A forum in Dublin in 2008, President Mary McAleese of the Irish Republic spoke of how we of the Irish Diaspora continue to cling to that small island on the farthest western shore of Europe whether we were born there or are two, three or more generations removed from it.

President McAleese pointed out that there are about 70 million of us scattered throughout the world, and she suggested that “there are subtleties and complexities around the nature of the Irish Diaspora that we need to comprehend … something palpable in the Irish psyche nudges us to be and keep on being community to one another … A deep appreciation of the emigrant experience and an affinity with a sense of Irishness — however that is interpreted — are defining characteristics of the global Irish family. Our culture and heritage are powerful instruments of connection.”

Irish Diaspora in Connecticut

The “something palpable in the Irish psyche” that McAleese spoke of certainly exists in Connecticut. Located between New York and Boston, two of the busiest ports of entry for Irish Diaspora immigrants over the centuries, Connecticut today is the eighth most Irish state in our nation, according to IrishCentral. More than 17 percent of Connecticut’s people are of Irish descent. Irish organizations abound and a steady stream of Irish events flows year-round from every nook and cranny in our Land of Steady Habits.

There are two Connecticut chapters of the international organization Comhaltas Ceoltoiri Eireann — meaning Society of Musicians of Ireland. The P.V. O’Donnell chapter is centered in Milford, the Burke, Curry, Seery chapter near Hartford. There is in New Haven the Gaelic Players who just celebrated a half century of staging the dramas of Irish playwrights. The Greater Danbury Irish Cultural Center sponsors a Theatre Troupe that teaches children age three through 10 “self-confidence, team building and community service while learning music and theater skills.”

The ancient Irish sport of hurling can be played and watched in Stamford, New Haven, Hartford and Storrs. In New London, a remarkable group of Irish athletes keep alive the ancient Irish tradition of curraching by competing in races with half a dozen other currach rowers groups throughout North America.

The Milford and Fairfield Irish clubs and the Connecticut Irish-American Historical Society have genealogy groups that meet monthly to do research on family histories and help others do so. The Gaelic American Club in Fairfield also has an Irish Literature Group.

In New Haven, Hartford, Stamford, Milford, Bridgeport, Norwich, Essex and Mystic, Irish marchers parade on St. Patrick’s Day. In the summer, New Haven, Milford and Danbury sponsor one-day or weekend festivals that feature everything from Irish food to Irish football, music and dancing.

Scattered throughout the state also are sites of Irish significance: in New London where Monte Cristo Cottage commemorates the nation’s greatest playwright, Eugene O’Neill, who spent summers in his boyhood there in the 1890s; in Waterbury, St. Patrick’s Church where all the stained glass windows depict scenes from the life of our patron saint and all the inscriptions are in Gaelic; in Bridgeport where is a statue of Baseball Hall of Fame honoree James O’Rourke, one of the many Irish all-stars of early major league baseball; in Woodstock’s historic district where stands the 1770s John Flynn cottage, the home of an Irishman who answered the Lexington Alarm at the start of the war that won America’s independence.

Academically, Connecticut colleges offer a full platter of Irish studies at Sacred Heart University, Central Connecticut State University, Fairfield University and the University of Connecticut. The website of the latter’s “An Ghaeilge in Ollscoil Connecticut” boasts: “UConn is one of the very few places in the U.S. where one can study Irish from its earliest forms to its most contemporary …”

Ireland’s Great Hunger Museum

Among the state’s higher education institutions, Quinnipiac University has been a pacesetter. Quinnipiac first offered some Irish studies courses and then in September 2000 established a collection of books and artworks focusing on the most catastrophic event in all of Irish history: the famine of the late 1840s that took the lives of more than a million Irish people and sent another million fleeing to the far corners of the Earth. The immediate cause of that event (Please turn to page 2)
Great Hunger Museum
(Continued from page 1)

was the failure of the potato crop throughout Ireland in 1845, 1846 and 1848. The underlying and true cause was that England occupied Ireland as a colony for centuries, gradually stripping land ownership and civil rights from ninth-tenths of the Irish population.

The Great Hunger collection of books and artworks was created thanks to the vision of Quinnipiac President John L. Lahey and the generosity of a Jewish family, the Lenders of New Haven. From a room in the university’s library it grew by 2013 to its current home, a former library building on Whitney Avenue several miles south of the campus. The building is large enough to display sculptures, maps, paintings and sketches, and also has a lecture room which has become a popular venue for presentations for adults and classes and workshops about hunger and justice for children.

The museum and its collection have become known internationally. In summer 2018, the artworks were sent to Ireland on tour. They drew large crowds. Christine Kinealy, director of the Great Hunger Institute at Quinnipiac, said, “I know how much excitement and interest this tour has generated ... Irish people are looking at the story of the Great Hunger through a different lens, that of art, and finding it a powerful and poignant experience.”

An author and lecturer on the Great Hunger and on Irish history, Kinealy has enriched the Quinnipiac initiative with a variety of projects. In 2017, she organized a two-day conference on the topic “Children and the Great Hunger,” and in 2018, an exhibit marking the 200th anniversary of the birth of Frederick Douglass, the African-American writer who himself was born a slave in Baltimore. In 1845, in the first year of the Great Hunger, Douglass fled to Ireland to avoid arrest as a runaway slave in the United States.

On June 12-15, 2019, Kinealy will preside at a Quinnipiac conference titled, “Famines in Ireland Before 1845 and After 1852.” The upcoming conference is just one indication of the richness and depth that Quinnipiac’s Great Hunger initiatives have added to the Irish cultural scene in Connecticut. Who else even knows about, much less is encouraging research, on the whole series of death-dealing famines suffered by the Irish people in the 18th and 19th centuries? The sponsorship of such conferences is an impelling reason for the Quinnipiac museum to be maintained.

Unfortunately, in recent days the future of Quinnipiac’s Great Hunger Museum has become questionable. The new university president, Judy D. Olian, has announced that the Great Hunger Museum will be closed if it cannot become financially independent by June 2020. Lynn Bushnell, vice president for public affairs, explained, “Ireland’s Great Hunger Museum ... is not facing imminent closure, however its situation is serious. The university has asked the museum to become a self-sustaining institution and is giving the museum some time to build a donor base. If the museum is to continue, it needs the financial support of the community.”

A number of Connecticut Irish groups are collaborating to find ways to support the museum. One immediate remedy is for individuals interested in Irish culture and history to become dues paying members of the Great Hunger Museum. President George Waldron has urged all members of the Connecticut Irish-American Historical Society to join the museum, and that society is working on other ways to spread the word.

Should such efforts fail, the loss of the museum would be a setback for the study and understanding of what was not only a horrific disaster in the history of Ireland, but also one of the major immigration stories in the history of the United States. In the years 1847 to 1855, 892,000 Irish immigrants entered the United States through the port of New York, to say nothing of others entering through Boston, Baltimore, New Orleans and Quebec.

Most of the memorials in the United States to that huge immigration are granite and steel monuments that recognize the disaster, but do nothing to preserve the stories of the immigrants themselves, nor to explain how it all came about, what its impact was and what lessons we should learn from it. Only one “monument,” Quinnipiac University’s Great Hunger Museum is devoted to study, research and display of the Irish Great Hunger. To be sure, there are American colleges and universities that have Irish studies touching on the famine, but only here in Connecticut do we have an entire museum with ongoing research, exhibits and conferences on that topic.

Other important moments and eras in United States history are recognized in museums: the United States Holocaust Museum and the National Museum of African-American History and Culture in Washington, D.C.; the Cherokee Trail of Tears Museum in Tahlequah, Oklahoma; the World War II Japanese American Internment Museum in McGehee, Arkansas; the Chinese American Museum in Chicago and the Acadian Museum in Erath, Louisiana. It will be shameful indeed if a university of the caliber of Quinnipiac and an Irish Diaspora of the size and vitality of that in Connecticut cannot find enough common ground to preserve a promising young museum that commemorates the circumstances and the end results that brought about a million starving Irish to America.

This article that began with the wisdom of a woman who was president of the Irish Republic, will end with the wisdom of another woman president of the Irish Republic. Speaking at a memorial to the Great Hunger in County Roscommon in 1995, President Mary Robinson said, “In the museum in Strokestown, there is a vivid and careful re-telling of what happened during the Famine. When we stand in front of those images, I believe we have a responsibility to understand them in human terms now, not just in Irish terms then. They should inspire us to be a strong voice ... for the cause and the cure of conditions that predispose to world hunger ...”

At the moment in Connecticut there is a museum that inspires visitors with just that message. Hopefully, Quinnipiac University and Connecticut’s Irish community working together will find a way to ensure that the message and the inspiration continue.

The Great Hunger Museum in Hamden has only just begun to fulfill its mission. We who are in some manner involved in the current situation have a choice: to find a way to make it work or to throw up our hands and say it is not worth the effort.

Rather than marking the end of what has proved to be an excellent idea, the difficulties casting doubt on the future of this museum can be a new starting point — if we choose.
A tale of two cities
New Haven Puritans invited to colonize Galway

The histories of Connecticut and Ireland have been intertwined for almost four centuries. In the vast majority of cases, the storyline has been the immigration of Irish men and women to Connecticut. The immigration began as a mere trickle in the mid-1600s, grew to a tidal wave in the latter half of the 19th century and continued at a moderate rate up to the late 20th century.

But, on one occasion in the 1650s the storyline was totally reversed when a group of English Puritan colonists were invited to leave New Haven and to take over — lock, stock and barrel — the city of Galway on the west coast of Ireland. How that came about is not very significant in the overall story of Connecticut’s Irish history, but it is a fascinating little tidbit.

Puritan refugees arrive

The story began on June 26, 1637, with the arrival in Boston of two ships from England. One ship was named The Hector, and the other was nameless. Their cargo comprised several hundred immigrants led by Theophilus Eaton, a London businessman, and the Rev. John Davenport, a Puritan clergyman.

Eaton was born in 1591 in Oxfordshire in southeastern England. As a young man, he became a merchant apprentice and established his own company to trade with Baltic seaports. Davenport was born in 1597 in Coventry in the English midlands. An Oxford graduate and an inspiring preacher as vicar of St. Stephens Church in London, he was drawn gradually toward the Puritan reform movement and thus suspected of disloyalty by the Anglican hierarchy. Like many other Puritan clergymen, he took refuge in Holland, but secretly returned to London in 1636 and with Eaton began planning to immigrate to New England.

The expedition they organized was composed, according to New Haven historian John L. Rockey, “of men of wealth, education and influence, most of them being the old parishioners of Mr. Davenport’s at St. Stephen’s Church.” Upon arrival in Boston, the immigrant Puritans were “warmly welcomed and every effort was made to persuade them to settle in the Massachusetts Bay colony.”

However, Eaton, Davenport and their comrades had something entirely different in mind. They were determined to make a totally fresh start, picking their own location. Dominated by London merchants and traders, the newcomers believed they could establish a thriving commercial city if they could just find a coastal site with a good harbor and access to inland waterways and the open sea.

Connecticut beckoned

Fortunately, at the time of their arrival, just such a place was available. Southwest of the Massachusetts Bay colony is Connecticut with almost 100 miles of coast on Long Island Sound, numerous harbors and waterways to the interior.

Both Dutch and English colonizers were beginning to recognize Connecticut’s advantages. The Dutch in New Amsterdam were a step ahead. In June 1633, they built Connecticut’s first European settlement, a fur trading outpost at what eventually became the city of Hartford.

Three months later, Puritans from Plymouth, Mass., established Windsor, Connecticut. Three more English settlements followed quickly: 1634 at Wethersfield, 1635 at Old Saybrook and 1636 at Hartford.

In May and June 1637, as The Hector was arriving in Boston, English settlers from these first Connecticut towns and from Massachusetts raised militia units that quickly cleared away the biggest hurdle to further colonization of Connecticut. In several very one-sided battles, the Englishmen all but annihilated the Pequot Indian tribe which occupied much of the shore and interior of Connecticut.

After the brief Pequot War, the militiamen wrote glowing reports about “that fine tract of country on the sea-coast from Saybrook to Fairfield.”

Of special interest to the Eaton and Davenport immigrants was a shoreline area known as Quinnipiac in mid-Connecticut. The site was described as a place “which hath a fair river fit for harboring of ships, and abounds with rich and goodly meadows … very fertile and well adapted for navigation and commerce.”

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(Continued from page 3)

In early September 1637, Eaton organized a scouting party of 20 men who sailed westward to visit Quinnipiac. So impressed were they that they constructed a hut large enough to shelter seven of their number during the coming winter. Eaton and the other 12 then returned to Massachusetts to prepare to resettle the whole company come spring.

At the end of March 1638, about 300 men, women and children sailed for their new home in Connecticut. They arrived on April 24 and quickly began laying out nine residential squares including a large green near the waterfront.

The Puritans had good reason to be optimistic about the future of their seacoast city which they named New Haven. They were the wealthiest group of English immigrants in colonial America and among them were movers and shakers, financiers, brokers, sea captains and sailors.

New Haven expands

The new city began to attract other Puritan immigrants and to add to its holdings immediately. In May 1639, the first ship that came to New Haven from England brought a group of immigrants who within four months had purchased from the Quinnipiac Indians the tract of land that became Guilford.

Within two years, the New Haven company purchased the land that became Branford, a territory 40 miles to the west that became Stamford and land on the eastern tip of Long Island that became Southold, N.Y.

In the winter of 1638-1639, George Lamberton, New Haven’s most experienced ship captain, sailed his barque south along the Atlantic coast in search of trade. He discovered and reported back to New Haven that Indians dwelling along the Susquehanna and Delaware rivers annually brought an abundance of animal furs to Delaware Bay to barter with Dutch and Swedish traders.

New Haveners sent Lamberton with a crew of 20 workmen to purchase land and construct trading posts on the New Jersey side of Delaware Bay. What New Haveners saw as an opportunity, however, was considered a flagrant intrusion by the Dutch and Swedes who were already there. The Dutch sent two warships loaded with soldiers. Finding a blockhouse and dwellings, they “burnt the buildings, gave the Englishmen two hours to pack up, took them prisoners and shipped them to Manhattan.”

The Swedes arrested Lamberton on charges that he had traded unlawfully with the Indians and had conspired to massacre all the Swedes and Dutch. The charges were eventually dismissed but with a finding that the English had “no place at or in or around this river.”

The negative outcome of their Delaware project threw a damper on the hopes of the New Haveners to build a mercantile empire on the east coast of America. Stymied in their effort to expand very much beyond Connecticut, they pinned their hopes on developing a profitable trans-Atlantic trade.

From the time the New Haven colony was founded, goods destined for England had been sent mostly by sloop to Boston, and transferred to ocean-going vessels for shipment to England. Now the focus would be on establishing a direct commercial shipping link between New Haven and London.

With Eaton himself as their leader, a company of New Haven merchants prepared to invest in acquisition of an ocean-going ship. In 1646, a ship with a cargo capacity of 150 tons was purchased in Rhode Island. Known only as the “Great Shippe,” it was brought to New Haven harbor that autumn and filled with a cargo of goods thought to be marketable in England and 70 passengers.

Rather than wait for spring, the departure was scheduled for January 1647 in weather so harsh that New Haven harbor was frozen over with a thick layer of ice. Crews of workmen were required to hack a passage through the ice. The ship’s captain, George Lamberton, was concerned about the seaworthiness of the ship, saying that it might prove to be the grave of its passengers and crew. Another account said the ship set sail with “many fears as well as prayers and tears.”

Great Shippe lost

Townspeople including the Rev Davenport followed along on the ice as the Great Shippe was inching out of the harbor. When it finally reached open water, Davenport was said to have offered an almost funereal prayer: “Lord if it be Thy pleasure to bury these our friends in the bottom of the sea, they are Thine. Save them.”

His blessing proved to be prophetic for once it hove out of sight that day, the Great Shippe was never seen nor heard from again. Vessels arriving from England that spring carried no news and eventually, New Haveners could only hope for some supernatural indication of its plight.

Supposedly, such a sign came to pass in June that year when after a thunderstorm a phantom ship appeared in the sky coming up the harbor. Townspeople watched in horror as the sails were blown off and the ship capsized and vanished. The terrified spectators believed they had seen a sign that their ship had perished on its voyage, and the mirage became a part of the folklore of New England. In one of the earliest histories of New Haven, written in 1838, Edward R. Lambert describes the people’s
agony: "The loss of their ship, with the former losses they had sustained, made the colonists despair of bettering their position by trade, and thinking themselves but poorly calculated to engage in agricultural pursuits, they formed the design of quitting the country ...

Civil war in England

While New Haven’s Puritans thus began to consider immigrating elsewhere, their English homeland was experiencing an era of political and religious upheaval.

Many elements were involved: issues of the rights and powers of kings vs. those of parliaments; the status of England, Scotland and Ireland in the British Isles; continuing antagonisms from the Reformation that had splintered Christianity throughout Europe in the 1500s. The last thing England needed to deal with those problems was a political leader who was contentious and authoritarian. Unfortunately that is exactly what England got when King Charles I ascended to the throne in 1625.

The English king’s weaknesses were so destructive that historian Albert E. Van Dusen mentioned them as a factor in the history of Connecticut. “Charles possessed a genius for earning quick and deep enmity from many of his subjects,” wrote Van Dusen “… Add to a rigorous Anglican religious policy, arbitrary taxation, flouting of Parliament and economic depression and one can see why the situation of the late 1620s set many Englishmen to thinking of a fresh start in the New World.”

At the beginning of his 24-year reign, Charles angered many of his subjects by marrying the Roman Catholic sister of the king of France. He then dissolved Parliament three times and eventually dissolved it for another 11 years. He involved England in warfare with both Spain and France. By forcing a new prayer book on the people he antagonized many of the Scots and then waged an unsuccessful war with Scotland.

The chaos of this era spawned a group of religious dissenters called Puritans. Seeking piety and simplicity in their religion, the Puritans gradually gained enough political strength to challenge not only the Church of England but also King Charles. From 1642 to 1649, open warfare raged between forces loyal to the king and those raised by the Puritan representatives in Parliament.

Finally, in January 1649, after years of warfare mingled with negotiations King Charles I was indicted by Parliament on a charge of treason. On Jan. 26, he was convicted and sentenced to death. His death warrant was signed by 59 parliamentarians. The king was publicly beheaded on Jan. 30, 1649.

Parliament then declared the nation a republic, the Commonwealth of England. One of the government’s first actions was to send an army commanded by its most capable general, Oliver Cromwell, to Ireland to put an end once and for all the centuries long resistance of the Irish to English rule.

Cromwell rose from relative obscurity to a seat in Parliament in 1628. He had a reputation of being “a highly visible and volatile” member of Parliament. He was the first to demand the abolition of bishops in the Church of England and he led a campaign to force the king to call annual sessions of the legislative body. In addition, he proved to be a brilliant military commander. Commissioned a captain in 1642, he was promoted to colonel of cavalry in 1643 and lieutenant general from 1645 to 1649.

With a 12,000-man army, comprised mostly of veterans of the recent English Civil War, Cromwell landed at Ringsend near Dublin in mid-August 1649. On Sept. 11, the invaders began a nine-month campaign at Drogheda in the Boyne Valley.

When the garrison there refused to surrender, Cromwell slaughtered about 3,000 soldiers and civilians. A similar slaughter followed on Oct. 11 at Wexford.

Cromwell blamed the brutality on the Irish who had rebelled in Ulster in 1641. “I am persuaded,” he wrote, “that this is a righteous judgment of God upon these barbarous wretches, who have imbrued their hands in so much innocent blood and that it will tend to prevent the effusion of blood for the future…”

His army’s campaign continued, but for the most part less brutal, into the late summer of 1650 at New Ross, Carrickfergus, Kilkenny and Carlow. The countryside was left in shambles, the people in misery.

Cromwell himself returned to England in May 1650, leaving the army to continue to the west of Ireland in charge of his son-in-law Henry Ireton. “One by one,” wrote an historian, “cities and towns fell to Ireton … Waterford fell in August 1650, in June 1651, Athlone surrendered … From June to October 1651, Ireton laid siege to Limerick … When Limerick capitulated in October 1651, Galway alone remained…”

Galway besieged

Located on the west coast of Ireland, Galway had been a busy seaport since ancient times, and had survived numerous assaults. It was visited by Vikings in A.D. 924, was the site of a fort built by the O’Connor clan in A.D. 1124, and was captured by Anglo-Normans in A.D. 1235.

Galway was exactly the kind of city that the settlers of New Haven had dreamed of founding. In 2012, on the 360th anniversary of the siege by Cromwell and Ireton’s army, historian Chris Doyle described the early grandeur of the city: “Medieval Galway was a wealthy trading post. Described as a place fit for king and princes, the town’s wealth derived from its long established trade with Spain, Portugal and France. Visitors to Galway were impressed by the wealth of the town evident in its many illustrious mansions and civic building, of which only fragments exist today … Carved window frames, inscriptions, ornamental fireplaces, coats of arm and the

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doorways of long demolished medieval mansions ... give some idea of the near vanished glory which was medieval Galway."

In the early 1640s, the city’s residents, alarmed by the unsettled and turbulent state of the times, reinforced Galway’s fortifications. They repaired the walls surrounding the city, built new towers and ramparts, strengthened gates and added 12 heavy cannon purchased in France on the parapets.

The people’s concerns were justified for in 1651 Galway became the final target of Cromwell’s Irish campaign. Rather than attempt an assault on the city, English forces led by Sir Charles Coote began a land and sea siege on Aug. 12 that year. Coote’s 6,000 troops dug trenches outside the fortifications while English warships prowled Galway Bay and the River Corrib to cut off any attempt to land food and supplies.

**Galway surrenders**

Inside the city were about 2,000 civilians and soldiers. The siege was slow but effective. Ships loaded with corn to feed residents were captured before they could dock in the harbor. And attempts by Galway militia to drive herds of cattle into the city were turned back with heavy casualties. Hunger grew into famine and after eight months the city surrendered on April 12, 1652.

The initial surrender terms appeared generous with residents of the city allowed to remain in their homes. However, shortly thereafter a monthly domicile tax was levied. If residents failed to pay, soldiers entered homes and took what they could lay their hands on. The tax collection was only the beginning of what became one of Ireland’s grimmest eras.

In 1653, Parliament made Cromwell the head of state of England, Ireland and Scotland with the unusual title of “Lord Protector.” He and the English government planned a massive redistribution of land in Ireland with Protestant landlords and tenants replacing all Catholics.

The first step was to rid Ireland of the rebellious elements. To that end, thousands of Irish men and women were transported to the West Indies as indentured servants, and other thousands of Irish soldiers were allowed to leave the country and serve in the French and Spanish armies.

The Catholic religion was outlawed. Catholics were forbidden from public life, bound to be strictly for Irish natives.

The second district would be along the eastern seacoast and would be reserved strictly for English people or non-English Protestants such as Dutch, Swiss and Germans. No Irish — not even servants or tenants — would be allowed there. Being closest to England, this district could easily be defended in case of a rebellion.

The third district would consist of territories in the middle of Ireland between the completely Irish inhabited Connaught in the west and the completely English district in the east.

Irish and English might mingle in the middle district, but the Irish would have to be authorized to live there case by case. Numerous restrictions were placed on Irish wishing to dwell in the third district: only English could be spoken, only Protestants could teach in schools, houses would have to be built with chimneys as in the English custom and surnames with “O” and “Mac” would not be allowed.

**Irish officials fired**

For Galway city, the resettlement plan went into effect with an order in October 1654 that the mayor and all other municipal officials must be both English and Protestants, while Irish or Papist officers were to be removed.

That order was followed in July 1655 with one stating that “all persons who claimed or had any right to any houses or other real estate within or contiguous to the town, being popish recusants, should remove themselves and their families thereout before the first of November.” Should they refuse or neglect to do so, the city officers and soldiers would remove them.

On Oct. 30 that year another order commanded that “all the Irish and other popish inhabitants should be forthwith removed out of the town in order that accommodation should be provided for such English Protestants whose integrity to the state would entitle them to be trusted in a place..."
Galway city historian John Hardiman wrote that the orders "were carried out with unrelenting severity. The wretched inhabitants without distinction of rank or sex, except a few who were oppressed by sickness and years were driven out of town in the midst of winter ... and were forced to take shelter by the ditches and in cabins in the country without fire or sufficient clothing, in consequence of which many fell victims to the uncommon inclemency of the season."

"Thus deprived of its inhabitants, who were succeeded only by soldiery, the town presented the appearance of a military camp, without either order or regularity and soon fell to decay."

**Galway, Jamaica invitations**

Another aspect of the resettlement plan was that Protestants of whatever nationality would be welcomed throughout Ireland, especially welcome would be Puritans who had fled England and settled in America during the rule of King Charles I.

John P. Prendergast, an historian of the Cromwellian era, described the outcome of the clearing-out of natives: "Ireland was now like an empty hive, ready to receive a new swarm ... The English looked through both worlds for plants of a godly seed and generation to out-plant and out-grow the relics of the Irish race ... One of the earliest efforts of the government towards replanting the parts ... was to turn toward the lately expatriated English in America."

The English government sent word that New England's settlers would be welcomed and well treated if they immigrated to Ireland. At least a few New Yorkers responded. In early 1655, unnamed returnees from New England sought out land in the seaport of Sligo town, and on Oyster Island and Coney Island in Sligo Bay. A year later, New Englanders John Stone and John Barker and their families arrived in Limerick and were accepted as tenants of 50 and 30 acres at Garristown in County Dublin. There seems to be no evidence whether these families were from Connecticut.

Lord Protector Oliver Cromwell took a personal interest in selling American Puritans on the idea of resettling in Ireland. Cromwell had friends and cousins in the New Haven Colony. He was aware, too, that New Haveners were discontented that they were unable to expand their colony in America and he offered them a tempting real estate deal: the city of Galway as their new home. The city would be "a small distinct province for themselves." They would have the same freedom they had in New Haven to establish their religious and political institutions. They alone would decide which Irish people, if any, they wanted to live among them.

New Haveners discussed Cromwell's offer and, according to one contemporary historian, they even "entered into some treaties about the city of Galway." Eventually, however, they decided to remain in Connecticut. No documents have survived of the correspondence between Cromwell and the New Haveners.

However, Cromwell did make a similar offer to the Puritans in the Massachusetts Bay colony, and a reply that some of them made indicated that they were pondering his offer, but would wait to make a decision. Apparently no such sufficient call was made for there was no immigration from Massachusetts or Connecticut to Galway city.

Galway was not the only resettlement choice that Cromwell offered the Puritans of New Haven. Several years later he made a personal appeal to them to consider the island of Jamaica in the West Indies.

Jamaica had been wrested from Spanish control in 1655 in an invasion planned by Cromwell. It immediately became one of the destinations for the men and women Cromwell was shipping out of Ireland. In the late 1600s, two-thirds of the 4,500 white people on the island were Irish.

In September 1656, Cromwell sent with a ship sailing to New England a letter addressed to New Haven residents. The purpose of the letter was "to describe the situation and goodness" of Jamaica.

The letter first pointed out how safe the New England Puritans would be in Jamaica because 7,000 well armed English troops were stationed there, and an English fleet in nearby waters at all times.

Cromwell expressed concern for the New Haveners who, he wrote, had been "driven from the land of their nativity into that desert and barren wilderness," and he urged them, "to remove to a land of plenty." He promised them that in Jamaica a location would be given them on some good harbor, that it would belong to them and their heirs forever without payment of rent for seven years, and then just one penny per acre. Twenty acres would be given to each male above 12 years of age; and 10 to every male or female.

Six ships would be sent to New Haven for their transportation to Jamaica. And the New Haveners would share in governing the island, "one of their number to be from time to time appointed governor and commander-in-chief."

New Haven residents were tempted for they debated the offer at a town meeting. Eventually, however, they responded: "Though they cannot but acknowledge the great love and tender respect to His Highness the Lord Protector to New England in general and to this colony in particular, yet for diverse reasons they cannot conclude that God calls them to a present remove."

New Haven historian Atwater wrote: "The disposition to find a place more favorably situated for commerce seems from this time to have yielded to a purpose to make the best of the opportunities afforded by New Haven ..."

**The ironies of history**

From the distance of three centuries, the decision of the Puritans to remain in New England seems to have been very sensible.

History made short shrift of the fantasy that Irish natives could be swept out of their centuries old city and forever replaced by English colonists. Oliver Cromwell died in 1658, the English Protectorate government collapsed a year later. It took a bit longer to restore Galway, but when King James II ascended to the throne in 1685, the restoration began. In July 1686, 160 Irish Catholic merchants and dealers were readmitted to the city. The next month, John Kirwan Fitz-Stephen, a Norman-Irish Catholic was elected mayor. And during the year 1687, according to historian Hardiman, "multitudes of the former natives and their families flocked to the city."

Galway and all of Ireland still had centu-

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(Continued from Page 7) A series of English rule ahead, but for the moment they were an Irish city and nation once again.

It appears that no New Haven Puritans at all settled in Galway. Ironically, the son and namesake of Gov. Theophilus Eaton, one of the two leaders of the New Haven Colony, did settle in Ireland. Theophilus Jr. — or Ellis as he was known — was living in Dublin when his father died in New Haven in January 1658. Ellis married an Irish woman and lived his life out in Dublin.

For its part, New Haven not only survived as a Puritan colony, but later became the largest city in the Connecticut colony, a busy seaport, an industrial hub and a center of higher education.

Ironic too is the fact that New Haven became not only the kind of city its Puritan founders dreamed of, but also eventually the most Irish city in Connecticut, a state which is one of the most Irish in the nation.

The 1900 U.S. census returns list the names of 10,562 natives of Ireland in New Haven, to say nothing of the multitude of second and third generations of Irish. In fact, just a year before that census, Irishman Cornelius T. Driscoll had been elected the city’s first immigrant mayor.

And again ironically, today one annual event on the New Haven Green — that was the center of the city planned by its Puritan founders — is a raising of the tri-color flag of the Republic of Ireland in honor of the April 1916 Easter Rebellion in Dublin, the first shot in the war that finally led to Ireland’s independence.