Chinese-Irish love affair blossomed, then withered

In the recently published anthology, The New York Irish, an entire chapter is devoted to the fairly common 19th century custom of Chinese-Irish marriages.

"Chinese-Irish marriages were sufficiently noticeable in New York City," writes John Kuo Wei Tchen, "to merit regular comment in the city's newspapers, even warranting caricatures and drawings, which dominated the media's representation of Chinese in New York City.

"Harper's Weekly" reported in 1857 that 28 Irish women selling apples have "gone the way of matrimony with their elephant-eyed, olive skinned contemporaries ... And decades later, in 1890, Harper's Weekly devoted a double-page centerfold spread showing a Chinese-Irish couple and their children.

"Those familiar with New York immigration and settlement patterns would not be totally surprised by this Irish-Chinese phenomenon. Chinese immigrants could be found in the Fourth and Sixth Wards of Lower Manhattan ... Many Irish lived in these two wards up until the time of Italian and Jewish immigration ..."

Although it is not mentioned in The New York Irish, there was at least one Connecticut tie in all of this: In 1892, Katie McCormack, an Irish girl from Hartford took up with a New York Chinese resident named Chu Fong.

The romance began when Katie, "a young woman with fair skin and blue eyes," took the train from Hartford to visit relatives who were among the Irish living in Chinatown.

(Please turn to Page 3)

Etiquette stressed at Irish dancing prof's New Year gala

A reception sponsored by dancing instructor P.H. Kelley — known formally as Professor Kelley — was one of the major events of the holiday season in Meriden in 1897.

The reception was held on the evening of Dec. 30 at the Grand Army of the Republic Hall. Kerr's Orchestra provided the music and those attending included 50 of Kelley's students from Meriden along with their partners and large delegations from the Irish instructor's dancing classes in Southington and New Britain.

"Elaborate preparations have been made for the event," commented the Meriden Morning Record, "not the least of which is a novel program issued by the instructor. The cover represents a life-like, half-tone photograph reproduction of Professor Kelley, and on the reverse side a pen and ink reproduction of the correct waltz position with the motto, 'So stands the statue that enchants the world.'"

(Please turn to Page 2)
Famine Journal  January - February 1849  #21

Perspective

The arrival of 1849 brought no relief from the Famine in Ireland. In fact, 3 1/2 years after the potato crop first failed in 1845, the death and destitution were as widespread as ever. Death by starvation was common, death from disease was on the increase in the crowded workhouses and the death toll was mounting from an outbreak of cholera in Ulster. Also increasing rapidly was the pace of evictions.

Reports from throughout the country indicated the new year would bring an even larger emigration than the early years of the Famine. "It is a growing expectation in Ireland," the London Times said in an editorial, "that we are now about to witness one of the most momentous operations of society - the removal of a people en masse to a distant shore. The half million who have got off with no very great stir in the course of two years are but an advanced guard to the mass of half-grown roots, small in size, bad in quality and frequently black and decayed in appearance.

Of livestock, the number in the hands of tenant-farmers is evidently diminishing. The decrease is observable in all descriptions - cows, sheep, horses and swine, particularly the latter. We do not perceive agricultural operations with a view of preparing for a future crop, progressing to any extent among the farmers generally. Many of the small holders have left their land, up to this, altogether untouched and few of the larger occupiers are making extensive arrangements for the coming season. Moreover, the quantity of land surrendered, deserted or the last occupier of which was removed, is considerable and is now in great measure waste. This coupled with the roofless cottages, dilapidated fences, and almost total absence of cattle or sheep, stacks of corn or pits of potatoes, from the fields, gives to many districts of the union a desolate and disheartening appearance, and affords but a gloomy prospect for the next harvest..."

There is scarcely any employment now for the labouring population of this union, with the exception of two or three of the larger proprietors who still keep a few men at work, chiefly consisting of small holders of land who are not eligible for relief under the poor law, there is little or no demand for agricultural labourers... The recent increase of disease - principally fever and dysentery - has added another item to the difficulties of the union. Probably arising from cold and wet, superadded to insufficiency of wholesome food and the absence of proper covering, the progress of sickness amongst the poorer classes since winter set in has been rapid, and in many cases fatal...

Evictions In Dingle

London Times, Jan. 6, 1849
- The Limerick Chronicle publishes the subjoined 'black list' of evictions in Kerry: From the lands of Cahirtran, the property of Lord Ventry and in a parish whence that nobleman's title is derived, 36 families, comprising 188 souls, have been expelled. From the lands of Dunshean, the property of Lord Ventry, 24 families including 113 individuals, have been exterminated. From the same townland, belonging to the same nobleman, 7 families of one acre holders, comprising 37 persons, have been driven forth. From Cahirquin, the property of Lord Ventry, 11 families, numbering 49 human beings, have been thrust out by process of law. From Clontrab, in the parish of Dunlavel, the property of Lord Ventry, 10 families, numbering 40 human beings, have been deprived of house or holding. From the townland of Cappagh, in the parish of Clahane, not far from the shores of Brandon, and belonging, too, to Lord Ventry, 19 families, comprising 97 Christian beings, have been ejected by a posse of bailiffs acting under the power of English law. Total of recent evictions from Lord Ventry's property near Dingle, 170 families, 552 souls.

... And Elsewhere

London Times, Jan. 5, 1849
- The Athlone Sentinel has the following statement: The number of ejectments tried last week at the Roscommon and Meath Quarter Sessions incredibly exceeds the usual number for hearing. Very few of the unfortunate creatures were able to take defence, and were in almost all cases ejected. A fresh mass of human beings will, consequently, be sent on the world to augment the existing misery.
Black men attending military review heard stirring appeal for freedom

An African-American spoke out strongly for freedom at Chappell's Tavern near Norwich in October 1845 during "a military review of the colored population" of that community.

"My countrymen and fellow citizens," said a black official whose name unfortunately was not mentioned, "...we are well aware of the many disadvantages we labour under from the great prejudice that exists amongst the community at large and superstition, bigotry, fanaticism and slavery that have cursed our race from the foundation of this government and most sensible I am that the day is not far distant when a purely democratic government will burst our fetters and proclaim to an outraged world that the colored man is free.

"Free in thought, free in body and the election franchise throughout this widespread republic. Then and not until then will this be a happy country or a happy people.

"However much remains to be done by our people and for that reason I would wish to impress upon the minds of all our people the great necessity of organizations, overt concert in actions and indomitable spirit of perseverance that alone will insure our speedy triumph.

"Let us be up and a doing then and use every possible effort to inform ourselves and others in knowledge and understanding. Let us endeavor to cultivate in our minds good, honest, upright principles in our dealings with mankind and show to the world although our complexion be dark by our daily proceedings and good conduct that we are men possessed with the same natural intellect and powers of mind as the white man and why are we deprived and cut off from the rights and privileges we are entitled to. Our forefathers fought, bled and died to gain the freedom and liberty of our country and why not ought we to enjoy the lawful rights of our country as well as the white man ..."

Editor's note: In recognition of the bond between our historical society and the other societies in the Ethnic Heritage Center, and to foster appreciation for all races and nationalities, we print in each issue of The Shannachie one story about another ethnic group.

Old city directories, available in many public libraries and in archives such as the Connecticut State Library in Hartford, are a treasurehouse of information for the genealogist.

The following is a list of Irish names extracted by Paul from both the Bridgeport Directory and Annual Advertiser of 1865-68. Searches of other city and town directories could produce equally valuable listings.

Abbreviations used in the directory include: n for near; h for house; c for corner; bds for boarders; av for avenue, ED for Eastern District, H for Housatonic Railroad, ext for extension; ft for foot; mach for machinist; mech for mechanic; n for near; rr for railroad.

Ahern, John, fish and meats, 284 Main.
Barry, John, boiler maker, h 19 High.
Barry, James, laborer, h 19 High.
Barry, John 2d, laborer, h Pacific H Railroad.
Barry, Michael, laborer, h Main e Congress.
Bohen, Francis, laborer, h Lerry n Harral av.
Bohen, James D., mech h Greene n Water.
Boand, William, laborer h 10 Pequonnock.
Bonan, Brian, laborer h Washington av n Grand.
Bourke, Martin, grocery h E. Main e Crescent ED.
Bowen, William, MD, h Golden Hill e Harrison.
Bowen, Lawrence, tailor, h Wood n Washington av.
Bowen, John, brass founder bds Congress n Main.
Bowen, Edward, laborer bds Congress n Main.
Boyen, Edward, laborer h George.
Boyen, Thomas, irakeman h 16 Milne.
Boyle, Anthony, mech h Pembroke n Coleman.
Boyle, Richard, currier h Milne n Washington av.
Boyle, Joseph, clerk bds Pembroke c Coleman.
Boyle, Mrs. Mary, h Gold c Water.
Brady, John, laborer h Lerry n Washington av.
Brady, Patrick, carman h Gold n Water.
Brady, Michael, laborer, 34 Arch.
Brady, Michael 2d, tinner h Division n South av.
Brannagan, Patrick, mech bds Greene n Walter.
Bray, Lucius, mech h Pembroke n California.
Bray, Nelson, saddler h 13 Gilbert.
Bray, Patrick, laborer bds 340 Main.
Bray, William, blacksmith h 15 Arch.
Breen, Patrick, laborer h Warren n South av.
Brennan, Bryan, laborer h Washington av.
Brennan, James, plumber h High n Washington av.
Brannon, John laborer h South av.

We will continue to publish names collected by Paul from both the Bridgeport and Norwich directories as space permits. In the meantime, perhaps other members would be interested in volunteering to extract names from directories of other cities and towns. If we can collect enough names from a number of directories, they can be filed in our archives and will be of great use to family researchers.
Thanks to one of our long-range members, we have stumbled upon the Nebraska connection. A resident of O’Neill, Nebraska, Ann Pomgratz is a descendant of Irish emigrants who settled in Norwich, Connecticut, in the 1850s and then immigrated once more to Nebraska in the 1860s. Research on her family turns up some other fascinating links in the history of the Irish of Connecticut and Nebraska.

**Nebraska’s Irish colonies**

Although not known as a state with a large Irish population, Nebraska did attract its share of immigrants from the Emerald Isle, and very early on at that.

In her history of Nebraska, Dorothy Weyer Creigh comments: “When the Indian moved over, the Irish moved into Nebraska, they say, for Irish immigrants were among the first settlers in the territory.” And Ray Allen Billington in his book, *Westward Expansion*, points out, “Nebraska boasted six predominantly Irish colonies in 1890.”

Settlement of Omaha began in earnest after an 1854 treaty opened the territory up. Among those listed as settlers in Omaha County in the late 1850s was Patrick Quinland, who may have been of the Quinlan families mentioned by Paul Keroack in his story on this page about Norwich people settling in Nebraska. A listing of marriages (Please turn to Page 3)

**Norwich families went west**

**By Paul Keroack**

For about 20 years, Norwich was home to a group of Irish immigrants who were among the pioneer settlers of Dawson, Neb., in the years after the Civil War.

Irish by the thousands poured into Connecticut from the 1840s on, filling a growing need for labor in new railroads and mills, and after 1845, fleeing the Potato Famine, as well.

Norwich attracted many of these immigrants because it was the largest city in the eastern half of Connecticut, growing rapidly from a population of 7,000 at the opening of the Norwich & Worcester Railroad in 1840 to 10,000 a decade later.

Of these immigrants, the Quinlans were apparently the earliest to arrive in Norwich, several Quinlan families living there by 1848. William and Winifred Quinlan and John and Mary-Ellen Quinlan had adult children at home, while Patrick (Please turn to Page 2)

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Celebrate St. Patrick's Day at our annual “Rainbow of Irish Traditions” program at Alumni Hall, Quinnipiac College in Hamden at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, March 18. The evening will feature The Emerald Dancers under the direction of Kathleen Mulkerin, Irish music, poetry, language and historical presentations. The performance is free and open to the public. It is arranged by our society and made possible by the Cultural Evenings at Quinnipiac Committee.
Cholera Spreads In West And South

London Times, March 2, 1849 — The cholera. This dreadful scourge has at length appeared in the south of Ireland. The Limerick Chronicle of yesterday thus reports: — "The first case in Limerick this year was that of Martin Boyle, a servant out of place who was brought into Barrington's Hospital on Monday evening, when Dr. Geary saw the unfortunate man and at once pronounced it a case of marked Asiatic cholera. The patient died about noon yesterday, after exhibiting a total prostration of strength, eyes sunk, voice reduced to a whisper, partial discoloration of the skin, with general collapse of the system. The second victim yesterday was Mary King, who, after a few hours' suffering, died at 5 o'clock, having been attended by Drs. Gelston and Kane, with symptoms exactly similar to the first. Last night there were three more cases in the hospital, also very bad, attended by Dr. Gore and the other physicians ... The names of the four persons in cholera at the hospital this day are Mary Mannix, James Byrnes, Jane Connors and Francis Duggan ..."

London Times, April 9, 1849 — The Most Rev. Dr. Crolly, the Roman Catholic Primate, expired yesterday in Drogheda after an attack of cholera of nine hours duration ... As soon as the announcement of his death was made public the shops in Drogheda were nearly all closed and the shipping in the river had their flags raised half mast high. He was about 70 years of age, but from active habits and strong constitution looked to be much less advanced in age.

London Times, April 27, 1849 — The cholera. Superadded to the afflictions that have fallen upon the devoted province of Connaught, the present epidemic seems to have set in there with far more fatal effect than in any other portion of the kingdom subjected to the visitation. The accounts from Ballinrobe in the county of Mayo, continue to be of a most distressing nature; the disease sweeping the people off by scores each day, while the cases of recovery are so few as to be scarcely worth mentioning. The subjoined extract of a letter dated Tuesday evening, tells its own tale — "I cannot regret to have to tell you that the cholera has made its appearance here, and the town is in a frightful state this morning. The vice guardians wish to get the dispensary for a hospital. They say there were upwards of 20 new cases of cholera this morning. I hear of more since. There were several deaths last night through the town and in the vicinity. Persons are lying dead and no one to bury them. May the Lord protect us — the visitation is awful."

The pestilence has also broken out with great virulence in the workhouses of Ballinasloe — "Ballinasloe, Tuesday evening. The greatest consternation prevailed here since yesterday morning in consequence of the appearance of cholera in one of the auxiliary workhouses with which the town is crowded. Up to the present, we understand, there have been no less than 87 cases of which 22 have already proved fatal. The disease, we are informed, has now broken out in a second of the houses where 12 cases have already occurred and two deaths. We fear that humanly speaking there is every probability of the malady committing fearful ravages in this town ..."

Black Hole Death

Cork Examiner, April 1849 — On Friday, the 20th of April, a weak tottering man or the skeleton of what once might be called a man staggered into the workhouse in Youghal. He was lean and hungry with the voracity of a wolf. On Friday and Saturday he was supported by the bountiful charity of the Poor Law; and on Sunday morning, instigated by hunger, this wretched being attempted — what? To commit what terrible crime? Murder? No, to steal a morsel of bread. This was the sole crime of which the pauper Patrick Connolly was guilty ... (He was placed) in what is rightly called the Black Hole, a den without air or light and measuring eight feet by six into this hole the starving man was thrust, his miserable meal having been torn from his hungry eyes and wolfish appetite ... The day rolled on, the day dedicated by the Christian world to thoughts of peace and love and holiness and at 2 o'clock death, more merciful than man, laid its cold hand on the heart of the pauper victim ...

An inquest was held and the following was the verdict of the jury — "We find that on Sunday, the 22nd of April, Patrick Connolly, a pauper in Youghal workhouse, was confined in a place called the Black Hole, being at the same time deprived of his rations and while so confined, being seized with sickness shortly after died, and the jury find that said Patrick Connolly came by his death in consequence of being so confined in said Black Hole and being deprived of his rations, and the jurors wish to put on record their marked condemnation of the Black Hole of the Youghal workhouse."

FAMINE JOURNAL

March - April 1849

# 22
after Civil War

To reach Dawson's Mills, located in Richardson County in the southeast corner of the state, they walked 20 miles from the nearest railroad stop.

Satisfied with the prospects, the other Connecticut immigrants were advised to follow, which they did later that year and in 1858. They were Johanna O'Brien Fenton, her sons Dennis, William and Jerry Fenton, with his wife and two daughters; Thomas Ryan, his daughter Bridget and grandson Martin; Civil War veterans Pat and James Clancy and John Fenton; Hugh O'Grady, his wife and children; John and Mary Carver and their children; Michael O'Donnell, Timothy O'Sullivan, M.B. Miller, who was a grandson of Bryan Riley, Denis Maher, William "Billy" Murphy, and John, Michael and Billy Quinlan.

In 1873, widow Bridget Kean, her grown sons James and David, and nephew George, who had been living in Mousap and Wauregan in Connecticut, bought a farm in Dawson. The family had left County Mayo in 1848 and lived in Canada and other New England states before moving to Connecticut.

An 1874 outbreak of grasshoppers forced some of the new settlers to leave Nebraska, including the Kean's, but they later returned to farm there. The last of the group, Thomas and Mary Gill Ryan, cousins of the first Thomas Ryan to immigrate, left Connecticut in 1886 for Dawson.

Descendants of all these families continue to live in eastern Nebraska. Many have gone into business, banking and politics in later years. Other members of the families who did not go West have descendants in Connecticut today.


Colonies attracted Irish to Nebraska

(Continued from Page 1)

in Nebraska in the 1932 issue of Nebraska Genealogical Record includes two other Quinlans: March 31, 1861, Hermann Walther and Mary Quinlan; Jan. 1, 1863, John Blacklaw and Margaret Eliza Quinlan. Were any or all of these precursors of the later larger immigration from Connecticut to Nebraska?

Whether that was the case or not, some Connecticut Irish apparently were attracted by one of the colonization schemes promoted by certain Irish leaders as a means to get immigrants out of cities on the Eastern Seaboard.

Father Jeremiah F. Treacy, a native of County Tyrone, established the first such colony in June 1855 when he and 11 Irish immigrants organized the mission of St. John in Dakota County just across the Missouri River from Iowa in northeastern Nebraska. In April 1856, Treacy brought 25 more families to St. John, or St. Patrick's as it was also known, from the Irish settlement of Garryowen in Iowa.

In the spring of 1857, Treacy came east and spent time in Washington, D.C., and New York talking up his colony. According to Sister Mary Gilbert Kelly in an article on Catholic colonization projects, Treacy visited Connecticut during his sojourn in the East. While here, he apparently did some recruiting for Kelly adds that a "group of factory workers from Woodstock, Hartford and other parts of Connecticut" decided to resettle in Treacy's community.

The best known of the Nebraska Irish colonies was that organized by Gen. John O'Neill. A native of County Monaghan who served in the Indiana cavalry in the Civil War, O'Neill was the commander of several of the Fenian incursions into Canada in the late 1860s.

In the early 1870s, O'Neill organized a colony in northeastern Nebraska in what subsequently became the town of O'Neill. A group of 13 men, two women and five children arrived there on May 12, 1874. The colony prospered despite some shady land deals and grasshopper plagues. Today, O'Neill has what it calls the world's largest shamrock, 65 feet by 55 feet, painted in the middle of its main downtown intersection.

German school in Meriden

In 1879, the German community in Meriden opened a German-American school in the Turner Hall in that city. The hall was fitted over with desks and chairs purchased from a German gentleman named Hinman, who was "the Meriden agent for school furniture."

The cost of refitting the hall to serve as a school was $200. The rental for the hall was $225 a year and these expenses have been provided for by the generous contributions from our German American citizens. Some of the expenses were recouped by charging the approximately 60 students a fee of $1 per month. Families that sent two children paid $1.50 a month and those that sent three paid only $2 a month.

To teach in the new school, which opened in the autumn of 1879, the Germans retained a Mr. Roeth who previously was principal of the Martha Institute in Hoboken, N.J. It was said that Roeth came highly recommended. He was assisted by his wife who was "a very accomplished lady."

On the day the school opened nearly every seat was filled and the Meriden Morning Record believed "the school cannot fail of being an excellent one."

Source: Meriden Morning Record, Sept. 6 and Sept. 22, 1879.

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Lurking Behind Convent Walls...

To 19th century Irish immigrants, convents were simply communal dwellings for women pledged to celibacy and devoted to teaching or helping the poor. New England Yankees, however, suspected that behind convent walls lurked dark secrets of young girls held against their will. Fanned by accounts of women said to have escaped from convents, such suspicions led to more than one incident of violence against convents by those who espoused the nativist view that the Irish represented a great threat to America. Below are stories of two such incidents linked to Connecticut.

Hartford nun lived through 1855 threat to convent in Providence

On May 27, 1854, Bernard O'Reilly, second bishop of the Diocese of Hartford, presided as three Irish young women took their vows as Sisters of Mercy. One of the three, Sister Barbara — née Mary Jordan — was to spend most of her career in Hartford as supervisor at the orphanage conducted in connection with St. Catherine's Convent for more than 32 years and as a teacher at St. Patrick's School.

At the time Jordan entered the order, the diocese comprised both Connecticut and Rhode Island and her first assignment was at St. Xavier's Convent on Broad Street in Providence.

In the 1850s, nativist agitation was in full stride in Rhode Island as it was throughout New England. Springing from about equal parts of anti-Catholicism, anti-Irish sentiment and concern that immigration was threatening American life, the agitation focused on politics, religion and education. Nativists wanted to limit the influence of the Catholic Church, disband Irish militia units and keep a close eye on convents.

Just a month after Sister Barbara took her vows, Rhode Island newspapers began to allude to secret gatherings promoting the nativist, or Know Nothing, cause. In local elections that November, voters put a number of nativists on the ballot.

Connecticut minister aroused nativists who burned Boston convent

The most famous of the convent incidents occurred in a suburb of Boston, on Aug. 11, 1834, with one of the leading characters a Connecticut-born clergyman, the Rev. Lyman Beecher.

The Ursuline convent was established on Mount Benedict in the then rural community of Charlestown in the 1820s as a boarding school. Its staff comprised primarily Irish nuns educated in France, and the school developed a reputation for excellence that drew students from as far away as Canada and New Orleans.

Many of its students were drawn from affluent Protestant families of Boston, a fact which greatly concerned orthodox ministers in that city.

One of those thus concerned was the Rev. Beecher, a native of New Haven, a graduate of Yale and a Presbyterian minister. Beecher, one of whose 13 children was Harriet Beecher Stowe, author of Uncle Tom's Cabin, served in East Hampton on Long Island and in Litchfield in Connecticut before becoming pastor of the Park Street Church in Boston.

According to one historian, Beecher was "a revivalistic preacher whose fiery sermons earned his church the popular designation of 'Brimstone Corner.'"
Perspective

While English newspapers and members of Parliament in London scolded the Irish for their indolence, the Famine raged on in many parts of Ireland. A government official in Dublin stated in early May 1849, “The deaths from privation within the last month outnumber those of the whole winter of 1846-47 and that a more fatal season has yet to come inasmuch as ... what in April and May is no worse than scarcity will amount before Midsummer to positive famine.”

What made 1849 different from 1847 was that the focus of the tragedy had now shifted from the cottages of the poor to the workhouses most of which had neither the space nor the financial means to provide for the mass of those needing assistance. Mortality reports indicated that thousands were dying in the workhouses and that other thousands were fleeing from them, preferring to die on the roadside or in their homes.

Adding to the turmoil was the continuation of large-scale evictions, with hundreds of peasants being turned out on the roadside and left to their fate.

And all anxiously awaited harvest time, fearing still another potato crop failure. If there were, peasants could but lie down and die.

Havoc In Kerry

London Times, May 4, 1849—State of the Kenmare Union ... Of the misery which the population of this district endure some idea may be formed from the fact ... that no less than eight persons have perished on the roadside of sheer exhaustion and hunger within the last 10 days. Six of those ill-fated individuals were coming away from the workhouse. Some say they had been turned out, and while striving to reach the place where once stood their homes, they fell and perished on the road. This happened last week — there was an inquest as to the cause of their death was a mystery. The verdict of the jury has not transpired but the verdict of the public was “Death from starvation.”

The other two cases occurred — one on Friday at a place called Whitestrand and one the morning following at West Cove. The parties were brothers of the name of Shea. On Thursday, they had traveled from near Waterville to Sneem, a distance of at least 22 miles to try and get their names put on the outdoor relief lists ... on their way back from Sneem on Friday, a bitter cold day, too, they got as far as Whitestrand and there sunk exhausted. The dispensary physician, Dr. Barry of West Cove, hearing of the occurrence hastened to the spot and found one brother just dead and the other beside him expiring. A little brandy poured into the mouth of him who still breathed revived him and then by a great deal of persuasion, the doctor induced a couple of men to assist him in bringing the poor sufferer to the doctor’s own residence ... on Saturday morning, the wretched man breathed his last, more fortunately than his brother, in that he was not allowed to perish like a brute beast, and that ... he had time to have the last rites of the church administered to him.

Workhouse Toll

London Times, May 4, 1849 — The mortality in the workhouse of Fermoy for the last four months has been as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Deaths</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>208 deaths</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>352 deaths</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>315 deaths</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>350 deaths</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1,225 deaths</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Choice Of Deaths

London Times, May 3, 1849 — In Ballinrobe, the deaths in the workhouse for the week have been 146, and upwards of 400 have absconded preferring to die by the wayside rather than become victims of disease in that charnel house. The choler is said to be on the increase in Ballinrobe and the surrounding villages.

Cholera In Galway

London Times, May 4, 1849 — Up to Tuesday the return of cases amounted to 840 of which 320 proved fatal. The local authorities have hit upon a novel method of getting rid of the disease. It is this — The 68th Regiment yesterday fired at the Square, Galway, 20 rounds of blank cartridges each rank and file, at the express desire of local authorities, for the purpose of purifying the air and expelling cholera.

Gentry Dying, Too

London Times, May 18, 1849 — Subjoined is an extract from a lady in the county of Roscommon, giving a melancholy sketch of the distress at present existing among the gentry in that part of the country.

— You have no idea of the state of the gentry in this county. I mean those who have nothing but estates; they are starving. Yes, indeed, starving! A lady who has an estate of 300 acres of land for ever at 6d. per acre has just been to tell me that for 27 hours her family have not tasted food! There is, I am told, a society in Dublin for affording relief to distressed Protestant families. Could you inquire about it, it would be an act of mercy to this large and suffering family. ... The fear of Poor Law officers prevents the lands from being let in grazing or for tillage; as there are two years’ poor rates due and the cattle and crops would at once be seized and sold to pay them. It is a melancholy site to see all the lands waste and the owner and his family starving.

Tipperary Eviction

Tipperary Vindicator, June 10, 1849 — We have heard that no less than 450 notices of ejectment have been made on one or two properties not many miles from Borrisokane and we learn that 300 miserable beings were sent in the world from a property near Clonmel, that five houses were leveled and 40 persons were turned out on the lands of the Knocknaclara, 36 persons off the lands of Knockakeely near Sneem, 106 off the lands of Ashgrove near Caher ... 41 off the lands of Ramlcough, 28 off another property, 78 off another and 20 off another. Good God, where is this sweeping system of wholesale extermination to end?
Hartford Gaels honored Irish poet Thomas Moore

Traditional Irish music, poetry and language filled Parsons Theater in Hartford on Sunday, May 29, 1904.

The occasion was the anniversary of the death of the famous Irish author Thomas Moore. A writer of both prose and poetry, Moore is perhaps best known for his publication of collections of Irish melodies.

To commemorate the anniversary, the Gaelic Society of Hartford organized a program filled with Irish traditions. A Mr. and Mrs. O'Donnell, whose first names unfortunately are not given in the newspaper announcement of the program, were the featured performers.

"Much interest," said the paper, "is being shown in this first appearance here of Mrs. O'Donnell whose lecture-recital will be the chief feature of the program, as her reputation as an exponent of Irish music is widespread. She will sing about a dozen numbers of different types, including a couple in the Irish tongue. Mr. O'Donnell who plays the accompaniments will also have some piano solos, illustrative of very ancient Irish compositions."

Father Walter J. Shanley presided at the concert and gave a brief summary of the life and works of Moore, who died in 1852.

Other melodies were sung by Mrs. Sinnott, Miss Kline, Mr. Lynch and Mr. Radicon.

Source: Hartford Courant, May 28, 1904.

9th Regiment lauded for chivalry during Civil War

In the years just after the Civil War, an Irishman, John Francis Maguire, visited the United States because he wished, in his own words "to ascertain by personal observation what the Irish — thousands of whom are constantly emigrating as it were from my very door — were doing in America...."

In New Orleans, Maguire was told of the praiseworthy conduct of the 9th Connecticut Regiment, the state's Irish unit, during the Federal occupation of that city. "Its officers," he wrote, "maintained the chivalrous character of the Irish soldier, who fought for a principle, not for plunder or oppression... They would not take possession of the houses of the wealthy citizens, which, according to the laws of war, they might have done. We came to fight men," said they, "not to rob women." They soon won the confidence and respect of the inhabitants."

A soldier of the 9th, Maguire said, was assigned to sentry duty in front of a grand home that Gen. Butler of Massachusetts intended to turn into his headquarters: "The sentinel was suddenly disturbed in his monotonous pacing to and fro before the door of the mansion by the appearance of a smart young girl, who with an air half timid and half coaxing said, "Sir, I suppose you will permit me to take these few toys in my apron? Surely, Gen. Butler has no children who require such things as these?"

"Young woman!" replied the sentry in a sternly abrupt tone that quite awed his petitioner, "my orders are preceptory — not a toy or a thing of any kind can pass this door while I am here. But, miss," added the inflexible guardian, in quite a different tone, "if there is such a thing as another door, or a back window, you may take away as many toys as you can find, or whatever else you wish. I have no orders against it, and the more you take, the better I'll be pleased, God knows.'

"The palpable hint was adopted and it is to be hoped that something more than the toys was saved to the owners of the mansion."

Source: The Irish in America, John Francis Maguire.

Japanese sailor aided by New Haveners

In the winter of 1884, a tugboat New Haven was sent out into Long Island Sound to rescue several crewmen suffering from frostbite on the ship Mohawk.

One of them, a Japanese sailor named Tomma Diaz, had such a severe case that all his fingers had to be amputated at a New Haven hospital.

When released from the hospital, Diaz went to the Seaman's Bethel, a sailors' hostel in New Haven. Unsuccessful in finding employment for Diaz, the director of the hostel raised enough money to pay for his passage back to Japan.

Editor's note: In recognition of the bond between our historical society and the other societies in the Ethnic Heritage Center, and to foster appreciation for all races and nationalities, we publish in each issue of The Shanachie one story about another ethnic group.
The Almighty has been pleased to grant us a signal victory on Lake Champlain in the capture of one frigate, one brig and two sloops of war of the enemy.

Our family is of Irish extraction. My grandfather came over about the year 1700, probably some few years after that period. He came from near Dublin with two other brothers, one of whom settled in the City of New York. Another went to the West Indies, his name was Augustine. The third brother, named James, settled in the state of Delaware. This latter was my grandfather, he had a large family and was a man of respectable character and standing. My father Thomas was educated well and became a physician, practicing a short time when he joined in arms with the rest of his countrymen in the struggle for independence. He was major in Col. Haslitt’s Regiment, was in several severe battles, was in Brooklyn at the time our troops retreated from Long Island, was wounded by the bursting of a shell on the knee. Uncle Michael was in the army, captain James, my brother, was midshipman in the Navy and lost his foot by a cannon shot in the main top of Commodore Truxton’s ship, the Constellation. The family name by the female side in Ireland was Coil.

Commodore Thomas Macdonough

Born of Dublin stock

Our family is of Irish extraction. My grandfather came over about the year 1700, probably some few years after that period. He came from near Dublin with two other brothers, one of whom settled in the City of New York. Another went to the West Indies, his name was Augustine. The third brother, named James, settled in the state of Delaware. This latter was my grandfather, he had a large family and was a man of respectable character and standing. My father Thomas was educated well and became a physician, practicing a short time when he joined in arms with the rest of his countrymen in the struggle for independence. He was major in Col. Haslitt’s Regiment, was in several severe battles, was in Brooklyn at the time our troops retreated from Long Island, was wounded by the bursting of a shell on the knee. Uncle Michael was in the army, captain James, my brother, was midshipman in the Navy and lost his foot by a cannon shot in the main top of Commodore Truxton’s ship, the Constellation. The family name by the female side in Ireland was Coil.

Commodore Thomas Macdonough

Each day, dozens of motorists drive by a small stone marker just across the street from St. John’s Church on North Main Street in Middletown scarcely aware that it commemorates an Irishman described by President Theodore Roosevelt as “the greatest figure in our naval history” up to the time of the Civil War.

Commodore John Barry, the Wexford native known as the “father of the American Navy,” you say? Wrong.

The monument honors not John Barry, but Commodore Thomas Macdonough, an Irish-American who soundly defeated a British squadron in the Battle of Lake Champlain on Sept. 11, 1814, thus ending British hopes of invading the United States from Canada during the War of 1812.

Macdonough was born at The Trap — now named Macdonough — in Delaware on Dec. 31, 1783, just at the end of the American Revolution.

He joined the Navy as a midshipman in 1800 and spent several years on the Ganges, a vessel protecting American shipping from French attack in the West Indies.

In 1802, he served on the Constellation carrying out a similar protective mission for American ships endangered by the Barbary pirates in the Mediterranean. A year later, he was assigned to the Philadelphia on the same station. The assignment proved a fortunate move for his career. The Philadelphia captured a pirate ship, the Mirboka, and Macdonough was put aboard it as part of the prize crew. Subsequently, the Philadelphia itself was captured by Tripolitans and Macdonough played an important role in a daring escape in which a crew picked by Lieut. Stephen Decatur boarded and destroyed the Philadelphia while it was in Tripoli harbor.

In October 1806, Macdonough was ordered to Connecticut to superintend the construction of four Navy gunboats at Middletown on the Connecticut River. While here, he made the acquaintance of Nathaniel Shaler, a prominent merchant and musician, a British sympathizer during the Revolutionary War and the father of a large family including a charming, 16-year-old daughter, Lucy Ann. A year later, Macdonough left Middletown on an assignment to the ship Wasp carrying dispatches from America to Europe, but not before a romance had blossomed with Lucy Ann.

When the War of 1812 began, Lieut. Macdonough was ordered first to Washington and then to Portland, Maine, to take command of a division of gunboats. On Sept. 12, 1812, he was named commander of the Navy forces on Lake Champlain with orders to prevent the British at all costs from gaining control of that strategically vital water route down into New York.

In December that year, he took time from his new duties to travel south to Middletown where on Saturday, Dec. 12, he and Lucy Ann Shaler were married. The newlyweds had no time for a formal honeymoon. Their only time alone consisted of their trip up through Connecticut, Massachusetts and Vermont to...
Blight Reappears, But Less Virulent

Cork Reporter, Aug. 2, 1849 — A gentleman called at our office this morning with some potato stalks which had been blighted. About a fortnight ago some of the leaves assumed the appearance of blight, became brown and rotted. The owner, of course, thought, as many others have done, that his crop was diseased and would be destroyed, but was agreeably surprised some time afterwards to find the diseased stalks throwing out new and green leaves. These shoots are still growing although the blighted ones, which appear to have been struck by lightning, remain on the stalks. The morning with some potato plants that were first attacked, while the remainder of the crop continued to bloom bountifully.

The hopes for the crop were diminished by the knowledge that in large areas of the country the economy, such as it was to begin with, had ground to a virtual standstill with people continuing to die from want of food even as thousands of acres lay untilled.

In August, 12 years after she was crowned, Queen Victoria made her first trip to Ireland. The London Times saw in the large and enthusiastic crowds that greeted her arrival an omen of better times ahead for Ireland and greater understanding between the English and Irish peoples.

Ireland In Chaos

Letter to the Editor, London Times, July 5, 1849 — Sir, ... The condition of the country is this: The masses which should be engaged in producing food are now scarcely sustained alive in its consumption, and this at the expense of those whose whole means were dependent on the independence of those very masses which they have now to feed in their helplessness.

The whole order of society is now reversed and still the rates increase. The labourer labours not; the occupying tenant has either thrown up his occupation and become a pauper or he has fled with what capital he possessed to America, or he holds on till his dwelling is roofed over his head, in a state of indigence which cannot pay anything or in a state of obstinate despair which looking on all around as one common wreck, determines him to float on on anything he can, be it his own or the property of another.

Thousands of acres lie untitled and yet more than 100,000 men might be found, ready and capable of work, who are now only undergoing a very expensive but rapid training for the grave.

An equal number are fed and lodged to do work not wanted, at an expense which could have applied their power to the securing of food and the fuel for want of which thousands must yet perish ...

S.G.O.
Arkansas ‘travelers’ to attend second O’Neill reunion

By Maureen Condron Delahunty

As I write this, my extended O’Neill family is preparing for its second reunion at the Madison Surf Club. We will come together on Sept. 12 to tell stories, share history, generally update each other on our travels through life to the present and discuss our goals for the future.

In 1998, we held our first reunion to celebrate the 100 years since John J. O’Neill of County Kerry married Honora Agnes Foly of County Clare in St. Mary’s Church, New Haven. The family has now grown to over 300 members including children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren and spouses.

One of the highlights of last year’s gathering was the presence of six family members from Altus, Ark. Cousin Peggy Murray Post came with five of her eight children. It was wonderful to greet all of them. For most of us, it was a first time meeting since that branch had moved away in the thrones of the Depression almost 60 years ago. They are descended from Margaret Loretta O’Neill, the fourth child of John and Nora. She was born Sept. 18, 1904, in Sneem, County Kerry, after her parents returned there with their first three children who were born in New Haven.

At the age of 18, Margaret crossed the Atlantic by herself to join her older sisters and brother who had already returned to the United States. Upon arrival at Ellis Island, she was held for a possible quarantine because some passengers were suspected of having tuberculosis. Managing to get a boat to the mainland, Peg caught a train to New Haven and a trolley to her uncle’s home.

In 1926, she married Russell Murray, a Baptist who converted to Catholicism and in 1940, Russell accepted a shipyard superintendency in Seabrook, Texas. He moved his family, then consisting of five children and arrived in Texas on Easter Sunday 1940.

In 1942, Russell was commissioned an officer in the U.S. Navy and went to war. Like so many wartime wives, Peg took charge. She worked occasional jobs, kept a garden and was chauffeur for the boy’s basketball team, for which she demanded and received extra gasoline tokens. At the end of the year and at the age of 41, Peg gave birth to her seventh child.

At this time, Russell tried his hand at farming, first in Texas and then in Arkansas. At first it didn’t go well for him. When they moved to Arkansas in 1949, they left their oldest daughter in college in Houston and their only living son was soon drafted for the Korean War.

Within a few years, things were looking up. Their children were married and presented Peg and Russ with a total of 33 grandchildren. Russ passed away in February 1981 and Peg died in June 1984.

On the day after the reunion last year, my Aunt Chris and I joined the Arkansas cousins at St. Lawrence Cemetery. The quest was to find the grave of Peg and Russell’s first child, John Russell Murray. The staff at St. Lawrence’s was wonderful to us. The records indicated that baby John, who died at the age of one week, was buried in a section referred to as Baby’s Field. The graves were unmarked and only identified by a metal pin marker.

With the aid of a metal detector and two grave diggers, the site was finally discovered. The cemetery would levy no charge for all the work. We then made our way to the monument works and found out what the options are for children’s grave markers.

The rest of the day was spent in locating houses in several New Haven neighborhoods where the family had resided, culminating at the last house on Halieck Avenue in City Point.

We are looking forward eagerly to meet another group of the Arkansas “travelers.”

(Maureen Condron Delahunty is secretary of the Connecticut Irish-American Historical Society.)

Meriden's Swedish Baptists enjoyed annual summer outing

The Swedish Baptist Church of Meriden held its annual summer outing at Ulert’s Grove in Wallingford on Saturday, July 10, 1909. A special trolley car left Meriden at 10:15 a.m. for Sunday school scholars and others who wanted to go. A bountiful dinner was served at noon at the park and the program included a short religious service conducted by the Rev. J.E. Klingberg of New Britain and the Rev. N.J. Linde of Waterbury. All Scandinavians were invited.

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1855 Enfield survey found many Irish, but few attending school

In 1855, an Enfield resident, who identified himself or herself only as L.S.P., did some research on the population of the Thompsonville section of town out of a concern for the schooling of the children of residents.

The results of the research, which the Hartford Courant published in a letter to the editor composed by L.S.P., are interesting from the standpoint of Connecticut’s ethnic history.

The letter, while telling something about Irish people in our state, speaks also in broader terms to such important issues in Connecticut and American history as child labor, the Nativist movement, the Industrial Revolution, and ethnic immigration.

The letter, as it appeared in the Courant on Feb. 6, 1855, is reprinted below:

"Mr. Editor — With much labor and care, I have just completed a census of our village, for the purpose of procuring a better knowledge of our educational condition and wants and the following is an abstract of our population:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Irish</td>
<td>960</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scotch</td>
<td>355</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>335</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Americans</td>
<td>360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germans and French</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2,129</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

"We enumerate between the age of four and 16, 608, of which there are enrolled upon our school registers, 344; number engaged in factories, 150; numbers engaged nowhere, 114.

"That there should be in New England, a village enumerating so many children, where only a fraction over one half are enrolled upon our school registers, and that too when our schools are in full operation, is a startling fact, and a fact which should excite serious apprehensions lest the proper education of the rising generation be too little cared for.

"That children in manufacturing villages under the age of 16, are compelled to labor, I am well aware, is owing in many instances to circumstances which no one can control — circumstances which may amount almost to a positive necessity.

"I am well aware that it is with feelings of the deepest regret that many parents feel compelled to take their children from the school to the workshop. And I think it true also that some parents prefer the income from their children’s services more than their proper education; that just the time when they are enabled to give them an opportunity for schooling, is just the time they do not.

"But be that as it may, the practical fact for us is that in a manufacturing population many children must spend the best season of their youth for schooling at labor, that often at 12 years of age they must enter upon that labor which is to be their future occupation. Children thus situated have the weightiest claim upon parents and the community, and there is no way in which even partial justice can be done to them except by giving (Continued on page 2)
Perspective

The seemingly never-ending epic of the Famine took another twist in autumn 1849. Frightened by reports of the return of the potato blight, peasants and small farmers throughout Ireland began to harvest crops by cover of night and send them to distant places for sale. In many cases, the crops had already been "distrained," that is, awarded to the landlords by the courts.

The government saw the peasants' actions as an organized attempt to subvert the laws and to cheat property owners of their rights. Peasants and rebels saw it as a justified seizure of crops by those who were starving and who could expect no equity from the political system.

Meanwhile, evictions of tenants — "extermination" as it was called — continued at a high rate and emigration was reported at some port cities as being greater than ever before. Some used proceeds from the sale of crops to purchase passage to America.

Officials basked in the afterglow of Queen Victoria's summer visit to Ireland, suggesting that it clearly showed the loyalty of the Irish people to the queen and to England. A Dublin man who was arrested for decorating his house in mourning during her visit begged to differ.

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Crop War

Athlone Sentinel, September 1849 — The system of removing crops at night and on Sunday, which were previously distrained for rent, has become very general and widespread in this neighbourhood. On Sunday last a large party of men assembled on the lands of Crosby, near Moste, the property of Mr. Arthur Browne, J.P., and commenced cutting down and carrying away corn which was distrained for rent. When Mr. Browne heard of the circumstance, he immediately sent for the police ... Mr. Browne, as a magistrate, read the Riot Act, and after a good deal of altercation and some exhibition of an inclination to violence, the parties dispersed. But they were determined not to be frustrated ... for they returned in the nighttime and succeeded in carrying away the corn ...

Tipperary Vindicator, September 1849 — The cutting down of crops and carrying them off the lands to evade the rent is becoming general throughout the county, the tenants justifying this proceeding by stating that they have no choice and are compelled to resort to that, the sole means that is left them, for supporting life. They say that the alternative is presented them of becoming dishonest and withholding the landlords' rents or starving ...

Boyle Gazette, October 1849 — On Sunday last upwards of 200 men assembled on the lands of Cartron, near Crossna (Co. Roscommon), and reaped a large quantity of oats which were immediately conveyed away on carts to some district, the object being to evade distress for rent, poor rates and county cess. The important fact in occurrences of this sort, that a considerable number of strange persons can be assembled on a short notice and from distant localities, clearly proves that a secret, but widespread organization exists ...

London Times, Oct. 3, 1849 — Dungarvan, Wednesday, I am sorry to say that the carrying off the crops for the purpose of evading distrain for rent is ... not confined to Clare, Limerick, Tipperary or any other locality. I happened on Monday to witness the result of a transaction of this nature. The crop, it appeared, of a tenant to an extensive farmer in the neighbourhood of Cappoquin was removed on the previous Sunday night, although distrained for rent. The crop was traced to a farmer's premises at Abbeyside ... and the Dungarvan police having arrived soon after, two prisoners, a man and a woman, who had custody of the distrained corn, were sent to prison ... The taking away of crops on a Sunday is not confined to those poor tenants who, by such an act of dishonesty, sometimes endeavour to obtain the only feasible means of enabling them to emigrate from their native land to a more prosperous clime ... A certain farmer who had always been deemed a most respectable man, recently waited on his landlord to whom he paid more than 200£ a year in rent, and demanded of him a reduction of 5s., an acre, which he said would enable him to remain in the country, but which the landlord preposterously refused. On the following Sunday, 300 men cut down this farmer's crops which were conveyed the same night far and away beyond the landlord's reach, whom nobody pitied. The farmer who was considered up to this time an improving tenant, turned the crops into cash and is now probably on his way to free America ...

Blight Spreads

Evening Mail, Sept. 11, 1849 — We regret to say that the accounts from the country this morning all speak of the spread of the potato blight disease.

Fear The Worst

Londonderry Journal, Sept. 13, 1849 — Since the issue of our usual monthly report, on this day week, the progress of the potato blight has been rapid beyond that of any years since 1846.

The growth of the crop may now be said to be over, but that would be of comparatively little consequence, as they are in most places pretty well grown; but the disease has set in so fast on the roots that we fear the worst consequences may be expected.

During the past week we had the close night and morning fogs which have always been the precursors of this sad calamity ..."

All Over Ireland

London Times, Oct. 3, 1849 — Unhappily there is no longer any conflicting testimony as to the extent of the fatal blight.

It has set in everywhere and in some districts with a rapidity far exceeding anything that marked its destructive progress in former years.

From north and south, east and west, the accounts scarcely vary, and the most sanguine are now reluctantly compelled to admit that no reliance can be placed on the late crop as an article of food. The people are night and day employed in digging them out, to save as much as possible from the impending ruin, and the markets are literally glutted with the produce, which in many instances is only got off hands at barely nominal prices.
9th was Connecticut's Irish regiment in Civil War

The 9th Regiment ConnecticutVolunteers was organized in September 1861 as the state's Irish regiment.

The 9th was mustered and trained in New Haven at Camp Welch, named in honor of the city's mayor. The majority of its members were recruited from New Haven, but other areas of the state were represented, too. Co. D, for example, included a number of men from Bridgeport, while Co. F had a strong contingent from Waterbury and Co. K had men from Hartford, Bridgeport, Derby, Griswold, Bethel, Easton, Winchester, Simsbury, Fairfield, Newtown and Danbury.

Interestingly, while the unit was composed mainly of Irish-born and Irish-American troops, its ranks also included a number of immigrants from other lands. Lt. Christian Streit, leader of the regimental band, and his brother, Cpl. Simon Streit, were natives of Germany, while one of the regiment's chaplains, Rev. Leo Rizzo, was born in Calabria, Italy.

The youngest member of the regiment in 1861 was drummer boy Richard Hennessey, not yet 12 years old and the son of Capt. J.P. Hennessey. The 845-man regiment left New Haven on Nov. 4, 1861, and after a brief sojourn in Massachusetts, sailed for Ship Island, Miss., where Union forces were gathering for an assault on New Orleans.

On the occasion of St. Patrick's Day that year, an anonymous member of the regiment wrote a letter to the New Haven Register assuring readers that members of the 9th, like other Irishmen, would give a good accounting of themselves. "The adopted citizens of New Haven," he wrote, "need not fear but what the Ninth will do their part, when they are led forth in defense of the country which gives more freedom to the stranger than any other on the face of the Earth. Irishmen have fought for France under Saratoga and for Spain in their short sleeves under O'Donnell, at Bull Run under Corcoran, and the adopted sons of Connecticut will prove themselves as good as their ancestors either in France, Spain, Russia or America."

When New Orleans surrendered in April 1862 after a week of bombardment by the Union fleet commanded by Adm. David Farragut, himself Irish on his mother's side, the 9th was among the occupation forces.

In the summer of that year, it took part in a campaign 400 miles north on the Mississippi River where the Union army made an unsuccessful assault on the Rebel stronghold of Vicksburg.

The regiment remained in the Mississippi theater of war into early 1864 when it was transferred to the Shenandoah Valley where it served under Gen. Phil Sheridan.

The monument to the 9th Regiment in New Haven was constructed in 1903. Michael P. Coen of Naugatuck, secretary and treasurer of the regiment's Monument Committee was selected to pose as the soldier depicted on the monument.

Dedication ceremonies were held on Aug. 5, 1903, with Gov. Abiram Chamberlain leading a large contingent of dignitaries.

Directions to 9th Regiment monument: From the west, take I-95 to Exit 46, at end of ramp go left, at second light go left onto Howard Avenue, park is on left just over bridge.

Hartford Courant bemoaned political clout of Irish

"No American who loves his country and his institutions could fail to see as he visited the polls on Monday last that the destinies of our city are in the hands of the Irish. The taxpaying community are governed by them. Without property themselves, paying no taxes, ignorant of the workings of our laws, they elect the Democratic Common Council who, with little responsibility in the way of taxpaying on their own shoulders, foolishly waste and throw away the public money and use it to the advantage of themselves and their Irish dependents.

Hartford city is under the control of the Irish and the miserable demagogues they elect to office. No wonder our city expenses have reached such a pitch as to deter men of property from settling among us ... Can it be possible that all the large cities of the land are to be thus brought under by Irishmen?"

Source: Hartford Courant, April 15, 1857.
During the years he and his family resided in Hartford, Samuel Langhorne Clemens, better known as Mark Twain, counted as virtual members of his family two Irish domestic servants — coachman Patrick McAleer and maid Katy Leary.

The affection and trust in which the writer and his wife, Olivia, held McAleer and Leary stands in vivid contrast to the ridicule of Irish servants engaged in by some of those in whose social circles the Clemens traveled.

McAleer was born in County Tyrone, Ireland, in 1846 and came to America in 1862. He lived for a time in New York City before moving to western New York.

Actually, McAleer was hired not by Clemens himself but by his father-in-law, Jervis Langdon, a wealthy entrepreneur of Elmira, N.Y., who had made his money in the coal business. As a surprise wedding gift, Langdon bought, furnished and staffed a home for Sam and his bride, Livy, on fashionable Delaware Avenue in Buffalo. Concerned about his new son-in-law’s prospects, Langdon put up money to enable Clemens to buy into the ownership of the Buffalo Express newspaper.

The day after the wedding at the Langdon home in Elmira in February 1870, the wedding party and guests were whisked off to Buffalo in a private railroad car, also arranged by Langdon. The bride and groom were given a sleigh ride around Buffalo and then taken to their new home where Langdon handed the newlyweds a package containing the deed to the house.

Later that evening, Sam and Livy met their coachman. In his autobiography, Clemens wrote, “Patrick McAleer, that brisk young Irishman, came in to get his orders for next day, and that was our first glimpse of him.”

The well-known journalist was immediately impressed by McAleer, describing him as “a brisk and electric young coachman.” His first impression was lasting. Within a few years, Clemens in a letter even included Patrick along with Livy as one of the blessings of his life: “Have got a lovely wife, a lovely house, bewitchingly furnished, a lovely carriage & a coachman whose style & dignity are simply awe-inspiring — nothing less ...”

In another letter, Clemens told how he bought Patrick a high hat and a pale blue coat with a deep cape. He described going off to church on Sunday morning with the ladies riding inside the coach and he and Patrick on the driver’s seat, “Patrick with his fearfully tall and fearfully shiny hat. Do you know that coat of Patrick’s cost me more than did any ever I wore and it is so handsome. It did not seem to me that a man’s coachman ought to wear a finer coat than himself and so, under way, I swapped coats with Patrick.”

McAleer apparently was a man of many talents for when a fire broke out in a neighbor’s house in March 1870, Clemens wrote, “Patrick climbed out on the roof and put it half out with snow before we succeeded in getting buckets of water to him. After he got it under complete control a couple of (fire department) steam engines came ...”

When the Clemens family moved to Hartford, McAleer, by then married and raising a family that would eventually number eight children, came to Connecticut with them. So much did Clemens think of his coachman that he built him a house adjacent to the stable at the Hartford mansion, which today is a restored tourist attraction known as the Mark Twain House.

The Clemens family moved into the home in 1871 and remained there, with some years off in Europe, until 1903.

McAleer was not only a dignified gentleman when driving Clemens around Hartford, but also a congenial and witty addition to the family comprised of daughters Susy, Clara and Jean in addition to Sam and Livy.

On one occasion, Livy rejected Clara’s repeated requests for a pony on the grounds that it could be dangerous for her. Patrick consoled Clara by introducing her to a calf just born to his cow. He told Clara that if she took good care of the calf, it would grow into a pony. Clara named the calf Jumbo, and brushed and walked it every day. Eventually, McAleer sold the calf and that caused such a ruckus with Clara that Clemens ordered his coachman to...
Perspective

As the fifth winter of the Famine settled upon Ireland, the focus of the suffering shifted from cabins and cottages to the workhouses. The financing of the workhouses was removed from general taxation and placed on the shoulders of property holders in the various poor unions. Large numbers of them were approaching or actually in bankruptcy and often there simply was no money with which to purchase food for the starving.

Paupers had to be turned away from the workhouses and from outdoor relief with the result that deaths from starvation, general destitution and disease remained at a high rate.

British papers continued to complain of the lazeness of the Irish people and to suggest that a change of population was the only real solution for Ireland’s woes. Conflicting reports were printed about Ireland’s woes. Conflicting reports were printed about Ireland’s woes. Conflicting reports were printed about Ireland’s woes. Conflicting reports were printed about Ireland’s woes. Conflicting reports were printed about Ireland’s woes. Conflicting reports were printed about Ireland’s woes.

Emigration continued at a rapid pace and the movement among the peasantry to force rents down to realistic levels was gaining support in large public meetings.

FAMINE JOURNAL

Published bimonthly during the 150th anniversary of the Irish Potato Famine. Copyright 1999 by the Connecticut Irish-American Historical Society, P.O. Box 120-020, East Haven, CT 06512.

Desperate State

Limerick Chronicle, December 1849 — Not withstanding the exertions of the local board and poor law inspectors, the in-door paupers were obliged to go to bed without dinner on Tuesday night.

The master brought the state of the house, as regards want of provisions for that day, before the board, when soup and chopped turnips grown on the land was the only food available.

The outdoor paupers are in a desperate state, crowding the depots and following the relieving officers by thousands to town to get into the workhouse, but the day’s admissions so crowded the auxiliary that admission was impossible.

It is fearful to think of the state of the Kilrush union, nothing but starving creatures from the country to be seen pouring into a starving workhouse...

The coroner attended an inquest on a man who was found in a dying state on the road near Kilmurry.

Mortality in the workhouse has been small, but owing to the able-bodied on the outdoor relief being struck off, the deaths in that department are every day increasing to a frightful extent.

Relieving officers complain that they must bury their dead without coffins.

The board yesterday agreed to petition the Poor Law Commissioners on the state of the union and said that the guardians would not be morally responsible for the deaths that may occur through starvation.

40 Die On Ferry

London Times, Dec. 18, 1849 — On Wednesday evening at 5 o’clock, intelligence reached the town of Kilrush that a large number of persons, most of whom were paupers who had been seeking outdoor relief, were drowned while crossing the ferry on their return to Moyarta...

No less than 33 dead bodies were washed ashore on the northern side of the ferry... It appeared upon the inquiry that no less than 43 or 45 persons... were allowed to crawl into a crazy and rotten boat, which has been plying on that ferry for the last 40 years.

The boat moved on as far as the middle of the ferry when a sea broke over her stern and filled her at once. She upset instantly and the miserable living freight were immersed in the merciless waters...

With the exception of four, the victims were all paupers who had frequently come to the town in vain to seek outdoor relief and were returning that sad evening to their wretched hovels in the parishes of Moyarta and Kilballyouen...

It is stated that the unfortunate creatures forced their way into the boat as it grew dark, and that act would appear as if they were reckless of their lives or as if Heaven awarded them a more merciful death than the starvation by which they probably would have perished in a few days more...

They came in many times to Kilrush seeking for relief and were crowded in squalid groups around the workhouse gate, the most miserable spectacle that ever shocked the eye of humanity. The doomed beings were obliged for the last fortnight to return to the country without receiving one pound of meal...

Lands Deserted

London Times, Dec. 5, 1849 — The committee have in this report endeavoured to give a faithful picture of the deplorable condition of the Limerick Union. It may not be difficult to foresee the alarming future, should the present causes of evil remain unmitigated and without remedy...

The farming classes find it still more difficult to extend or even to continue their ordinary demand for labour, and the committee have observed with regret that lands are frequently deserted and left without means of meeting any engagements. In some cases, lands are thrown back upon the owner encumbered with arrears of poor-rate incurred not by him but by default of another; for these arrears his freehold estate is made responsible and under the act of the last session may be sold.

Under these circumstances where cultivation is rendered unprofitable it will cease and lands must become waste.

In the electoral division of Castletown, Union of Newcastle, consisting of 9,656 acres, 2,397 acres are already waste...

A large and increasing emigration of a new character has extended greatly, adding to the difficulties of employing labour and of paying rates.

Farmers and occupiers of land who can still command some share of unexhausted capital are flying from the ruin they anticipate...

The committee are unable to furnish any distinct evidence of the mortality that has taken place though it is undoubtedly very great, but the diminished number of marriages and of births is undeniable; the deaths in the workhouses and the coffins given away for outdoor poor are formidable great...
devotion of a pair of Irish domestic servants

very plain. I could understand it, I tell you. It was in English and I could understand it, the bad part and I enjoyed it, too.

Several nights later, as was her custom, Livy asked Leary what book she was then reading and without thinking the servant blurted out its name. Livy ordered Leary to bring the book to her and Katy obeyed, although lamenting, "I hated to give it up before I'd read the whole story."

While living in Hartford, Katy maintained some connections to the Irish community. "I dressed myself up fine for the occasion," she said of one Hibernian ball she attended. "I had a red silk dress covered with black lace... I thought it looked very nice and was very much pleased with myself.

"We danced all them old square dances. I never danced round dances, you know, because the Catholic Church didn't approve of round dancing in them days. Jazz hadn't struck the world then. So we did, well, just money musk, lanciers and quadrilles. We danced lots of them dances and we had a grand old time..."

If Katy Leary shared in all the joys of the Clemens family, she also partook in full measure of their sorrows. In the summer of 1896 she was at Susy's side when the Clemens' daughter contracted spinal meningitis. Just before she died, Susy reached up and touched Leary's hand and said, "Mamma." Leary attended Livy when she died in June 1904. At Christmas-time 1909, Katy found Jean, who was an epileptic, dead from a seizure in the bathtub. And the Irish maid was at the bedside with Clemens' daughter Clara and her husband when Sam died on April 21, 1910.

Mary Lawton, who joined the staff long after Leary, wrote, "From the very beginning of my intimacy in the Clemens household, the doings of that delightful family were an everlasting joy to me. In that House of Enchantment — for so it always seemed — besides the magic figure of Mark Twain, the gentle presence of Mrs. Clemens, and those three diverting children, Susy, Clara and Jean, was another figure: the unique figure of Katy Leary, for more than 30 years their faithful and devoted servant."

"Katy Leary, whose quaint sayings and philosophies and funny stories of the family happenings bubbled up like the Fountain of Life, and were an unfailing source of delight to all who heard them."

Lawton recalled her first day in the employ of the family: "I remember that it was Katy Leary herself that opened the door. I can see her now as vividly as she stood then — a handsome, smiling, stalwart, unique and very kindly figure on that gracious threshold. Her flashing black eyes still flashed, although behind large spectacles. Her thick wavy hair, that must have been in the early days as black as the proverbial raven's wing, was iron-gray. A fine ruddy color burned in her welcoming face — a face that was firm and round and happy as a girl's."

"In fact the first impression that Katy Leary gave was one of happiness, bubbling happiness, and after that the flash of her humor was the thing that struck one most and made one feel that it would be an amusing and enlightening experience to talk with Katy Leary..."

"...And that is Katy Leary as she looked; but when she spoke — ah, then it was that you began to laugh with and love Katy Leary. The things she said in her soft, deep and rather quiet voice were inimitable. The Irish wit of her, the Irish quickness of her, the Irish deftness of her, and sometimes when necessary, the Irish bluntness of her, was something to think over, something to laugh over, and something sometimes, alas, to weep over!"

Years after the death of Sam Clemens, Lawton went to live for a time with Leary who had returned to the home where she was born in Elmira. The purpose of her visit was to recapture for posterity the magic of Katy Leary and the Clemens' household by getting Leary to retell all the old stories of the family.

From that visit came a book, A Lifetime With Mark Twain, The Memories Of Katy Leary..."

"Here is the story as Katy and I lived it together again not long since in her little house in Elmira where she was born nearly seventy years ago," Lawton wrote in the introduction to the book. "There I found her — older, sadder, I must admit — but still one glimpsed the Katy Leary of old. The quaint sayings and funny stories that used to come all tumbling out, now hung haltingly, the unforgettable riot of gay words seemed hushed forever, the precious memories lay scattered through the twilight of the years, and only the thin flame of the past glowed in that quiet room.

"For anxious days that flame burned low and fitfully and then — out of the smoldering embers, the fires leaped up once more, the years were swept away and the magic of those happy, laughing days came back again — and Katy with them!"

Sources: Mary Lawton's book, A Lifetime With Mark Twain, is a delightful collection of stories by and about Katy Leary and Patrick McAleer. The ones quoted here are only a tiny portion of the whole. Obituary notices of Patrick McAleer appeared in the Hartford Courant on Feb. 26 and 28, 1906. References to Patrick and Katy can be found in most of the many biographies of Samuel Clemens and collections of his letters.

Black minister visited state

In his autobiography, the Rev. L. Tilmon, "pastor of a Colored Methodist Congregational Church in New York City," described a journey he made in 1844 to eastern Connecticut. "While there," he wrote, "I stopped with a colored family by the name of Anderson. There are quite a number of colored people in that place who are living without any regular established organized system of religion among themselves.

"I held meetings for them several times and then I left for the city of Norwich. Here, I found a still larger number of colored people who were more desirous of improvements in social, moral and religious habits for the accomplishment of which they had associated themselves in times past and built for themselves a meeting house, but being of different opinions in relation to the mode of religious worship, dissensions and divisions had crept in their midst which finally resulted in serious alienations so much so that the house was closed and seldom opened for religious meetings except when a stranger would pass along. On the eve of my departure from them, they urged me to visit them again, which I promised to do within three weeks but was unable to do so, being more successful in other places."

Source: "A Brief Miscellaneous Narrative of the More Early Part of the Life of L. Tilmon."

Editor's note: In recognition of the bond between our historical society and the other societies in the Ethnic Heritage Center, and to foster appreciation for all races and nationalities, we publish in each issue a story about another ethnic group.