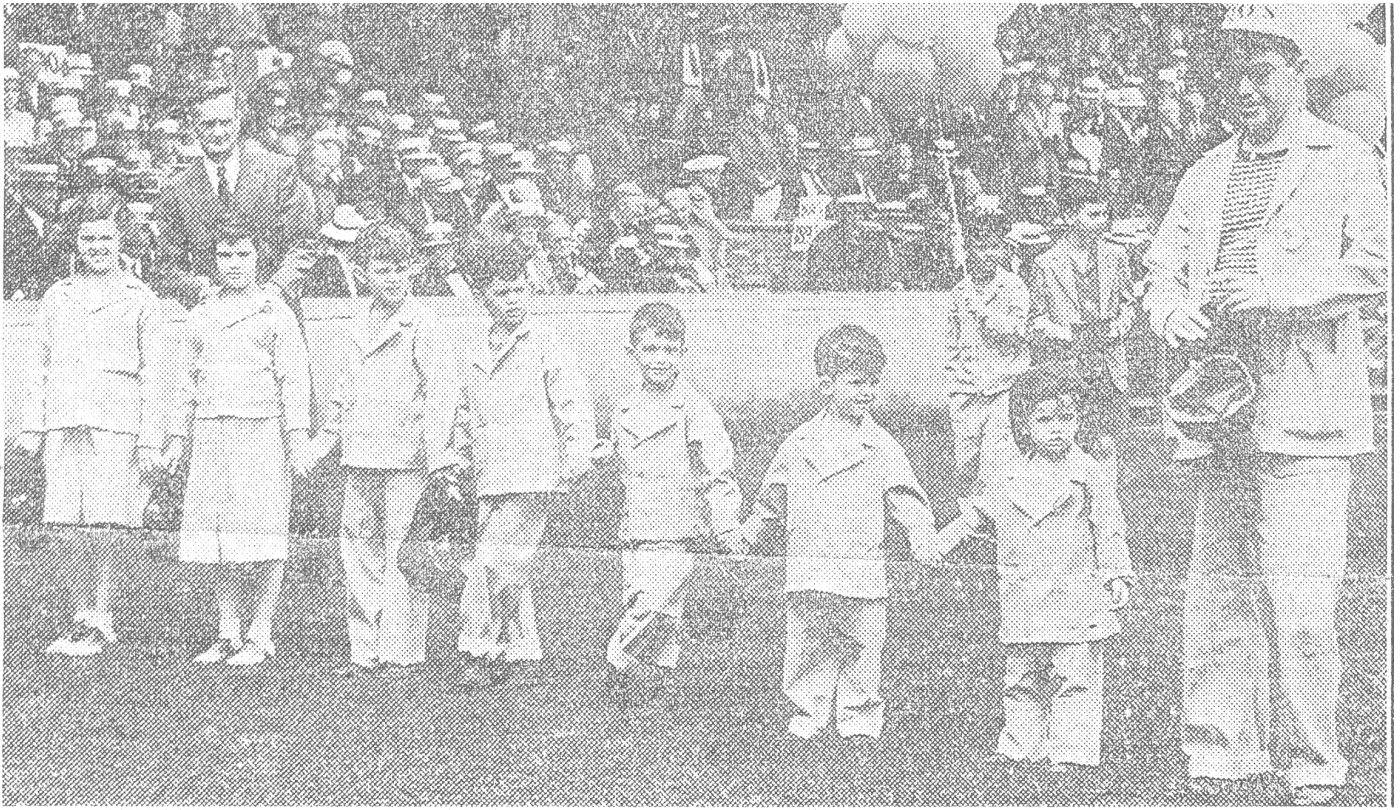
The annual placing of a wreath at the New Haven monument to the Ninth Regiment Connecticut Volunteers, the state's Irish regiment in the Civil War, will be at 11 a.m. on Sunday, Nov. 6, 2016.

The monument, shown above, is in Bayview Park in the City Point area near the western shore of New Haven harbor. It was constructed in 1903. On its base are inscribed the major campaigns and battles in which the Ninth was engaged. Three plaques on the monument list the names of 253 soldiers of the regiment who died during the war.

Participating in the Nov. 6 ceremony will be Civil War reenactors, a Knights of Columbus Fourth Degree honor guard, and bagpiper Patrick Whalen. There will be a short address and Taps in memory of the soldiers.

After the ceremony, there will be a light lunch with no charge at the Knights of Columbus Museum nearby at 1 State Street.

On display at the museum will be information regarding the regiment. An exhibit will feature the Civil War uniform and sword of one of its officers, Capt. Lawrence O'Brien, and a sampling of letters written by the regiment's commander Col. Thomas Cahill to his wife, Margaret, in New Haven during the war.



In 1940, Dr. Edward J. Tracey of Norwalk, right, brought seven of his eight children, to his 20th anniversary reunion at Yale University. A creative photographer lined them up for a picture that in 21st century jargon “went viral,” appearing in newspapers across the nation. The Norwalk Traceys did things in large numbers: Dr. Edward was just one of five Tracey physicians.

Tracey family established a medical dynasty in Norwalk

By Paul Keroack

William J. Tracey, son of Irish emigrants, became not only one of Norwalk’s first Irish Catholic physicians, but a community leader and a long-time school board president who lived to see an elementary school named for him. Two of his sons and two grandsons also became local physicians — an Irish-American dynasty in medicine not unlike that of the Kennedys in politics.

John and Catherine English Tracey emigrated to the United States by the 1850s, likely from Tipperary, Ireland. Most often anglicized as Treacy or Tracey, the surname O Tressy originated in Leix and is found often in Tipperary. John’s place of birth was not included in his 1896 death record, but Catherine who lived into the 20th century is listed as born in Clonmel, County Tipperary.

John and Catherine were married at Norwalk’s St. Mary Church on Nov. 14, 1858. Two unnamed sons were born in the next

two years, one probably the John Edward who died in 1867. James was born early in 1863, following his father’s enlistment in the Norwalk-based Company F of the 17th Connecticut Volunteer Infantry. John served as a private (his surname spelled as Treacy) from August 1862 until the end of the war.

The Traceys’ eldest surviving son, James, worked in skilled trades, later relocating to Pennsylvania. His father is early listed as a laborer and later as a gravedigger. Since he then lived on Plattsville Avenue, opposite St. Mary’s cemetery, he may have worked for that cemetery. Several other Tracey men lived on that short street at the time, perhaps relatives.

William, their youngest son, was born in Norwalk on May 15, 1866, in the Broad River neighborhood. He worked as a paperboy while attending elementary school, first at St. Mary’s and then at Center School on Camp Street. He went on to Dr. Fitch’s Academy in Norwalk and began medical

school training at Bellevue Hospital Medical School in New York City, finishing his studies in Dublin at Ireland’s Rotunda Maternity College and the Jarvis Street College of surgery.

Returning to Norwalk in 1889 he took over an existing practice and within a decade he had a large clientele. In 1893 he was one of a group of physicians who opened the city’s first hospital. He served on the surgical staff and as a director for many years, as it relocated and expanded in 1899 and in 1918. He was appointed town health officer in 1896 and was a pioneer in the control of infectious and contagious diseases, especially tuberculosis.

Local newspaper biographer E. Humphrey Doulens, in his 1932 essay on Dr. Tracey, noted that he “continued his research in medicine and surgery, usually spen[ding] his vacation going to clinics.”

Outside of his profession, Dr. Tracey’s most avid interest was education. He

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served on the town school committee from 1911, then on the Board of Education, of which he was chairman for many years, retiring in 1943.

In a final accolade for his years of educational service, a new elementary school which opened in 1940 was named the William J. Tracey School, though not without opposition by some board members whose only objection was to the naming of a school for a living person. The new school replaced the Center School building where Tracey studied as a child. He was also active in St. Mary's parish as a prominent layman, a founder of the Catholic Club.

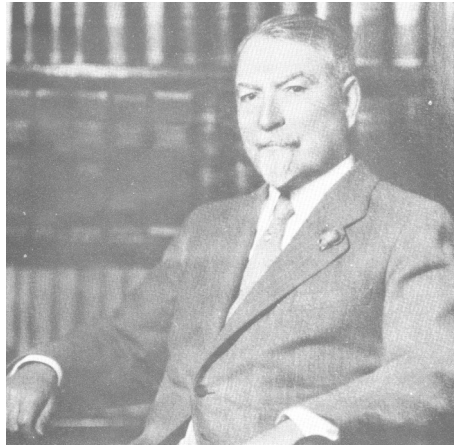
On Oct. 2, 1891, William Tracey married Katherine Anne Finnegan, a former elementary school classmate. In the third grade, they won the boy's and girl's annual prizes for best work. They had two sons and one daughter. Both of their sons graduated from Yale University and became physicians. Their daughter Katherine married John T. Dwyer, an attorney and later a Norwalk judge. The Dwyers had one daughter.

In 1939, Dr. William J. Tracey was given a testimonial dinner by his fellow citizens. The news account reviewing his career of 49 years, noted that, "... unstinted praise from speaker after speaker left him with his feet firmly on the ground. Praise will never affect Dr. Tracey. He's too busy to pay much attention to such blandishments."

In a letter to the editor following the same event, his hospital board colleague and fellow local leader Russell Frost, while joining the praise, added that Tracey had "a touch of Irish belligerency, [though] not looking for a fight, he was not running away from [one] when he believed he was right."

Dr. Tracey died in Norwalk after a long illness on Dec. 17, 1948, following his wife by two years and his younger son by one month. He was survived by one son and nine grandchildren.

Elder son William Wallace Tracey graduated from Yale in 1912 and later the Columbia Medical School. He served as a lieutenant in the Army Medical Corps during World War I. He practiced medicine in New York until returning to Norwalk in 1926 to join his father's surgical and medical practice. He married Anna Phelan of Bridgeport.



Dr. William J. Tracey

They had no children. He relocated to Macon, MS, where he served as health officer before returning to Norwalk in 1949 after his father's death. Unfortunately, "Dr. Bill" Tracey died less than a year later at age 66 on Feb. 14, 1950.

His younger brother, Edward J. Tracey, studied at Yale University and the University of Pennsylvania's School of Medicine. He joined his brother and father in surgical and medical practice in Norwalk in 1927. He married Clara Hammond of Toronto, Canada. They had eight children, three daughters and five sons. His eldest and youngest son both became physicians, after graduating from Yale in 1954 and 1959, respectively.

Offering his services to firemen at local conflagrations, "Dr. Ed" was appointed to the position of physician to the Norwalk Fire Department in 1931, a position that he held for the rest of his life. He was later appointed a city fire commissioner.



Dr. Edward J. Tracey

Dr. Edward J. Tracey was also involved with the Red Cross and other local civic organizations, and elected town chairman of the Democratic Party in 1932. In 1940, a photograph of Dr. Tracey and his then seven children lined up on the field at his 20th Yale University reunion appeared in national publications. Dr. Tracey died at age 48 on Nov. 17, 1948, in New York City.

In 1965, Edward J. Tracey, a son of the late Dr. Edward J., began his career in Norwalk as a general surgeon, becoming the first of a third generation of the family to practice medicine in the city. He served in the Navy as a surgeon in the Dominican Republic operation earlier that year.

He was selected as president of the Norwalk Medical Society in 1976. His younger brother James P. Tracey, after service in the Army Medical Corps in Vietnam, opened his practice in general medicine and gastroenterology in Norwalk in 1969 — a break in the family tradition of general surgery — thus becoming the fifth physician in his family within a three-generation span of eighty years.

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Internet helped to reunite far-flung Ford clan

How to knit your Irish-American family back together after 90 years

By Peggy Ford Cosgrove

In May of this year, my cousin Mary Jane Ford Kelsey and I joyfully hosted a reunion at the Irish American Community Center in East Haven for the descendants of our Irish-born great-grandparents Patrick and Anna Wynne Forde and their families.

We estimated that we would get 40 people. However, we had 85 instead. It was a happy result because the individual lines of the family had lost touch over the years and decades. There was no particular reason; it was the times and the circumstances of leaving your homeland and adjusting to a new reality. My mother's neutral comment was, "Well, they just didn't bother."

The history had been lost with the connections as well. But it was easily regained. A happy, curious and gregarious crowd table-hopped, introduced themselves to each other and had the pictures taken with newly discovered cousins from all over the United States and one from England as well. Watching strangers change into cousins was lovely to see.

How did this reunion come to pass? Mary Jane and I attended the same high school, but we met as cousins only three years ago via [Ancestry.com](#).

Her cousin-by-marriage in Tucson, Arizona, saw a query I had posted on Ancestry regarding Patrick, William, Bernard, Thomas and Frank Ford who had lived in Sacred Heart parish in New Haven starting in the 1880s.

The cousin, Ruth Greenan, did not know much about them, but she put me in touch with Mary Jane, who still lives outside of New Haven. I understood the geography and economics of The Hill neighborhood where the "Sacred Heart Uncles" — as they were referred to in Ireland — lived. I grew up there.

Both of Mary Jane's parents were born in Ireland and had remained in contact with relatives there. She was the expert on the

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It's a long way from Leitrim

Peggy Ford Cosgrove of New London, left above, and Mary Jane Ford Kelsey of Branford spent two full years knitting together the family of Patrick and Anna Wynne Forde, shown below in their native Fenagh, County Leitrim. Patrick and Anna were married in 1846 and immigrated to the Hill neighborhood of New Haven. When Peggy and Mary Jane finished their research, they organized a reunion for their long-lost relatives at the Irish American Community Center in New Haven. It turned out to be "the experience of a lifetime" when 85 kinfolk showed up from throughout the United States and from England.



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Ireland side and fact checker in chief.

Patrick and Anna married in 1846 during the Great Hunger in Fenagh, Co. Leitrim. They had 12 children over 24 years. Three died, one son inherited the lease on the farm, and the rest came to America, including Ellen to New Haven and Anna to Rhode Island. We were able to attract people to a reunion because we did a lot of research early on to give them hints of what they had missed. And as we had used the Internet to find our ancestors, we used it to find our living cousins.

Here is how we used the Internet in our research:

- ◆ To find the “Sacred Heart Uncles,” we used Ancestry.com for U.S. Census returns from 1900 to 1940, and for city directories to find basic name, occupation, and address information. Also, if you take out an Ancestry membership that includes Ireland, you can find civil births, marriages and deaths starting, at least in Leitrim, in the 1860s. And, do not take Ancestry “hints” at face value. Verify all information. Some public libraries offer free access to basic U.S. Ancestry.com.
- ◆ We joined the Connecticut Society of Genealogists and received a card that admits us to the vaults in Connecticut town halls, where you can search for individual birth, marriage and death records. Death certificates in Connecticut require the names of the parents of the deceased. With so many Irish sharing similar names, confirming the names of their parents on a death certificate is a huge time-saver.
- ◆ Use www.roots.ie for baptism records if it is available for the Irish county you are researching. The fee was worth it. Accurate and reliable. Of course, today, you can access the original parish registers online for free at <http://www.nli.ie/en/parish-register.aspx>.
- ◆ Facebook: Mary Jane has a cousin Kevin in Ireland but did not know where he lived. We checked Facebook, and there he was. He is an important member of our research team. Facebook was a great way to find our own U.S.



Fenagh in County Leitrim is the site of the ruins of one of earliest monasteries in Ireland. Fenagh Abbey was founded by St. Caillin in the 6th century.

cousins and the next generation to invite them to our reunion. Also, it helps with research. There are group pages for many counties that have both Irish and diaspora members. People in Ireland often can answer a question or look up a record for you. Search Facebook for your county of interest. “History and Genealogy of (insert county name)” is a good Facebook search term.

- ◆ Reaching out – If you don’t have a relative, contact a local county historical society or a librarian in Ireland. You can find email addresses online. They can provide important connections. Both the local library and cousin Kevin from Facebook, mentioned above, were notified of the distant cousin who was doing something no one had done before: by tracing our Ford(e)s through land leases that our male ancestors had signed with the landowner. It worked, and we now know where we were, and who we were, back to the early 1700s. It bridged a gap when births were not recorded.
- ◆ Check out medieval Ireland. Type the phrase “History and origin of the Irish surname ...” If you are lucky, you will get a Wikipedia page that tells you where your family originated, and where they were at certain times in history. And that page may provide links to ancient annals in which your surname is mentioned. Another good web site for family names is

www.johngrenham.com. It hosts a version of the Ancestors feature that used to be on the *Irish Times* website. You can type in a surname and you will get not only a history of the name but also a map of Ireland in the mid-1800s showing dots in the counties where the surname is found. You can then type in a second name to see if that person (say, the person’s future wife) could have lived in that county. It’s not proof, but it provides possibilities to be researched. Space out your searches so you won’t hit a paywall.

- ◆ DNA introduced us to many lost cousins, including — surprise! — some Ulster Scots in the American south, and my brother’s Y-DNA is being tested for comparison with other Fords and related ancient Kingdom of Breifne families, including Riley, O’Brien, Duffy, Flynn and, we hope, O’Rourke.

To share this information with so many other people, including some who flew from England, Nevada and North Carolina or drove from northern Maine, was the experience of a lifetime. Most of them had never met a cousin outside the line of the Sacred Heart parish grandfather/uncle from whom they descended. They were hungry for information, and we had it.

Having spent over two years not only on genealogy and family profiles for the various Fordes, but on medieval Irish history, the migration of our Future Fordes recorded in mutations/markers on my brother’s Y-DNA like stamps on a passport – Africa to Central Asia, thence to Europe, probably to Spain or France and then to the Isles.

Our Fordes, it turned out, were in medieval times chieftains of Breifne under the O’Rourke kings of Breifne, and we found our clan had a bishop, Conchobar (Connor) Mac Conshnámha who died in 1355 and whose seat was the Diocese of Kilmore, in Breifne. We didn’t even have a priest on our radar. Mac Conshnámha, which has alternate translations about a swimming hound, was later anglicized under the English as Forde, and in America it became Ford.

Every family is special in its own way. The Internet may well help others to find a broader view of their family across the centuries and some specific details as well.



Eamon de Valera, tallest man in the picture, on a visit to Hartford in January 1920.



Thomas Ashe

New book commemorates rebels in Ireland and Connecticut

(Continued from page 1)

the verse in the Irish national anthem, "The Soldier's Song," which speaks of some of Ireland's soldiers as coming "from a land beyond the wave." That land was understood to be the United States. The alliance of Ireland and the Irish in the United States is also mentioned in the proclamation read from the steps of the General Post Office in Dublin on April 24, 1916, the day the Easter Rising began. The proclamation says that the rebels that day were supported by Ireland's "exiled children in America."

The pictures on this page show just a few of those whose stories are related in the book. Top left is a photograph of Eamon deValera

surrounded by city dignitaries and Irish leaders on one of several of his visits to Hartford. Top right is Thomas Ashe who played the bagpipes and gave speeches about the Gaelic Revival in Connecticut cities during a tour in 1914. Ashe fought in the Easter Rebellion and died during a hunger strike in September 1917 after being force-fed in Mountjoy Prison in Dublin.

Below left is Hanna Sheehy Skeffington in Connecticut on a speaking tour in early 1917. She was the wife of a Dublin journalist, Francis Sheehy Skeffington, who was executed without trial during the Easter Rising. Below center is Joseph Lawler of Nor-

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Hannah Sheehy Skeffington



Joseph Lawler



Charlotte Molyneux Holloway

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wich. After campaigning for four years with the Ninth Connecticut Infantry in the American Civil War, Dublin-born Lawler joined rebels in Ireland and was arrested three times during the Fenian rising in the late 1860s.

At bottom right on page 7 is Charlotte Molyneux Holloway. Born in New London of Irish immigrant parents, she became known throughout the United States before and after the Easter Rising as a powerful orator for Irish independence and an organizer of Irish relief activities.

On this page, right, is a sketch of William Joseph Hynes, an Irish native whose father died during the Great Hunger, and whose mother emigrated with her children to New England. In 1865, Hynes visited towns

and cities throughout Connecticut recruiting and organizing Fenian chapters whose members either went to Ireland as freedom fighters or participated in Fenian invasions of Canada in the late 1860s.



William Joseph Hynes

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"We have kept faith
with the past;
we have handed
a tradition
to the future."

Padraic Pearse

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