


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



**THE NEWSLETTER OF**  
**THE MUSEUM OF NEWPORT IRISH HISTORY**

Published by the Museum of Newport Irish History  
P.O. Box 1378 Newport RI 02840 (401) 847-2890

Volume 4

Spring 2000

### ***THE MUSEUM'S THIRD ANNUAL MEETING***

Held March 26th at The LaForge Casino Restaurant.

About twenty members and friends attended the Third Annual Meeting of the Museum on Sunday, March 26th.

At the meeting, President Arnold reviewed the past year's activities, which included the dedication and blessing of the restored St. Joseph Cemetery, a "First annual" Old Colony Train Ride, a very successful Steak Night fund-raiser and a Museum-sponsored talk in October by Dr. Patricia O'Malley from Bradford College.

Elected for the year 2000-2001 (March) were:

President	<i>Vincent Arnold</i>
1st Vice President	<i>Robert McKenna</i>
2nd Vice President	<i>Elliot Carter</i>
Secretary	<i>Margaret Ahearn</i>
Treasurer	<i>William Nagle</i>

After the meeting's business, President Arnold introduced the speaker, Dr. John Quinn of the Salve University History Department. John gave a very interesting and enlightening talk entitled "Eamon De Valera's American Ties." John recounted how Eamon had been born in Brooklyn in 1882 and moved to Limerick in 1885, after his father's death. His mother returned to the U.S. and he was raised by his uncle in Ireland.

(Continued on P 2)

### ***Museum Members "Man" a Booth at Newport County EXPO 2000***

On March 23rd, seven Museum members shared the "duty" at a table donated by the Newport County Chamber of Commerce at "EXPO 2000". Over 100 businesses, government and non-profit organizations displayed their wares. The event drew several thousand people who exchanged views, sought out information on the products and services displayed and received a lot of good advice on home decorating, clothing, etc. Throughout this time, attendees also enjoyed free samples of many kinds of food as well as coffee and wine.

Members Eileen and "Skip" Carter, Bill Nagle, Maria Carroll, Margaret Ahearn, Ned McGrath and Pat Murphy all assisted in the Museum's presentation. Pat produced a video tape of the Barney Street Cemetery showing it "before" and "after" our restoration last March and included the Dedication Ceremony. Pat fixed the video to play for four hours to cover the whole time of the "EXPO".

Our booth operators had a great time talking to many visitors and handing out membership forms and "Tour of Irish Newport" brochures. During breaks, the operators were able to sample the many goodies offered by the restaurants, wineries and coffee houses. A great time was had by all !! We hope to do this again next year.

(See related photos on Page 2)

### **JOIN THE MUSEUM OF NEWPORT IRISH HISTORY**

**HELP US BRING THE STORY OF 350 YEARS OF IRISH HISTORY TO LIFE !!**

NAME (S): \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

TOWN/CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

Individual  \$10.00/Year    Family  \$20.00/Year    Life  \$100.00

Amount enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (Donations are tax-deductible)

Make checks payable to: The Museum of Newport Irish History  
P.O. Box 1378  
Newport, RI 02840

**THE MUSEUM'S THIRD ANNUAL MEETING**

(Continued from Page 1)

Professor Quinn related how De Valera was spared execution after the 1916 "Easter Monday" rebellion, no doubt as a result of his American birth. Later, in 1919, Eamon DeValera came to the U.S. to raise funds for the nascent "Irish Republic". (The Irish rebels had named him the "First Mister"). Eamon traveled all around the U.S. and came to Newport in September where 4,000 people greeted him. These included Mayor Mahoney and several of the City Aldermen. While DeValera's political wishes were not necessarily met, he did raise ten million dollars -- an astronomical sum for that time.

Dr. Quinn also played an audio tape of President DeValera addressing the Nation and the world in 1939 at which time he declared that Ireland would remain neutral during World War II. His voice on that tape sounded amazingly like one of our local personages. Following his talk, Dr. Quinn responded to many questions from the floor.

\*\* The Museum taped Dr. Quinn's talk and the De Valera recorded speech.

**EXPO 2000**

Members Margaret Ahearn (L) and Maria Carroll at our booth with the VCR showing the video

Eileen and "Skip" Carter (Left) with Bill Nagle await more visitors at the booth.



Special thanks to Flint Video of Middletown for donating the use of the VCR.

The Newsletter has received permission to reprint the following article from the "Irish America" magazine, Sept/Oct 1998 issue: We thought this article by Dr. McKiernan was particularly interesting- especially his discussion in the last paragraph regarding Mac and Mc.

## ■ Last Word Focal Scoir

# What's in a Name?

In one sense, all family names are odd, resembling in their origins the native American, African, or Oriental names which are often regarded as quaint, romantic, exotic.

Family names arose out of the need for identification and reference. It's not a precise system. There could be a dozen Patrick Kellys in one small town but, to avoid errors of identification, each must have a separate Social Security number—but numbers do not evoke the appeal of names. How, then, did the system of names originate?

Perhaps in point of priority, the new baby was identified as John's son (Johnson). That may explain the first Johnson name, but not the next who achieved individuality by an additional name, for example, Kevin (meaning of gentle birth).

But if the son of Johnson came to be Kevin Johnson, how did John, who started off the tribe of Johnsons, get the name John?

We are, obviously, going back at least two dozen centuries in Ireland to an era when people bore the type of name that we find so romantic or primeval in native American societies of yesteryear, to an era in Ireland when a man might have been known as "Hawk" and his new-born daughter "Heather."

So identification went on in such a simple manner for another 1,000 years or so. With an increasing population there was a further refinement in the system, probably something like "Short-Winged Hawk" and "Mountain-Heather."

There was still no nominal relationship between child and father.

And the years rolled on in Pre-Christian Ireland with personal names drawn from nature or personal characteristics. Even in our time, the London telephone directory listed a man by the name of Harry Smallbones.

Ancient Irish raids upon Britain and trading contracts with the Continent introduced other names into Ireland. Many were still only a single word, but often they combined a native Irish word with a foreign word in the

process of becoming Gaelicized.

The first large impact upon the Irish naming system began in the fifth century A.D. as a result of the introduction of Christianity. Of course Christianity did not produce massive name changes overnight but what changes were made have persisted to the present.

In the beginning, the person might still be identified by one word because the saint's name was so culturally different. Our "John," a Semitic name, for example, appeared in its Latinized form, Johannes (Christ's beloved disciple). Gradually becoming very popular, it became shortened in its Gaelic form to "Eoin."

If we may be excused in jumping from the fifth century to the twelfth, we find another great shock upon the Irish name system in the arrival of the Normans in 1168. It seemed to the Irish that every second Norman was named Jean.

To the Irish, the French-speaking Normans seemed to be saying Seán. Since Jean was French for John, we now have two words in the Irish language for John, the newer one, Seán, coming approximately 700 years after the first, Eoin.

To return to the fifth century: What was noticeable about Irish names was the gradual extension of *O* and *Mac* to indicate family relationships. The Scandinavians and the Teutons in general add *-sohn*, *-sen*, *-son* to the basic stem to indicate the parental relationship, but the Irish prefaced the set with *Mac*, *O*, or *Ní* for this purpose.

These three words are complete in themselves although the English mistake of converting the accent on *O* to an apostrophe seems uncorrectable.

These three words translate: *Mac*, son; *O*, grandson or descendant; and *Ní*, daughter.

Thus, *Mac Eoin* becomes anglicized Keown or Johnson and *Mac Seán* becomes Cheyne or Johnson. In these instances, as well as in others, Irish names coming into English suffer mangling, the phonics of one language differing so much from the other.

So it is that personal names in Ireland (as happened in other cultures) were influenced by the changes affecting the

total culture. In any culture such changes may be limited to a small group or powerful enough to register on an entire culture as in the 18th century when the tell-tale *O* and *Mac* began to disappear from Irish names.

Shortly before the Normans, the Vikings had left an imprint upon the Irish society but their influence on names was less marked than that of the Normans. Yet the great O'Rourke family may have earned its name by blood-descent from the Norse family name *Hrothreker* or may have adopted the name out of admiration for the Norse man's prowess, a practice not uncommon throughout the world—naming a child after a military hero, a sports achiever, a film star, as well as a saint.

The English language has the peculiar habit of adding a final *s* or *d* in bringing some names from Irish to English. For example, the Irish *O Uiginn* becomes *O'Higgins*. Note, the separate existence of *O* has been ignored and the accent has mistakenly been demoted to an apostrophe. Similarly, the *O Beollain* family becomes *Boland*, the *O* dropped altogether and the *d* added. Other examples abound.

The greatest changes in Irish names occurred from the 16th century onward as English domination became increasingly widespread and the English ear interpreted Irish sounds variously and in differing English spellings.

The relatively simple name *O Dochartaigh*, which acquired 33 different English spellings from *O Doherty* to *Dockery*, illustrates the problems of genealogical research as well as placing too much emphasis on whether one is a Kelly or a Kelley.

Because of different timetables in the English conquest of Ireland and Scotland, a fable has grown up that *Mac* is Scottish. *Mc* is Irish. *Mc* used to be written with a line under the *c* indicating a contraction, the omission of the *d*. The languages of both countries are basically the same, as is reflected in the naming customs. In both countries *Mac* also appears in disguise as *M'*, *Mc*, or *Mu* (and means son). **Ⓛ**

By Dr. Eoin McKiernan



## A LITTLE GENEALOGY

Over the next several years the Museum will be working to build up a basic set of genealogical resources, both in the "hard cover" form and the new CD-ROM format. This will take time and careful use of funds, as the list of publications and other resources is almost endless. We will, of course, concern ourselves with Newport County, not country-wide areas.

Meanwhile, we print here a little article submitted by Pat Murphy, which was incorrectly printed in our Newsletter several issues ago. (Apologies from the Editor.)

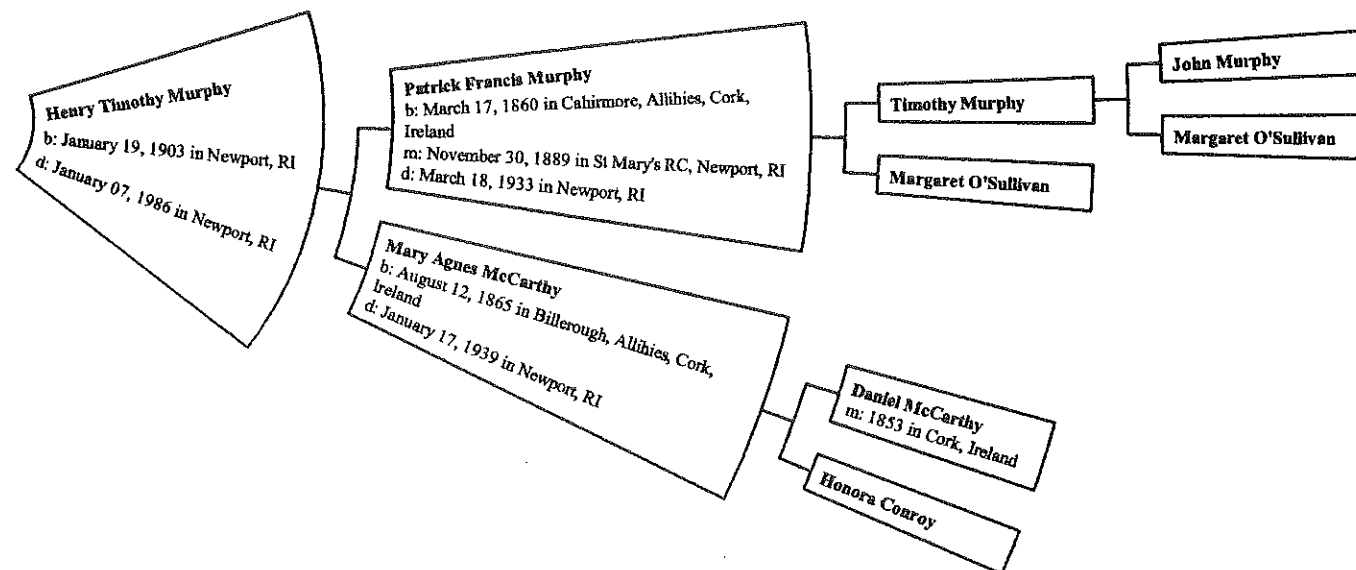
### IRELAND'S 32-HORIZONTAL, SAVE ONE

CAVANTRIMTIPPERARYCLAREKILDARE  
 ARMAGHTYRONEFERMANAGHLAOISLIGO  
 ROSCOMMONAGHANCORKKILKENNYLOUTH  
 LEITRIMAYOWATERFORDUBLINDERRY  
 OFFALYLIMERICKERRYLONGFORDDOWN  
 WEXFORDONEGALWAYWICKLOWESTMEATH

The Museum of Newport Irish History is looking for your county of origin. Hopefully, you may know the town or even the townland of your ancestors. Please supply this information to Vin Arnold in the near future. It is thought that the Irish came to this area from all thirty-two counties. Irish places of birth are listed on many tombstones in the local cemeteries.

Several people have sent in the counties of their forebears and we print below Pat Murphy's interesting ancestors of Henry Timothy Murphy.

#### *Ancestors of Henry Timothy Murphy*



In other genealogical items of interest, the following article is reprinted from the New York Post.

## Tracing your Irish ancestors

**T**HE National Library of Ireland has long been a focus for visitors researching their Irish ancestry.

Since June of 1998, a dedicated Genealogy Advisory Service has been available in the library, located on Kildare Street, Dublin 2.

Two professional genealogists provide

visitors, gratis, with an overview of Irish genealogical records and expert advice on their family research.

The staff coordinates relevant printed materials and a computerized data base.

For those preferring to hire an expert, a list of members of the Association of Professional Genealogists

in Ireland is provided. Cost ranges from 20 to 25 pounds (\$28 to \$35) per hour to search.

The GAS offices are open Monday-Friday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. and Saturday, 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.; e-mail: [info@nli.ie](mailto:info@nli.ie); phone number: (011-353-1) 603-0200; fax number: (011-353-1) 676-6690. — C.K.V.

The Museum has recently received a catalogue of a complete listing of the Genealogical Publishing Company of Baltimore, MD. It lists such titles as "American Passenger Arrival Records" by Michael Tepper. "Emigrants From Ireland to America, 1743- 1753" is a report to the British House of Commons on enforced emigration to America. There are many, many more volumes of potential interest to the Newport area. We will review this and other sources and begin a modest collection.

### ***UPCOMING EVENTS OF SPECIAL INTEREST***

\*\* On May 13th, the Fort Adams Trust will have an open house at the Fort with many events planned. The Fort Adams Trust Executive Director, Tony Palermo has asked us to participate with a booth displaying our Museum's Newport and Fort connection. A Fort Adams flyer is enclosed.

\*\* **June 1st** is our second annual **Great Train Ride** with the *Old Colony & Newport Railroad* !! See the enclosed flyer and ORDER YOUR TICKETS NOW !!! before the tickets go on general sale. Don't lose your place for a great fun time !!

\*\* In August we are planning another Steak Night fund-raiser with raffle items. We will keep you updated concerning this event.