



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 9

FALL 2002

Museum Fall/Winter Speaker Series Begins

*Dr. John F. Quinn of Salve Regina University
to Lead off the Year's talks on October 24th*

John Quinn, a specialist in Irish History, will kick-off the Fall/Winter speaker series on Thursday, October 24th, with a talk based on his research for his newly published book, *Father Mathew's Crusade- Temperance in Nineteenth-Century Ireland and Irish America*.

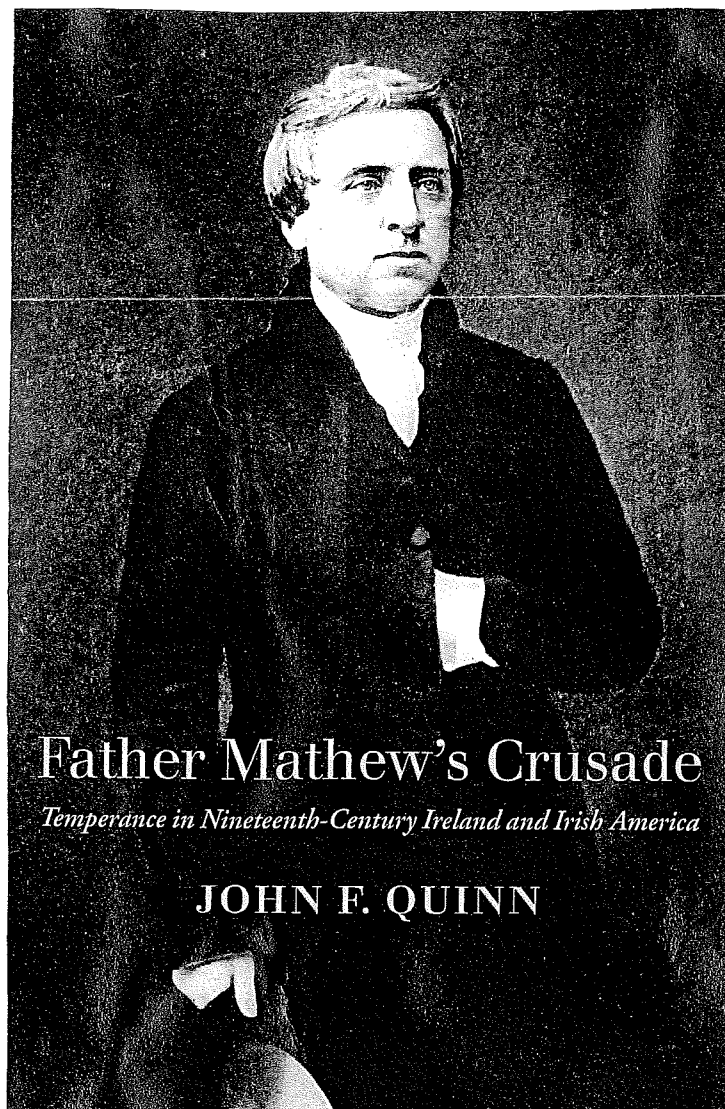
John received his A.B. from Georgetown and an M.A. and Ph.D. from the University of Notre Dame. He is an associate Professor of history at Salve Regina University.

John will reveal some interesting facts about the temperance movement in Ireland, the U.S., and in Newport.

**TALK TO INAUGURATE THE
MICHAEL F. CROWLEY Lecture Series**

Paul Crowley and the La FORGE CASINO RESTAURANT will generously support the series of talks in memory of Paul's father, Michael F. Crowley.

Dr. Quinn will be pleased to sign his new book following the talk, which will be held on Thursday, October 24th at 6PM. (Please see the insert in this Newsletter for further information)

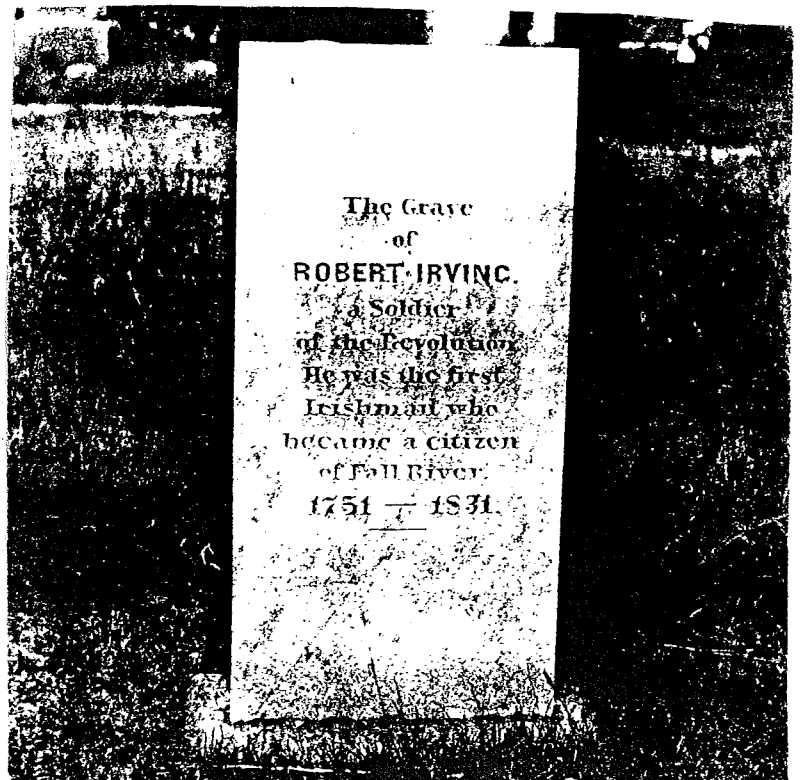


FALL RIVER, RHODE ISLAND-1856-1862

The Spring 2000 Issue of the Museum's Newsletter contained an article about Fall River once being a part of Tiverton, thus accounting for a fairly large number of Irish in the 1860 census of Tiverton. We have recently read a 2-volume book by Philip T. Silvia Jr. entitled "Victorian Vistas: Fall River (1865-1900)", published in 1987. Silvia uses articles from the Fall River newspapers to tell the story of early Fall River.

Of interest to us is, of course, the Tiverton story and the Irish immigrants who lived in what was originally Tiverton, but became Fall River by an act of the Rhode Island Legislature in 1856. The area bordering Massachusetts was set off and named Fall River. The reason for this action was basically to position the state in its battle with Massachusetts over the 1746 boundaries. This was finally settled by the U.S. Supreme Court, which gave Rhode Island East Providence and eastern Pawtucket, while Massachusetts gained Fall River.

While reviewing Silvia's book, we came across the story of the "oldest Irishman" in Fall River. It seems that one Judge Durfee met Robert Irving in Boston. Robert had just arrived from Ireland and, needing work, agreed to lead a ram all the way to Freetown where Durfee had a large farm. The year was about 1774, and when the Revolutionary War began, Durfee offered Irving a lifetime job at his farm if he would join the Army. Irving joined, and on his return stayed with the Durfee family for many years. After his death the family erected a gravestone with the inscription "The first Irish citizen of Fall River". One must note that as Irving died in 1831, the stone must have been erected sometime *after* 1856, as the area was still part of Freetown in 1831.



A Follow-up Civil War Story

Our Summer 2002 Newsletter had the listing of Newport (City) Civil War dead taken from the recent 'broadside' issued by Secretary of State Inman. Several articles have been recently reviewed which are of interest relating to the Civil War.

The Spring issue of the Recorder of the American Irish Historical Society has an excellent article about the great March 17th St. Patrick's Day celebration by General Thomas Meagher's Irish Brigade in Virginia, 1863.

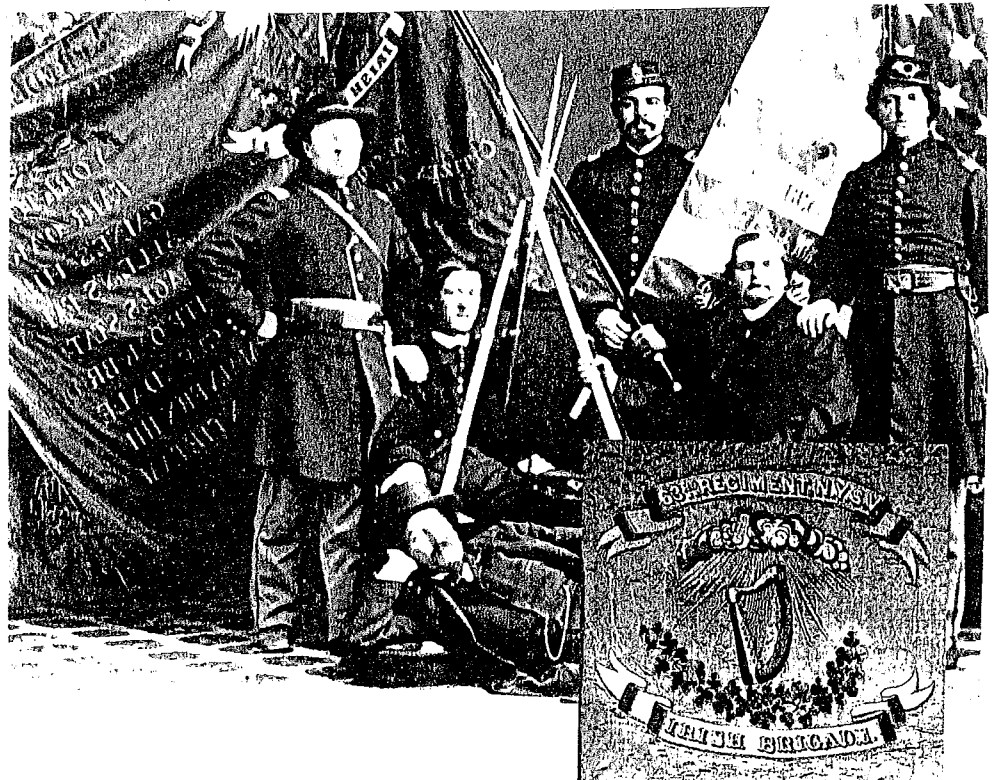
The Union Army, and especially the Irish Brigade, had suffered through the battles of Fredericksburg and Antietam, with its' 'Bloody Lane' fight of the Fighting 69th, and the General knew the troops needed time to regroup and the 17th would be a good 'uplift'.

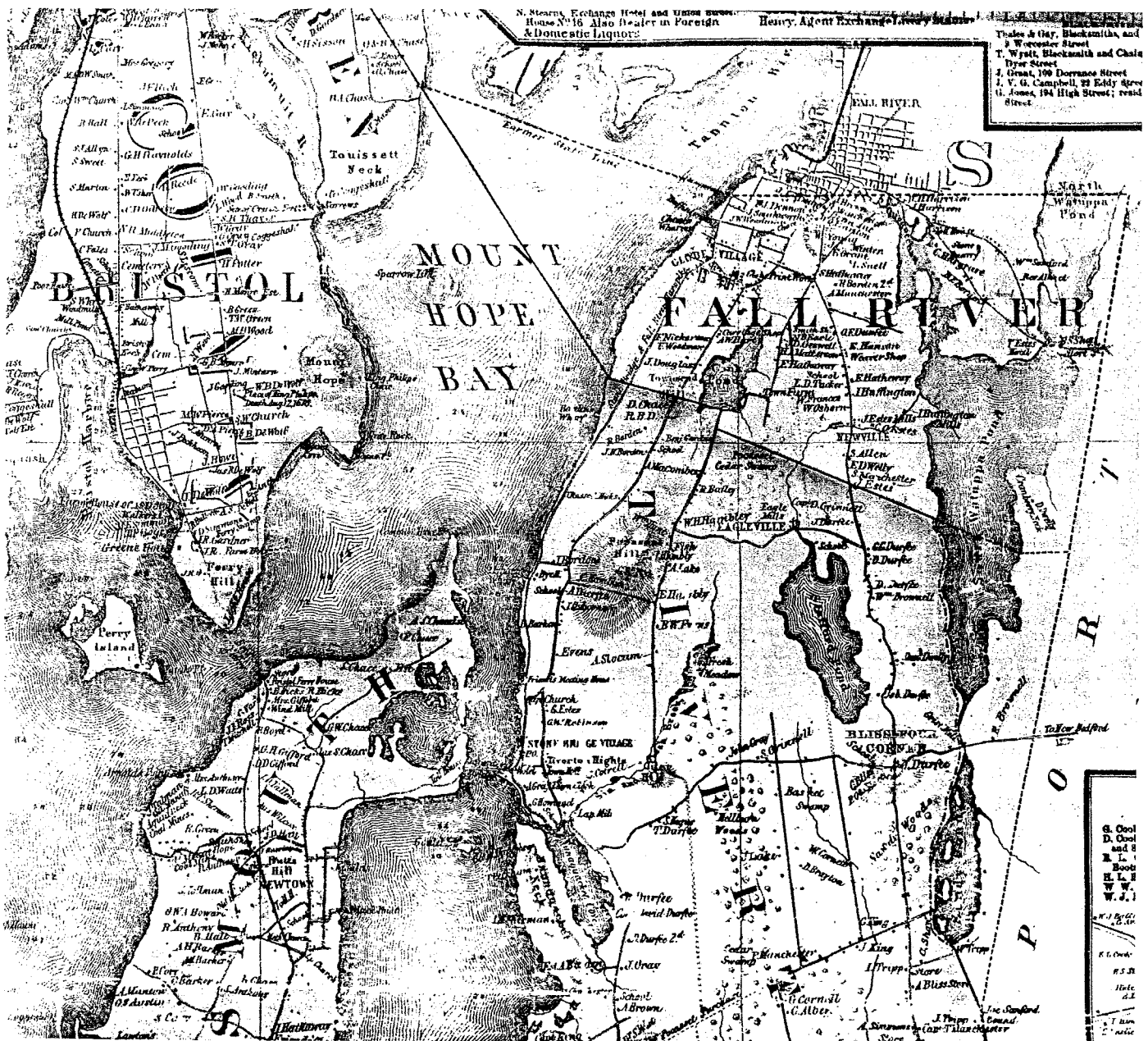
The all day celebration was attended by 20,000 troops, with horse racing, music and all forms of entertainment. Notables in attendance included General Hooker, General Mead, and General Sickles. Mass was celebrated by Father William Corby of the Irish Brigade. He would later become the president of the University of Notre Dame.

In a related article in the Summer 2002 issue of the Notre Dame Magazine, University Archivist Peter Lysy pointed out that the Irish Brigade took their Brigade flags into battle, but in the Brigade's case, the New York merchants had bought very special banners- from Tiffanys, no less, at a cost of \$2000! These special banners were never carried into battle, and Notre Dame possesses one of the six originals.

Copies of these articles are available ; also, a copy of the *Bulletin of the Newport Historical Society, July 26, 1926*, which has an excellent article regarding the formation and action of the Rhode Island First Regiment in the Civil War.

Officers from the Irish Brigade pose with their unit's ceremonial green flag, circa July 1865. The lettering reads backward because the back side of the flag is facing the camera. Inset, detail of the restored flag, which is stored in the Snite Museum.





The 1862 boundary adjustment by which Rhode Island acquired eastern Pawtucket and East Providence resulted in the transfer of the state's newest town to Massachusetts. In 1856 the state legislature set off the industrialized northern portion of the town of Tiverton to form the separate municipality of Fall River located on a stream by that name. It did so in the midst of litigation between Massachusetts and Rhode Island concerning the proper boundary between Tiverton and the Massachusetts community of Freetown to

its north. That dispute, stemming from a faulty survey done when the East Bay region was ceded to Rhode Island in 1746, was resolved by the U.S. Supreme Court in favor of Massachusetts. Thus, on March 1, 1862, Fall River, Rhode Island (two miles from north to south, with over three thousand inhabitants) was merged with Freetown to form modern-day Fall River, Massachusetts. Detail from H. F. Walling map of 1862, courtesy of RIHS (Rhi x3 5702)

**PLANNING FOR A TRIP TO IRELAND
IN OCTOBER 2003 --- UPDATE**

THE MUSEUM HAS RECEIVED ENCOURAGING RESPONSES from 20 members who have expressed interest in our proposed trip. We will plan on a meeting of interested people next January to talk "specifics".

Meanwhile, we will also send a notice to members of the Newport Irish Heritage Association to ask for their interest.

If you are interested in our planned trip to Ireland in October, 2003, please send the form below so that we can contact you for our planning session to be scheduled in January, 2003:

Yes, I'm interested- please notify me(us):

Name(s) _____

Address _____

Phone# _____

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

The Museum welcomes four new members, one of which is a Life member, and a renewal upgrading to Life membership.

Shelia Plakis	Greenville, RI
Mary Alice Blake	Miami Shores, FL
Joseph M. Hall	Newport
Anjan Dutta-Gupta	Roswell GA (Life Member)
Bernard & Patience Connerton	Newport (Life Members)