



## THE NEWSLETTER OF

# THE MUSEUM OF NEWPORT IRISH HISTORY

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Winter 1999

## THE EARLY IRISH IN NEWPORT COUNTY: THE 1700's

### NOTICE.

**J**UST arrived from the Metropolis of Ireland, a Person perfectly skilled in the Cotton Manufactory, having been regularly bred to the same, and carried it on for his own Account several Years very extensively, as he can shew.—He can manufacture all Sorts of Fustians, Jeans, Cantoons, Royal Ribs, Rib Delure, Stockinet, Thickset, Corduroy, Vелveret, Velveteen, Calicoes and Nanquins, Chequers and Furnitures, &c. &c. He can also dye, prefs, dress and finish the above Goods; can direct and assist in making Looms, Frames, and several other Parts of the Machinery wanting in said Business, together with the Spring Shuttle, Springs, &c. He would engage with a Company of Gentlemen to conduct the Whole, and take a Partner's Share of Profit as a Compensation for his Skill and Knowledge.

**N. B.** He will colour any Kind of Cotton Goods, for Town or Country, equal to those imported from Great-Britain or Ireland, giving Security for such as may be committed to his Care. He will teach any Branch of the Art, likewise the Cutting of Corde-roys, the Use of the hot and cold Callender, and measure Land, &c. on very reasonable Terms.—Enquire at General Thayer's, or for the **IRISH ARTIST** near the Baptist Meeting-House.

Providence, Oct. 3. 1789.

An advertisement in the Providence Gazette October 3. 1789.

If one searches the "Records of the Colony of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations" for the 1700's, you will find names such as Kelly, Larkin, Carr, Smith and others of obvious Irish ancestry.

As an example, Robert Kelly is "admitted" as a freeman in Newport in 1757. Edward Larkin, Jr. was a deputy to the General Assembly in 1705, 1707, & 1715. His father was a commissioner from Newport and later moved to Westerly.

In his article in the "Records of the American-Irish Historical Society - Vol. II", Thomas H. Murray discusses a number of Newport Irish names of the 1700's, such as James Dillon, a native of Roscommon, Richard Field, a native of Dublin and Thomas Green, who advertised in the Newport Mercury, selling Irish poplins and linens. (August 1777). There are many Irish listed in the marriage records of Trinity Church during the 1700's, such as Fallon, Murphy, Kelly, Holland, O'Brien, Brown, Burk, Hickey, Mullen, etc., etc.

Probably one of the most noteworthy Irish names residing in Newport in the early 1700's was the famous philosopher, George Berkeley, who later became the Bishop of Cloyne in Dublin in 1734

(Continued On next page)



**THE EARLY IRISH IN NEWPORT COUNTY: THE 1700'S** (cont'd.)

George Berkeley's "Whitehall" home stands today in Middletown (property of the Colonial Dames of America) and a Berkeley scholar is in residence each Summer. Bishop Berkeley was very concerned about the conditions of the poor in Ireland and wrote a treatise entitled "The Querist", asking for assistance of the English.

**THE NEWPORT - KINSALE "CONNECTION"**

Matthew Perry, known primarily for his successful efforts in opening Japan to American trade, was born in Newport in 1794. He was the son of Christopher Perry, who had seen service with the Navy during the Revolution. He had been taken prisoner by the British, who interned him near Kinsale, Ireland. There he met and later married Sara Wallace Alexander, an Irish beauty.

Another Newport-Kinsale connection concerns the brother of Baron Kinsale, who settled in Newport about 1720. His son, Thomas de Courcy joined the Navy and in the mid 1700's learned that his uncle, Baron Kinsale had died. He then went to Ireland to become the Baron of Kinsale. This Newport native held great affection for Newport and provided warm hospitality for any Newporter who came to Kinsale. His account of his learning of his uncle's death was told to Captain Benjamin Pearce of Rhode Island who dined with him in Kinsale. This account is described in the American-Irish Historical Society records.

**THE IRISH IN THE REVOLUTION**

The following list of Irish-born volunteers from the Newport area who fought for the Colonies is only a small part of the total. Because the documentation is incomplete, many of the names of those who served will never be known. The list below is provided by the Newport Historical Society. In his article "Yankee Doodle Brogue" in the July/August issue of the Irish America Magazine, Thomas Fleming states that historian Michael O'Brien estimates that about 38% of Washington's soldiers were Irish or of Irish descent. He states further that the British General Robertson, testifying before Parliament in 1779 places the Irish participation at 50% !!

**A partial listing of Irish from Newport County who served in the Revolution**

- |                                   |   |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| <b><i>Michael Kelly</i></b>       | Thirty-six years of age, a barber who resided in Newport.<br>A native of Limerick.                  |
| <b><i>Edward Fitzgerald</i></b>   | Nineteen years of age who served in the Rhode Island Continentals.<br>A native of Tipperary.        |
| <b><i>Daniel Monk</i></b>         | Sixty-four years of age, a barber, who enlisted at Newport.   |
| <b><i>Edward Burke</i></b>        | LT of Marines who served aboard the <u>Columbus</u> of the Continental Navy. Discharged at Newport. |
| <b><i>Peter Morris</i></b>        | A Marine on the <u>Columbus</u> . Also discharged at Newport.                                       |
| <b><i>James M. Case</i></b>       | A Private who resided in Newport.   |
| <b><i>Gerald Fitzgerald</i></b>   | A "quarter-gunner" aboard the <u>Columbus</u> .   |
| <b><i>Bartholomew Jackson</i></b> | (   |
| <b><i>James Flanagan</i></b>      | ( Recruits from Newport for the 1782 campaign.  |
| <b><i>Edward Fitzgerald</i></b>   | (   |

## THE EARLY IRISH IN NEWPORT COUNTY: THE 1700'S (cont'd.)

### THE IRISH BRIGADE

When the French Army came to Newport to assist in the Revolution, a contingent was drawn from the famous Irish Brigade, which had served the French for decades. These men were descendants of the "Wild Geese" - the Irish soldiers who had left Ireland after the revolt of 1691. The Brigade was led by Count Dillon, Count O'Brien and Count Walsh.

So, one can realize, in this brief summary, that the Irish-born and their descendants were fully involved and active in the life and community of Newport County during the 1700's.

The next Newsletter will discuss the very active 1800 and 1900's with the arrival of Irish workers for the Portsmouth coal mines and the US Army's recruitment of workers in Ireland to work on Fort Adams.

*V. Arnold*

### ***BARNEY STREET CEMETERY CONTINUED PROGRESS AND A DEDICATION/BLESSING SCHEDULED***

A great deal of work has been done over the last several months, before the onset of Winter, to get the cemetery ready for its "new", restored look this Spring.

During October and November, many volunteers worked to install six "period" granite posts around the grave site, lay down many yards of topsoil, grade the site and remove the grave stones for cleaning.

The volunteers are: Andrew Behan, "Bud" Behan, Joe Buckley, Carolyn Booth, Michael Downey, Dave Downes, Tim Finn, Bob Finn, Ed Murphy, Brian Pelletire, Ed McCarthy, Pat and Chris Sheekey and David Quarry. All worked very hard to assist the Cemetery Committee: John Booth, Chair, with "Skip" Carter and Tom Mahoney. Also, a huge thanks are due Neil Sullivan of Sulbro Trucking and J.H. Booth Construction for donations of material and equipment. Thanks very much to all.

Also, during the last several months, B&B Welding has been fabricating the wrought iron fence sections and Nick Benson has been busy restoring the Celtic memorial cross.

All of this activity leads us to the "formal" announcement that we plan to have a dedication and blessing ceremony on Sunday March 28th at 3:00 PM at the St. Joseph/Barney Street Cemetery site, followed by a collation at the LaForge Casino Restaurant to thank all who worked on and donated to the project.

We're planning on a gala event with several honored guests. **Be sure to mark your calendar -- Save the date!**



## MEMBERSHIP

We wish to welcome the following new Members:

<b>Dorothy Ward</b>	Portsmouth, RI
<b>Chris Coleman</b>	Virginia
<b>Phil Tobin</b>	Middletown, RI
<b>Vincent Murray</b>	Florida
<b>Constance Doyle</b>	East Greenwich, RI
<b>Thomas Gill</b>	Middletown, RI

### And new LIFE MEMBERS:

<b>Michael &amp; Margaret Ahearn</b>	Newport
<b>Ned McGrath</b>	Newport
<b>Michael &amp; Beth Cullen</b>	Newport
<b>Edward Hurley</b>	Portsmouth
<b>Thomas "Fox" Donnelly</b>	Newport
<b>Rose &amp; Albert McManus</b>	North Kingstown
<b>Robert &amp; Margaret Shinnors</b>	Newport
<b>Rick O'Neill &amp; Family</b>	Newport
<b>"Skip" Carter &amp; Family</b>	Portsmouth
<b>Neale Murphy</b>	Jamestown
<b>Thomas Callahan</b>	Newport
<b>Jack Sweeney</b>	Newport

## **RECENT ACQUISITIONS BY THE MUSEUM**

\*\* Vin Murray from Florida has sent us a complete copy of the excellent series called "Remembering The Famine" run in the Boston Globe in June 1998. We'll delve into this series in later Newsletters for some very interesting facts.

\*\* We now have five videos available for borrowing:

*Brendan The Navigator: Footsteps in America*

*The Dubliners Dublin*

*A History of Ireland (Brian Munn)*

*A Celtic Journey Through Time -- A Short History of Ireland*

*Out of Ireland -- The Story of Irish Emigration to America*

If you would like to borrow any of these, please call 847-2890.

\*\* Another "item" recently acquired is a set of letters (copies) from a Newporter written in the 1880's regarding the Land League and work to raise funds here to support that growing program in Ireland.

## MUSEUM ACTIVITIES DURING MARCH

### BUS TOUR OF IRISH NEWPORT

We will again have a bus tour of Irish Newport, on March 6th, starting at 10:00 AM, with a *Step Dancing* demonstration at the *Hibernain Hall*, ending at about 12:00 Noon with a Pub Lunch served by the A.O.H.

Tickets, limited to 35, are \$15.00 each and are available at the AOH Hall or LaForge Restaurant. Get your tickets early, as there will only be one tour.

### ANNUAL MEETING

The Museum's Second Annual Meeting will begin with breakfast at the LaForge Casino Restaurant at 10:00 AM Sunday March 7th, followed by the *Annual Meeting* with a guest speaker.

As we did last year, we ask that individuals call ahead to let the restaurant know how many will attend breakfast. You will be ordering from the menu.

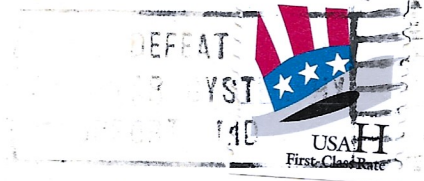
We will be sending out a separate notice for this meeting.

### BARNEY STREET CEMETERY

We are planning a ceremony of dedication and blessing for the restoration of the St. Joseph-Barney Street Cemetery on Sunday, March 28th at 3:00 PM.

All are urged to attend to honor those "pioneer" Irish interred here and to thank the many volunteers who have spent hundreds of hours to restore this historic site.

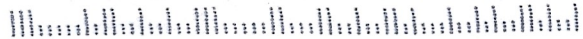
A collation will follow at the LaForge Restaurant. Donations are appreciated.



THE MUSEUM OF NEWPORT IRISH HISTORY  
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Amount enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Make checks payable to: The Museum of Newport Irish History  
P.O. Box 1378  
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Individual  \$10.00/Year    Family  \$20.00/Year    Life  \$100.00

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JOIN THE MUSEUM OF NEWPORT IRISH HISTORY  
HELP US BRING THE STORY OF 350 YEARS OF IRISH HISTORY TO LIFE !!