

THE NEWPORT MUSEUM OF IRISH HISTORY
P.O. BOX 1378
NEWPORT, RI 02840



THE NEWSLETTER
OF THE
NEWPORT MUSEUM OF IRISH HISTORY
NMIH

P.O. BOX 1378, NEWPORT, RI 02840

RECOGNIZING AND PRESERVING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF IRISH MEN AND WOMEN OF NEWPORT COUNTY,

THE PRESIDENT'S LETTER

A hearty welcome to all of our new members!! We now have 70 members and growing. Our fund-raiser/kick-off February 28th will be a real gala! I know our Directors have been out and around, 'talking up' the Museum, in addition to our recent mailing. Thanks to all.

The 'Barney Street Cemetery' committee has been busy, thanks in part to Martin Murphy, whose tireless efforts via phone and letter writing, has produced a letter from the Diocese of Providence, giving us permission to proceed with our efforts on the cemetery. We have a long way to go, but first we will organize to properly research this old site, which, incidentally, was the first Catholic parish facility/grave in Newport. A more detailed article appears in the Newsletter.

We have been very fortunate to have acquired some wonderful old photographs and news articles from several members and Directors. Pat Murphy allowed us to copy a number of pictures of Eamon DeValera's visit to Newport in 1919. We wish to thank Moto-Photo and Michael Carlin for the super work in producing these shots! We also have to thank Rita Brady Clarke for letting us copy a wonderful series of pictures and articles about her father, Thomas Brady. We will have an article about Tom in a forthcoming Newsletter.

WE have acquired several books/pamphlets of interest, including a biography of DeValera by Tim Pat Coogan, and the pamphlet from the Providence Library on their wonderful Irish collection, entitled "The Irish Literary Renaissance in Providence," on display recently.

All and all I think we're off to a great start. Eventually, of course, we will be looking for a facility for display and storage as well as computer research, video, etc.

Thankfully yours,

Vince **A**rnold
President

INTERESTING ARTICLE RECEIVED ON IRISH PERSONAGES OF NEWPORT

Patrick Murphy has uncovered several newspaper articles from years ago about some interesting Irish personalities, including an article about Mrs. James Brown, known worldwide as the "The Unsinkable Molly Brown." As you may recall, the nickname "unsinkable" came from the fact that she survived the sinking of the Titanic. Mrs. Brown was formally Miss Margaret Tobin. She met Brown in Colorado; he subsequently "struck it rich" in mining. The Browns became quite wealthy, and at one point in the 1890's, Molly bought a cottage on the corner of Bellevue and Redwood St. She decorated it lavishly, and as the article from the Newport Daily News reported, "she entertained a small coterie of friends, but was unable to gain the approval of the social leaders, and after a few years gave up her Newport residence." (She died in 1932)



Another person of note, Countess Annie Leary, was the owner of the house on the corner of Bellevue and Pelham St., now the Elks Home. Miss Leary was given the title "Countess" by Pope Leo XIII for her many, generous gifts to charity. While she was a very generous benefactor to many charities in the New York City area, she was also a notable New York and Newport socialite. It is understood that she is buried in St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York.

"The historical sense involves a perception, not only of the pastness of the past, but of its presence." T. S. Eliot, 1919

MUSEUM "PLANK" MEMBERSHIP TO BE AWARDED

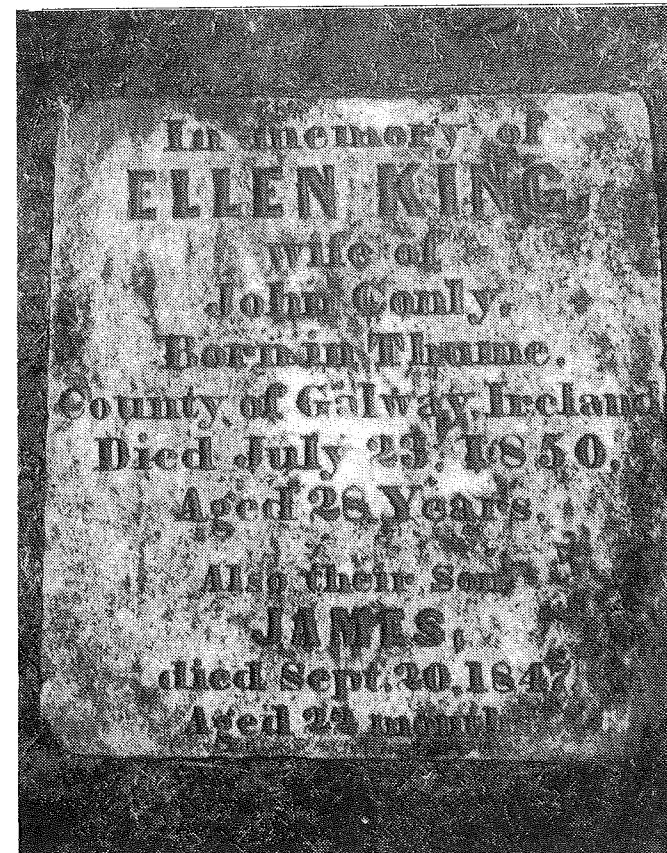
The Museum Board of Directors has passed a motion to award "Plank" owner memberships to all new members who sign up in 1997 as LIFE MEMBERS. As of this time, there are ten (10) LIFE members who will receive this award.

NEWPORT IRISH TOUR BROCHURE

We are presently working on a new tour of the Newport area which will highlight the Irish work and influence in the city. Specific sites that will be described include Fort Adams, which was built with many Irish stonemasons and bricklayers; St. Mary's Church, also built by many of the same workers; the Barney Street cemetery, and other interesting places. We hope to have this completed for distribution by Spring.

MUSEUM BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

THE NEXT MUSEUM BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR MONDAY, MARCH 31ST, AT 7:00 PM, AT THE LAFORGE RESTAURANT. ALL MEMBERS MAY ATTEND THE BOARD MEETINGS



Typical example of an actual tomb stone in the cemetery.

THE EARLY IRISH IN NEWPORT

BY MARTIN J. MURPHY III

Very often, when we think of the colonial times in Newport, the only image that comes to mind is a mental picture of a first or second generation person who came here from England—mainly for religious liberty. While many colonists did actually fit this mold, there were others who came here for economical reasons.

The city is filled with ancient cemeteries with tomb stones with familiar names carved on the face such as Coggeshall, Coddington, Whipple, Clarke, Bull.

Little is known to most Newporters about one cemetery in our city which is located on the corner of Barney and Mt. Vernon St's. It is a large, treed lot, surrounded by buildings of the 18th century. These structures house historical memorabilia, places of worship, colonial residences of both the 18th and 19th century.

Without the historical cemetery sign on the property, one would just pass by and not really take notice. Upon walking through this lot, one would come upon many tomb stones lying flat on the ground. Perhaps at one time, they stood erect and the same fate came to them as did the Arnold burial plot on Pelham St., until it was restored. The fact that few are aware of this site could be the reason that its fate has not been worse than it is. But while walking on this site, you won't see names like Foke, Arnold or other names thought to be indigenous to Newport. No, you will find Irish Names.

When the idea of having a NEWPORT MUSEUM OF IRISH HISTORY came about, we looked for something physically connected to our endeavor to take on as a project. The Barney St. Cemetery came up as a great goal for restoration. The difficult part was in finding out who actually owned this property. Following are some details of the search which led to our success in taking on this project.

Before 1808, the entire east coast belonged to the Baltimore Diocese. At that time, the Diocese of Boston was created, which included Rhode Island. In 1843, Hartford, CT. became a diocese, which included both Connecticut and Rhode Island, whose first bishop was William Barber Tyler. (He actually resided in RI, and signed his name, "Bishop of Providence" in defiance of the Vatican.

In 1872, the State of Rhode Island and Cape Cod became a diocese in their own right under the tutelage of one Rt. Rev. Thomas P. Hendricken. In 1904, Cape Cod became a part of the Diocese of Fall River, MA.

What we are driving at here is that with each creation of a new diocese, those where cemetery property is situated, the new diocese inherits the site. This was not an easy task to have its ownership established. Once it was, we requested permission from the Diocese of Providence to maintain and improve it. Our work will be guided by a gentleman whose reputation in this field is unequalled in our state.

A short history of the cemetery: The property was purchased in April, 1828 by the Rt. Rev. Benedict Jos. Fenwick, 2nd Bishop of Boston, from Eleazar Trevitt, who owned the building and lots, the building of which was used as a school. It was purchased for \$ 1,100.00. It became the first permanent Catholic Church in Rhode Island. Behind the building a cemetery was established, the remains of which we see today. Sometime later, the property on Warner St. was purchased and the "New St. Mary's Cemetery" was located there. The old schoolhouse/church was soon given up, as in 1847, property on Spring St. was purchased for building the present church of the Holy Name of Mary, Our Lady of the Isle, St. Mary's.

MJM