

The Shanachie

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Ireland, Connecticut and the Easter Rising

One hundred years ago, at noon on April 24, 1916 — Easter Monday — a group of about 150 Irish rebels occupied the General Post Office on Sackville Street in Dublin, cleared the building of customers and workers, and ran up two flags — one the traditional Irish green banner with gold harp, the other a new tricolor of orange, green and white. At 12:45, one of the rebel leaders, Patrick Pearse, read from the steps of the post office a proclamation declaring the birth of “the Irish Republic as a Sovereign Independent State.”

More rebels — about 1,200 all told — occupied other strategically located buildings and sites in Dublin such as the Four Courts, South Dublin Union, Stephen’s Green, Boland’s Mills and Jacob’s Biscuit Factory. Word soon went out to London and the world that a full-fledged rebellion had broken out in Ireland. The British brought in troops and gunboats, shelled the strongholds of the rebels, and by April 30 quelled the rebellion. In early May, 14 of its leaders were court-martialed and executed.

The English government thought that was the end of the matter, but at his court-martial, one of the Irish rebels, Thomas MacDonagh predicted, “The Proclamation of the Irish Republic has been adduced in evidence against me as one of the signatories; you think it is already a dead and buried letter, but it lives, it lives. From minds alight with Ireland’s vivid intellect it sprang, in hearts aflame with Ireland’s mighty love, it was conceived. Such documents do not die ...”

MacDonagh proved to be an excellent prophet. The Easter Rising put down so quickly by the English simmered in the souls of the Irish people and within three years all Ireland was aflame with revolution. Unable to extinguish the fire, the English in 1921 accepted a truce and a treaty that within a few years ended centuries of occupation and made most of Ireland, in the beautiful words written by Thomas Davis in 1844, “A nation once again.”



In its issue of Aug. 10, 1916, The Irish World and American Industrial Liberator, an Irish nationalist newspaper in New York City, published this tribute to the Easter Rising leaders killed in Dublin. Missing from the list on the Celtic cross is the name of Roger Casement who was hanged on Aug. 3.

SUNDAY — APRIL 24 — 2016

8:45 a.m. — Mass and Irish flag raising on City Green, New Haven

2 p.m.— Memorial Mass, St. Thomas Aquinas Church, Fairfield

4 p.m. — Unveiling of Easter Rising Monument, Gaelic-American Club, Fairfield

Irish Republic 'supported by exiled children in America'

The first word Connecticut people had of the Easter Rebellion was in dispatches published in state newspapers on Tuesday, April 25, 1916, indicating that an Irishman — and ironically a British knight Irishman — Sir Roger Casement had been captured near Tralee in County Kerry attempting to land weapons from a German ship.

The next day, the papers contained very brief accounts from English sources not of an insurrection but of “an anti-British riot in Dublin.” The accounts said, “Political rioters took possession of the post office and being well armed, defied the police and soldiery to dislodge them ... The military authorities now have the situation well in hand ...”

As the week progressed, it became obvious that the unrest in Dublin was more than just anti-British rioting and that authorities did not have the situation in hand at all. By Thursday, April 27, the *New Haven Union's* lead story on page one appeared under a three-deck headline, “Martial Law Declared Throughout Ireland As the Rebellion Spreads.”

The same day, the *Union* published a story about reaction to the revolt among New Haven Irish-Americans. One of them quoted was Patrick Henehan, a 64-year-old native of Ireland. Henehan spoke of the situation in Dublin neither as a riot nor even a rebellion. “The Irish volunteers have certainly made a great stand in Dublin,” he said, “and I believe that the revolution will set Ireland free. To set any nation free, the first blow must be struck by the nation itself.”

Henehan knew whereof he spoke. Thirty-two years before the Easter Rebellion, when just a young immigrant from Westport in County Mayo, he left New Haven and struck a blow in the form of dynamite bombings in the very den of the lion — London. He and his fellow bombers did not free Ireland, but they did demonstrate that England could be made to pay a price for its continued brutal treatment of the Irish.

Henehan himself paid a heavy price. Found guilty of “treason felony,” he was sentenced to penal servitude for life. He spent 14 years in Newgate, Chatham and Portland prisons in England. He was released in early 1899 only after repeated representations by Irish

and American statesmen and Irish-American organizations. He was greeted as a hero in his hometown of Westport in Mayo, and when he returned to his adopted hometown, New Haven.

The willingness of generations of Irish-Americans like Henehan to risk life and limb to strike blows for Irish independence was recognized by the Dublin rebels of 1916. In their proclamation, they declared their new-born Irish Republic was “supported by her exiled children in America.”

The depth and breadth of that support was obvious in 1916 in the huge response from across the Atlantic. Connecticut's voice was loud and clear in that response. On May 14, an estimated 3,000 Irish-Americans from all over the state gathered at the Bijou Theater in New Haven to organize a Connecticut chapter of the Friends of Irish Freedom. It was the second chapter in the United States.

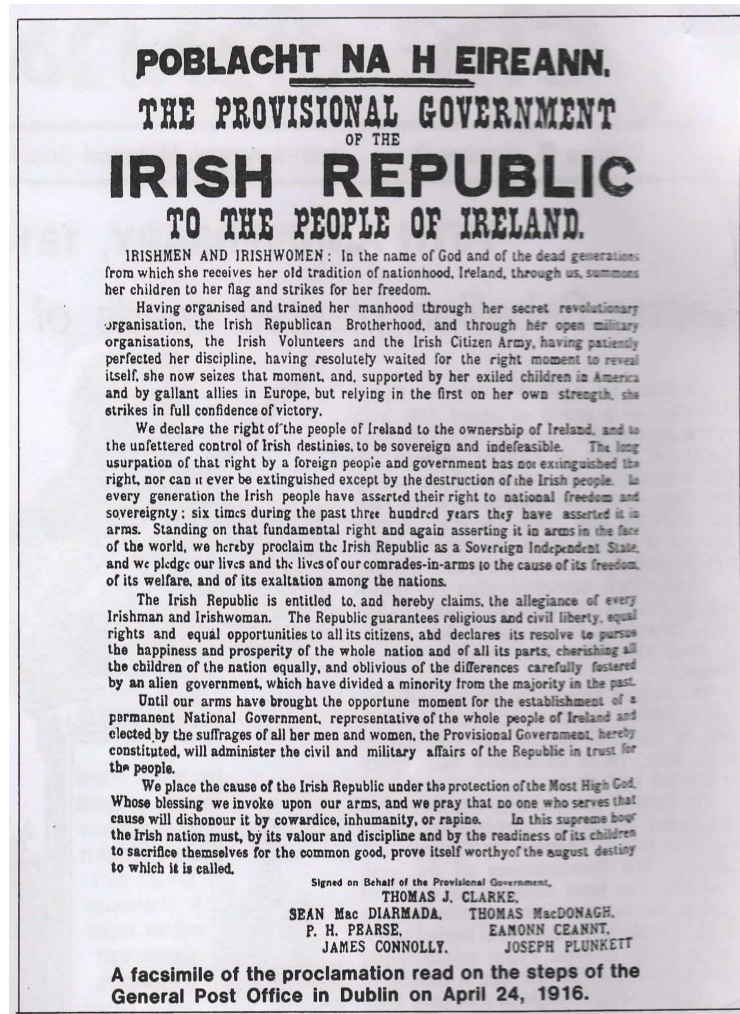
The Friends organization was founded in an afternoon meeting. An evening session, reported the *New Haven Journal-Courier*, “might be said to have been a giant protest meeting against the martyrdoms of the Dublin men.”

The *New Haven Register* described the evening session as a rally, “Denouncing England as a ravisher of small nationalities and defenseless people; declaring that that country is shrewdly asking at the expense of her allies only to gather the glutton's slice

when the spoils of the great war are thrown on the bargain counter of Europe and asserting that the home rule measure is insincere, used as a bait to cheat Ireland and delude the world.”

Attorney Francis F. Guilfoyle of Waterbury said the purpose of the organization was not to influence the United States to take sides in the war in Europe, but to remind America of the advice of Gen. Washington to avoid entangling alliances and to be “watchful to prevent the baleful influence of England from poisoning life in America.”

Judge John W. Goff of New Haven chastised England and the American press for playing down the significance of the Irish rebel-



lion. "Persistent efforts have been made by the English news agencies," he said, "to minimize what was really a rebellion into an inconsequential street riot."

Philip J. Sullivan of Thompsonville was elected state president; Michael J. Quinn of New Haven, secretary; James P. Larkin of New Haven, treasurer. Members of the executive committee included M.J. Clabby, Fairfield County; Timothy Luddy, New Haven County; Thomas J. Smith, Hartford County; Thomas C. Donahue, New London County; John C. Healy, Middlesex County; John J. McYoung, Windham County; Patrick J. Murray, Tolland County.

Mass meetings throughout Connecticut echoed similar pro-Irish and anti-British sentiments.

In Bridgeport on May 31, Irish socialist leader Cornelius Lehane told delegates to the Connecticut Socialist Party convention that the rebellion in Dublin was the only bright spot in the world war and declared that the shooting of the leaders of the rising would only inspire others to work and die for the cause.

On July 23, a convention of Hartford's United Irish Societies at the Michael Davitt Club on Pearl Street adopted resolutions "denouncing the despotic attitude of the British government toward the Sinn Feiners who instigated the rebellion in Ireland."

At a meeting at the Ansonia Opera House, "many men and women gave way to tears," as the proclamation of the Irish Republic and Patrick Pearse's letter to his mother were read. In nearby Derby, a Friends of Irish Freedom chapter was organized and took the name of Padraic Pearse Chapter.

In August, 10,000 Connecticut Irish men and women attended the Ancient Order of Hibernians convention in Middletown. The convention adopted a resolution denouncing England's reaction to the revolt after hearing the A.O.H. chaplain, Father Edward Flannery, state: "The barbarity toward Ireland of her ancient foe has proved once more that the leopard among the nations never changes her spots. The prediction has come true again that where Ireland is concerned England is not to be trusted."

Conspicuous at the A.O.H. convention was "the display of the new Irish flag of green, white and gold. It waved gaily side-by-side with the United States banners."

Easter Rising at a glance in Ireland & Connecticut

April 21 — Friday — Irish nationalist Roger Casement is captured near Tralee in County Kerry attempting to land a shipment of 20,000 rifles and 5 million rounds of ammunition provided by the German government for the rebellion.

April 24 — Easter Monday — Irish rebels occupy the General Post Office and other buildings in Dublin and proclaim an Irish Republic.

April 25 — Tuesday — English rush reinforcements to Dublin. Connecticut newspapers publish brief announcements of "anti-British riot" in Dublin.

April 26 — Wednesday — Irish rebellion becomes lead story in Connecticut newspapers. Francis Sheehy Skeffington, a Dublin editor who had lectured in New Haven in November 1915, is shot by an English firing squad.

April 27 — Thursday — Martial law proclaimed throughout Ireland.

April 28 — Friday — Connecticut lawyer and nationalist agitator James M. Sullivan arrested in Dublin for complicity in the rebellion.

April 29 — Saturday — Leaders of the rebellion surrender their troops.

April 30 — Sunday — 4,000 German-Americans and Irish-Americans hear Irish nationalist Jeremiah O'Leary compare the Dublin rebels to American Revolutionary War leaders at a meeting sponsored by the German-American Alliance at the Olympia Theater in New Haven.

May 3 — Wednesday — Rebels Patrick Pearse, Thomas MacDonagh and Thomas Clarke executed.

May 4 — Thursday — Rebels Joseph Plunkett, Edward Daly, Michael O'Hanrahan and Willie Pearse executed.

May 5 — Friday — Rebel John MacBride executed.

May 8 — Monday — Rebels Edmund Kent, Michael Mallon, J.J. Heuston and Cornelius Colbert executed.

May 9 — Tuesday — Connecticut lawyer James M. Sullivan released.

May 12 — Friday — Rebels Sean MacDermott and James Connolly executed.

May 14 — Sunday — Connecticut Branch of Friends of Irish Freedom organized by 3,000 Irish-Americans at a rally at the Bijou Theater in New Haven.

June 4 — Sunday — 2,000 attend mass meeting in Waterbury to show support for Irish rebels.

June 10 — Saturday — Irish Relief Day is conducted throughout the state.

June 11 — Sunday — Mass meeting of Friends of Irish Freedom in Ansonia.

June 16 — Friday — Padraic H. Pearse Branch, Friends of Irish Freedom, organized in Derby.

June 25 — Sunday — Mass meeting of Irish at Plaza Theater in Bridgeport.

July 16 — Sunday — Lithuanian convention in New Haven adopts resolution sympathizing with the people of Ireland.

July 22-23 — Saturday-Sunday — United Irish Societies meet in Hartford and adopt resolutions supporting Ireland.

August 3 — Thursday — Roger Casement is hanged in England. Wallingford Auxiliary, A.O.H., announces plans for raising money for Irish Relief Fund.

August 6 — Sunday — John Dillon Club of Meriden denounces Casement execution.

August 24 — Thursday — A.O.H. state convention adopts resolution abhorring butchery in Ireland. New Irish tricolor flag is displayed at convention.

October 14 — Saturday — Fenian Ram submarine removed from shed on Mill River in New Haven where it has been stored for 40 years. It will be an attraction at the Irish Relief Fund bazaar at Madison Square Garden in New York City.

January 28, 1917 — Sunday — Hannah Sheehy Skeffington, widow of slain editor, tells a packed house at New Haven's Poli Theater that Ireland does not want reconciliation with England, but will settle only for a complete divorce.

The roots of Irish nationalism and rebellion run deep in Connecticut. Many of the state's Irish immigrants actually fought in Fenian campaigns; many more supported the cause of Irish independence with their voices, writings and money. Brief sketches of just some of them appear on the next five pages. In late summer 2016, the Connecticut Irish-American Historical Society will publish a book with the full stories of all these and other Connecticut Irish who supported the dream of a Republic of Ireland until it became a reality. Look for more details in the next Shanachie.

Matthew Lyon — American Society of United Irishmen

A native of County Wicklow, Lyon came to America in 1750 as an indentured servant to a Woodbury, Conn., merchant, Jabez Bacon. Lyon served out his indenture and purchased 100 acres of land in Cornwall. He moved to Vermont and served as second in command to Ethan Allen at Fort Ticonderoga in 1775. He was elected to Congress from Vermont in 1796. In the 1790s, when nationalists founded United Irishmen societies in Belfast and Dublin to contest British rule in Ireland, Lyon was one of a group of Irish immigrants who organized an American Society of United Irishmen. As was the case with many later radical Irish-American organizations, the United Irishmen were devoted to “the emancipation of Ireland from the tyranny of the British government.”



Matthew Lyon

John Driscoll — 1817 obituary of wounded veteran of 1798

“Died at New London, Conn., on the 20th inst. Mr. John Driscoll, aged 60 years, a native of Cloyne, county of Cork, Ireland. The deceased was very respectably connected in his native land, but he was gloriously unfortunate, he loved liberty; he took an active part in the war, (rebellion) of 1798, the fate of the patriots of that year is known, they were defeated; Mr. Driscoll escaped covered with wounds, some of them so severe as to have proved incurable; after years of suffering, he sunk under their effects; his wife, the partner of his breast, the sharer in his misfortunes went before him, to that ‘bourne whence no traveler returns,’ she died 16th July last. The patriot of whatever country, who may learn the fate, and visit the tomb of Driscoll, will not fail to heave a sigh, to drop a tear over the ashes of an illustrious exile.”

James Bergen — 1848 Connecticut rebel

On July 29, 1848, a handful of rebels known as Young Irelanders staged a rising in Tipperary to protest the export of crops from Ireland while people were starving. James Bergen, a Connecticut native known for his revolutionary sympathies, was caught up in the wave of arrests after the rebellion. Living in Brooklyn, N.Y., at the time, Bergen sailed to Liverpool on business, but crossed over to Dublin. The English arrested and held him for six months claiming he was an agent of New York groups that supported the rising. When freed from Newgate Prison in Dublin, Bergen left a note reminding his jailors that his release, came on an historic date, “the 67th anniversary of the evacuation of New York by the British” in the Revolutionary War.

Stephen Meany — Newspaperman fought for Irish freedom for 40 years

From 1848 when he was arrested for writing a disloyal article in an Irish newspaper in Dublin, until he died in Waterbury, Ct., in 1888, Stephen Meany was in and out of English prisons. In 1867, he was sentenced to 15 years in prison for his support of Irish independence while living in the United States. In 1882, he went back to Ireland as a reporter covering Land League activities and was arrested again. At each of his trials Meany was his own lawyer and fought English prosecutors step by step. Freed one final time, Meany settled in Waterbury where he wrote editorials for the Evening Democrat. He filled the editorial columns with outrage against England's continued occupation of Ireland. When he died, a delegation of Waterbury Irish escorted his body back to Ireland where he was buried in County Clare.

William Erigena Robinson — ‘Twisting the tail of the British lion’

Born in County Tyrone, William Robinson spent his first years after immigrating to America studying at Yale. Of Scots-Irish Presbyterian birth, he was a firm advocate of the United Irishmen tradition that Irish of all religious faiths must work together. That was his theme when he was the orator at the first ever St Patrick’s Day observance in New Haven in 1842. He left New Haven to live in New York City after graduating from Yale, but became widely known throughout the northeast as a defender of Irish rights. In the 1880s, he was acclaimed for “twisting the tail of the British lion” over the issue of Irish-American rebels being incarcerated for years in English prisons on flimsy evidence.



William E. Robinson

William J. Hynes — Fenian recruiter throughout Connecticut

In the early 1850s, William J. Hynes immigrated to Springfield, Mass., when scarcely 10 years old with his mother and siblings. His father had died in County Clare during the Great Hunger. If they were not already rebels, the death and destruction of that era in Ireland turned many immigrants into rebels, Hynes among them. When only 22 years of age, he spent most of 1865 traveling the length and breadth of Connecticut to recruit Irish-Americans into the Fenian Brotherhood whose goal was to mount military attacks against the British. Hynes began his recruiting at Gilman’s Hall in Hartford on New Year’s Day. He enlisted 30 to 40 men there and went on to New Haven where 50 more Irishmen enlisted. He visited cities like Meriden, Waterbury and Norwich as well as towns and hamlets like Central Village in Plainfield, Jewett City and Baltic. By the end of the year, hundreds of recruits had signed up in at least 25 or 30 communities in Connecticut.

Joseph Lawler — Civil War veteran from Dublin went back to fight for Ireland

A Dublin native, Joseph H. Lawler, a cigarmaker in Norwich, Ct., served almost five years during the American Civil War in the 2nd and 9th Connecticut Volunteers. In August 1865, like many Civil War veterans, he went to Ireland to put his military experience to work in a rebellion in his native land. He was arrested soon after he landed in Dublin. Freed after only a week, he went to Mullingar, Westmeath, to train Fenian recruits. He was arrested again in February 1866 and was released on the condition that he not return to Ireland. But he sailed back to Limerick to participate in the planned rebellion in March 1867 and was incarcerated once again. Released in May 1868, he left Norwich and returned to New Orleans where he had served in the Civil War. He was a police officer for many years and died there in 1893. He is buried in Chalmette Cemetery on the banks of the Mississippi River.

Laurence O’Brien — Civil War veteran escaped from prison in Tipperary

A comrade of Joseph Lawler in the 9th Connecticut, Capt. Laurence O’Brien also returned to Ireland. He served in Dublin, then was sent to Paris where he handled the distribution to Fenians in Ireland of money sent from Fenians in the United States. In early 1867, O’Brien was ordered back to Ireland for the planned rising. He was captured in Tipperary before the rising began. Imprisoned in Clonmel, he was able to contact Fenians outside the jail and obtain tools to cut the bars in his cell and escape. With the help of other Fenians, he made his way back to France and sailed safely home to New Haven where he continued to fight for Irish independence in such organizations as Clan na Gael and the Land League.

Richard R. Madden — Civil rights advocate and 1798 historian

In the first authoritative history of the 1798 rebellion in Ireland, Dublin native Richard R. Madden wrote eloquently of the civil rights struggles of the United Irishmen. He also practiced what he preached when in 1839, he made a special trip to Connecticut to testify in a famous trial involving the civil rights of Africans. After being brought to Cuba as slaves, the Africans mutinied about the ship *Amistad*. They attempted to sail the *Amistad* to Africa, but were arrested on Long Island Sound and jailed in New London. Their would-be owners reclaimed them as runaway slaves. Madden gave authoritative evidence that proved the Africans had been unlawfully sold into slavery to begin with. Thanks to him, they returned to Africa as free men.

James Reynolds — Catalpa expedition rescued Irish from Australian prison

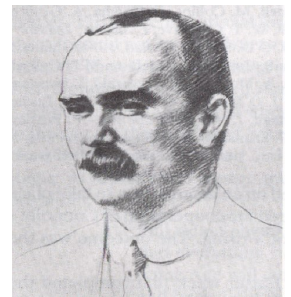
A native of County Cavan and a Great Hunger immigrant, James Reynolds' devotion to the cause of Irish freedom made possible the rescue of six Irish rebels from Australia in 1875-1876. Reynolds mortgaged his home in New Haven so that American Fenians could buy an old whaling ship, the *Catalpa*. After refitting, the *Catalpa* sailed on April 29, 1875, to Fremantle in Western Australia where the Irishmen were serving life sentences. Because the prison was so isolated, the inmates were allowed to work outside the walls. The American Fenians arranged for them to rendezvous with two carriages that took them to a nearby beach where a whaleboat from the *Catalpa* waited. Australian police attempted, but failed, to intercept the whaleboat before it could reach the *Catalpa*. The freed Fenians were welcomed in New York when the *Catalpa* docked on Aug. 19, 1876.

Fr. Lawrence Walsh — Waterbury priest played key role in Land League

The Catholic clergy and Irish rebels were often at odds with each other. The clergy opposed secret societies and did not endorse the use of force to secure Irish independence. One rebel organization that won support of the clergy, however, was the Land League in the early 1880s. The Land League fought to prevent the eviction of peasants from their cottages and to lower the rents landlords charged their tenants. One Connecticut priest, Father Lawrence Walsh, held high offices in the American Land League. A native of Rhode Island, Walsh was pastor of Immaculate Conception Church in Waterbury. He presided at one national convention of the league and was elected national treasurer. During his three years in office, he received funds from all over the United States and distributed an estimated \$210,000 to assist Irish peasants.

James Connolly — 1916 martyr was no stranger to Connecticut

Among the executions of the leaders of the Easter Rising, that of James Connolly earned special attention. Connolly was wounded in the fighting and was executed while tied in a chair because he could not stand. A dedicated socialist and commander of the Irish Citizen Army, Connolly was no stranger to Connecticut. He visited the state on a speaking tour in 1902, then returned to the United States in 1903 and stayed for seven years as a labor leader and advocate of workers' rights. In 1908, Connolly ran afoul of the law when he set up his stand and tried to lecture on socialism on Main Street in Bridgeport. Police Sgt. James O'Neill, told him that he was causing a crowd to gather and the crowd was obstructing road and sidewalk traffic. Connolly moved to another location when told there would be no lecture if he remained where he was.



James Connolly

Charlotte Molyneux Holloway — New London orator and organizer

When 3,000 Connecticut Irish people gathered on May 14, 1916, to organize a state chapter of the Friends of Irish Freedom, the only woman among many speakers was Charlotte Molyneux Holloway of New London. She was greeted, said one newspaper, "with an enthusiasm that was a faint echo of the esteem and appreciation in which she is held. Miss Holloway, who is a patriot, original and brilliant, referred to Ireland's heart which is bleeding today and will not cease until the wrongs of her martyrs are righted." For years before the Easter Rising, Holloway had lectured on Irish history and culture. After the Easter Rising, she organized chapters of the Friends of Irish Freedom throughout Connecticut and lobbied for the peace conference in Versailles to include Ireland among the small nations deserving to be freed from control by the imperial powers.

James M. Sullivan — 1916 suspect held in Kilmainham Gaol

A Connecticut lawyer with a long record of support for Irish independence was among those swept up in Dublin in the British dragnet during the Easter Rising. James M. Sullivan was arrested near the scene of the action in Dublin on April 28, a day before the last of the rebels surrendered. He was interrogated at Dublin Castle and held in Kilmainham Gaol for more than a week. Born in County Kerry, Sullivan worked as a newspaperman for the *Hartford Courant* and *Waterbury American*, before graduating from the Yale Law School in 1902. He practiced law in New Haven and was active in the Clan na Gael and the Ancient Order of Hibernians. His sister in New Haven, Mrs. Ethel O'Neill, said Sullivan went to Ireland to learn to use a moving picture camera in the hope that he could "bring Ireland to America" by producing films. When released on May 9, Sullivan complained bitterly about his treatment by his captors



James M. Sullivan

Eamon de Valera — Cousin Daniel Coll greeted Irish leader in Hartford

The American-born leader of the Easter Rising and later president of the Irish Republic visited Connecticut on a number of occasions not only to urge support for the Irish struggle for independence, but to visit his family. On his first visit to Hartford, part of a highly publicized fund-raising tour in June 1919, he was accompanied by his cousin, Daniel B. Coll, a World War I veteran and longtime resident of White Street in Hartford's storied south end. It was Coll's father, Ned, who 35 years earlier had brought de Valera, his two and a half-year old nephew, back to be reared in Bruree, County Limerick. As the political career of the "Long Fellow" progressed, his family connections to Hartford remained a point of interest within state periodicals, bringing a new, regionalized chapter to the family history of the Irish leader.



Eamon de Valera

Dan McAulife — Only Hartford young man to wear Irish Free State army uniform

In Aug. 1922, West Cork-born Hartford police Sgt. Daniel McAulife left the city, ostensibly to visit a sick relative in New Jersey. However, after a few weeks, it appeared that he had vanished, leaving his family behind in the capital city. In the coming months, McAulife was relieved of his post in Hartford, after it was revealed that he had returned to Ireland, in order to help his childhood friend Michael Collins operate through what was unequivocally a tumultuous political environment. With the outbreak of the Irish Civil War in June of 1922, McAulife drew upon his Hartford policing experience and assumed a position as head of the Free State Criminal Investigations Department. Despite his opposition, his son Dan Jr. also got involved in the effort promptly joining the Free State army after his family joined the AWOL detective in Ireland. Oral histories and archival research tell the full story.

Nora Brosnan McKenna — Memories of a rebel family in County Kerry

"This is my memory of 1916 to 1923," said a Milford woman, Nora Brosnan McKenna, in an interview 75 years after the events. "I was 10 years old and I knew the boys drilled every evening and weekends. All the kids watched them. My brother, Tadg, was commandant of West Kerry. Tadg was waiting for word from Dublin about the landing of the *Aud*, the ship bringing arms from Germany. In the meantime, the *Aud* was at anchor off the coast of Kerry. It was supposed to arrive on Easter Sunday, but instead arrived on Holy Thursday. Roger Case-ment was on board waiting for a pilot that never came. On Good Friday, he came ashore in a small boat and landed at Banna Strand, and took refuge in McKenna's fort — my husband's uncle's farm ... The Royal Irish Constabulary got a tip, went to Banna Strand and arrested him. He was taken to Tralee Jail, sent to England, tried and executed. On May 1, 1916, my brothers Tadg and Sean were arrested and taken to Dublin. Our local RIC sergeant — his name was Reagan — knew all Tadg's activities and was there to testify. Tadg was sentenced to life commuted to two years. He was sent to England to Dartmoor Prison. England was trying very hard to recruit the Irish to fight her war with Germany and in 1917 there was a general release of all political prisoners. Tadg came home and went right back into the fight."

Catherine Flanagan — Suffragist and rebel

Catherine Flanagan was a Connecticut Irish rebel who fought first for the right of American women to vote, then for Ireland's independence. She never spent time in an English prison, but she willingly went to jail in the struggle for women's suffrage. She was arrested for picketing at the White House in August 1917 and spent 30 days in jail. In 1919, she campaigned in five states for ratification of the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. That same year, Flanagan plunged into the fight for Irish independence. When the sister of Terence MacSwiney, the lord mayor of Cork who died after a 74-day hunger strike in prison, came to America, Flanagan served as her secretary on a speaking tour. After that, Flanagan set up office in Washington and lobbied U.S. senators to vote for recognition of the Republic of Ireland.



Catherine Flanagan

Edward J. Gavegan — Advocate for recognition of Irish Republic

A Connecticut-born lawyer was one of the foremost lobbyists for the United States to recognize the Irish Republic. The son of Irish immigrants in Windsor, Ct., Edward J. Gavegan was admitted to the bar in New York City in 1892 and elected to the Supreme Court of New York, First Judicial District, in 1910. Just two weeks after the Easter Rising, Gavegan was the principal speaker at a rally of 3,500 supporters of Irish independence in Carnegie Hall in New York City. While opinion makers across America were labeling the Easter week insurrection as everything from "crime and folly" to "high treason," "a tragic farce" and "a lost cause," Gavegan assured his audience that what had happened in Dublin was anything but a lost cause. Throughout the five crucial years after the 1916 rebellion, he spoke in venues across the nation and in appeals to Congress and to President Woodrow Wilson in support of the Irish Republic.

John Holland — Fenian Ram submarine helped families of 1916 rebellion



John Holland

A science teacher born in County Clare, John Holland immigrated to the United States in 1873 and began designing submersibles. His first submarine was built with the financial aid of the Irish Republican Brotherhood which saw in such a vessel a potential weapon to attack British shipping. The three-man submarine, named the *Fenian Ram*, performed well in trials in New York Harbor. However, a falling out between Holland and the Fenians ended the project. Holland continued his experimentation with shipbuilding and succeeded in developing the first submarine commissioned by the U.S. Navy. Named the *USS Holland*, it was launched in May 1897. Today, there is an exhibit and a collection of Holland's notes at the Submarine Force Library and Museum in Groton. After the breakup of Holland and the Fenians, the *Fenian Ram* was towed to New Haven, where it was stored for years in a shed at the ironworks of James Reynolds, the hero of the *Catalpa* rescue. After the 1916 Rising, Irish nationalists removed the 33-foot submarine from its shed in New Haven Harbor, put it on a barge and shipped it to New York City where it was a featured attraction in Madison Square Garden at a bazaar to raise funds for the victims of the 1916 rebellion. Thus, almost a half century after it was built, the *Fenian Ram* was used for its original purpose of aiding Ireland's struggle for independence.

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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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