

A Walking Tour of Irish Newport

Tour 2: Spring Street to Barney Street Cemetery (Self-guided)



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Open May—October and by appointment

The Irish in Newport

The first Irish immigrants to Newport, in the mid 1600's, came as the result of English policies and Cromwellian brutality toward Ireland.

The 1700's saw the arrival of the noted philosopher, educator Dean George Berkeley, and the involvement of many Irish in the Revolutionary War. Documentation is very incomplete, but we know the names of Fitzgerald, Burke, Morris and Flanagan fought in that war.

1778 saw the arrival of the French to Aquidneck Island to support America, with the Irish Regiment under Count Dillon, some of whose ranks stayed behind.

The next wave of immigration occurred in the 1820's as the result of the difficult economic times in Ireland, and the first of the potato crop failures in 1818 and 1822. Of course, the huge potato crop failures of the 1840's drove thousands to come to America.

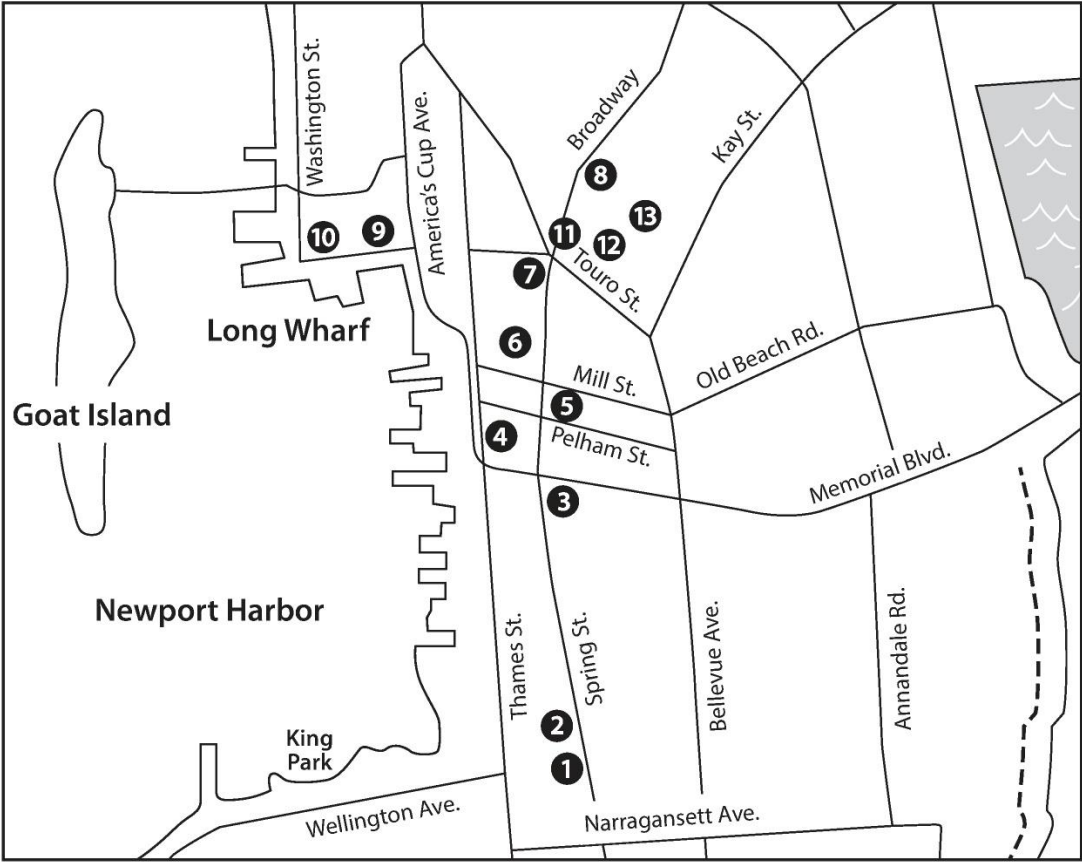
In the 1800's many skilled Irish worked in such diverse fields as the Portsmouth coal mines, the gardens and houses of the Newport Mansions, and the construction of Fort Adams.

Through the 1800's and 1900's the Irish established themselves as a rich, diverse group that has contributed to the fabric of this area. The names of O'Connell, McCormick, Walsh, Horgan, Butler, Galvin, O'Neill are familiar, and since 1895 there have been eleven (11) mayors of Newport of Irish descent.

1. **465 Spring St.: "The Old Stone House"** now home to O'Neill-Hayes Funeral Home. In 1850, home to famous author Henry James, Nobel prize winner, author of *Portrait of a Lady*, *Turn of the Screw*, and *Daisy Miller*. He was born and raised in NYC in a wealthy family where both grandmothers were Irish (Walsh).
2. **53 Dearborn St. (Corner of Spring St. behind fence): Thomas Galvin Home and Nursery (1845).** Galvin was the first wealthy Irish gardener/landscaper with much of his business was servicing the Bellevue

Ave "cottages". His estate stretched from Spring St. to Thames St.

3. **12 William St.: St Mary's, "Our Lady of the Isle", Church (Catholic), Corner of Spring St. and Memorial Boulevard:**
 - Cornerstone laid 1848, dedicated 1852.
 - Irish labor built the foundation.
 - Architect was the famous Patrick Keely (born County Tipperary, moved to Brooklyn, NY). Keely designed more than 600 Cathedrals, churches and colleges.
 - John Fitzgerald Kennedy married on



September 12, 1953, to Jacqueline Lee Bouvier, daughter of Lee Bouvier, 3rd wife of Hugh Auchincloss. The wedding reception was held at Hammersmith Farm, Ocean Drive near Ft. Adams.

- Auchincloss was a wealthy NYC stockbroker, died in 1976 and is buried at Island Cemetery in Newport.

4. **Thames St. and Green St. in front 282 Thames St.: initials "JKS" (Jeremiah K. Sullivan, 1857-1939)** can be found in the cobblestones in front of "Bar and Board" Restaurant. JKS supervised paving of the street in 1908, one of the first in U.S. at a time when only 200 miles of paved roads existed in the country. Sullivan was contractor, entrepreneur and head of Newport Street Dept. His initials are now 113 years old.

5. **60 Pelham Street: Home of Jeremiah K. Sullivan** located east of Trinity Church. (See #4)

6. **One Queen Anne Square: Trinity Anglican (Episcopal) Church 1725/1731**
 - Several marriages of Irish residents (e.g. Murphy's) were performed at Trinity in the 1700s. Trinity existed 100

years before the first permanent Catholic parish in Newport (1828).

- Dean George Berkeley, born County Kilkenny, Ireland was a philosopher ("immaterialism/idealism") and preacher at Trinity 1729-1731.

- Berkeley resided at Whitehall Plantation in Middletown. Infant daughter buried beside church. Donated his household organ to Trinity and returned to Ireland 1731 where he was appointed Bishop of Cloyne, County Cork.
- Whitehall farmhouse now museum on Berkeley Ave in Middletown

7. **45 Washington Square: Florence Kerins Murray Judicial Courthouse.** Murray was an Irish-American woman and first female judge in Rhode Island and first female member of Rhode Island Supreme Court, resided at "Hilltop", corner Touro and Kay Streets.

8. **43 Broadway: Newport City Hall: Home to First Irish Mayor, Patrick Boyle 1895**

- 14 Mayors of Irish descent since Boyle.
- Eamon deValera, President of Ireland, spoke from steps during fund-raising visit 1919.

9. **Kerry Hill (West Broadway to Farwell Street) and the wharves (shops on Bannister and Bowns Wharves): location of first Irish settlements.**

10. **Long Wharf: Docking for Fall River Line steamships and Repair facility.** Irish labor manned the ships and the repair facility. Ships stopped here enroute from New York and on return enroute from Fall River/Boston (1847-1937)

11. **ONE Broadway: Fastnet Irish Pub.** Proprietor, Finbar Murray, for Irish Sessions Sunday evenings.

Fastnet Lighthouse is famous sailing turn-point near Clear Island, SW County Cork.

12. **72 Touro St.: Touro Synagogue**

- Oldest surviving Synagogue in US (1763). Designated National Historic site 1946.
- Rabbi Theodore Lewis "the Rabbi with a brogue", an Irish Dubliner who headed Adelaide Road Congregation in Dublin, largest congregation in Ireland was Rabbi emeritus of Touro Synagogue.
- Rabbi Lewis headed Touro congregation 1949-1985. Died Brooklyn, NY 2010 at 96 and was buried in Israel.

13. **Corner Mt. Vernon St. and Barney St.: Barney Street Cemetery (1828)**

- Site of first Catholic Church in Rhode Island. First church was repurposed Trevett "New Academy" Schoolhouse (1809).
- 25 Headstones from 1828 to 1853 (note County and/or parish on stones).
- Bishop Fenwick of Boston appointed Fr. Robert Woodley as first priest. Fenwick saw the need to provide pastoral services to Ft. Adams construction workers and Portsmouth Coal Miners, most of whom were Irish.
- 1830 and 1833: expanded lot footprint through 2 land plot purchases.
- 1837: larger church (capacity 450) dedicated to St Joseph's.
- First Church believed moved to nearby 19 Sherman St or 71 Third Street.
- 1848 Cornerstone laid of St Mary's Church "Our Lady of the Isle", completed 1852.