



## **30<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY**

***General Thomas F. Meagher Division***

***1987-2017***



GENERAL MEAGHER'S DISPATCHES

<http://www.aohfredericksburg.org/>

September 2017

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**President:** Shawn Lenahan    **Chaplain:** Father Jerry Wooton    **Vice President:** John Tracy  
**Financial Secretary:** Bob Fitzgerald    **Treasurer:** Jeff Everett    **Recording Secretary:** Bill Vanderveer  
**Standing Committee:** Dave McLaughlin    **Marshal:** Paul O'Brien    **Sentinel:** Jack Grey; **Webmaster:** John Hogan    **Newsletter Editor:** Bill Halpin ([sisconsulting@comcast.net](mailto:sisconsulting@comcast.net))

### *\*\*\* Important notices \*\*\**

1. Proposed changes to our division by-laws are posted in the restricted area of our division website. Among the proposed changes are term lengths for elected officers and procedures for associate memberships. Please review the document and ***be prepared to vote on the changes at the September meeting***
2. The **Virginia AOH State Biennial Convention** is 22-24 September at the Virginian Beach Resort Hotel. All Hibernians are encouraged to attend. The Major Degrees will be exemplified on Sunday Morning, 24 September. A schedule of events and the registration form can be found on the Home page at <http://aohvirginia.org/2017/07/01/2017-aoh-virginia-state-convention-call-to-convention/>
3. **The Division's 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Dinner Party** is scheduled for October 28<sup>th</sup> at the American Legion Post 320 at 8456 Brock Rd, Spotsylvania, VA 22553. In addition to live Irish music and accomplished Irish dancers, National Park Service historian Frank

O'Reilly will be our guest speaker. *If you haven't already, put this on your calendar today!*

### President's Corner

Brothers,

On August 5th, members of the Gen Thomas Meagher Division attended the 8th annual Mary's Shelter Soiree. There we heard about the possibility of each human soul from Ryan Bomberger of the Radiance Foundation and the incredible and moving story of Jenn Sullivan, a Mary's Shelter alumnus.

We have three major events this month and I hope to see you at each. First, the drawing for our 9th Annual Raffle takes place on September 16th at the Adventure Brewing Oktoberfest. Please note the venue change; Oktoberfest takes place at the Quantico Corporate Center. Next, the 2017 State Convention takes place at the Virginia Beach Resort and Convention Center on September 22-24. All brothers are encouraged to attend the convention and support Brother Bill Halpin for State President. Good luck, Bill! Finally, on September 30th, St. Patrick's Church will hold a parish festival. We will have a table to recruit new members and spread Irish culture. Set up begins at 10am the event goes until 5pm.

Please be sure to attend our September meeting. We will vote on the proposed bylaw changes. Please review the changes in the restricted section of our website. I will also name the Nominating and Division Hibernian of the Year committees, important committees to celebrate our success and ensure our future.

I received some unsettling information after last month's meeting. A brother contacted me to share that he was approached by someone who is not a Hibernian with questions specific to what was discussed at our meeting. This cannot happen. Remember, *you are cautioned against speaking of anything that transpires at our meetings to any but those whom you know to be members in good standing.*

Please remember to keep in your prayers all those affected by hurricanes Harvey and Irma.

May you always have...  
Walls for the winds  
A roof for the rain  
Tea beside the fire  
Laughter to cheer you  
Those you love near you  
And all your heart might desire.

In Our Motto,

Shawn M Lenahan



*“The Celt would forfeit his title to the respect of the civilized world, did he not fight with all his heart and all his soul and all his cunning against the empire which has despoiled him and murdered his kin, now with arms, now with artificial famine. There can be no peace between the two people until either Ireland is a desert or is free. It is war to the knife, and the knife to the hilt. There can be neither truce nor compromise.”*

## Solar Eclipse – No big deal for the Ancient Irish

Provided to *Dispatches* by Melody Kelley (St Patrick Parish) via her father-in-law, Louis Kelley

***Ancient Irish recorded first solar eclipse 5,000 years ago*** (edited from original by Kate Hickey in IRISH CENTRAL)



As the world looked skyward for the solar eclipse on August 21<sup>st</sup>, we can recall Ireland's 5,000 years of history with astronomy. The Irish have a long and distinguished history with eclipses. Images of the first recorded eclipse were carved into stone cairns at Loughcrew in Meath over 5,000 years ago but one of the first eclipses was also recorded in Ireland, by an Irish monk on June 29, 512 in the Chronicle of Ireland.

Our ancient Irish ancestors carved images of an ancient eclipse into giant stones over 5,000 years ago, on November 30, 3340 BC to be exact. This is the oldest known recorded solar eclipse in history. The illustrations are found in the Stone Age “Cairn L,” on Carbane West, at Loughcrew, outside Oldcastle, in County Meath. The landscape of rolling hills is littered with Neolithic monuments. Some say that originally there were at least 40 to 50 monuments, but others say the figure was more like 100. “Cairn L” received a mention in Astronomy Ireland’s article: “Irish Recorded Oldest Known Eclipse 5,355 Years Ago.” They write that the Irish Neolithic astronomer priests recorded the events on three stones relating to the eclipse, as seen from that location.



During their research at Loughcrew, Martin Brennan and Jack Roberts discovered that the sun illuminates this chamber on the mornings of Samhain and Imbolc, the ancient Celtic festivals. These important dates lie during the first week of November and the first week of February, the

ancient cross-quarter days. Though this may not be the original alignment we are still left with a spectacular display.

The 3340BC eclipse was is the only eclipse that fits out of the 92 solar eclipses in history tracked by Irish archaeoastronomer expert, Paul Griffin. With none of the technology available to our modern experts, the ancient Irish constructed these complex structures that not only endured over 5,000 years but were built with such accuracy that they continue to perform their astronomical functions today. Many believe that the ancient Celts created the “festival of light” to welcome the eclipse, which they predicted.



The ancient structure of the “Cairn L” remains a mystery. The most unusual aspect of the monument is a tall pillar stone within the chamber known as the “Whispering Stone.” This limestone pillar is two meters tall and gives the impression that the whole chamber and cairn were built to house it. Below is an illustration of the interior. This drawing, from c. 1870, is by Eugene Conwell, who discovered the structure.



On August 26, 1980, Brennan and Roberts observed the full moon entering and illuminating the end recess of the cairn. The moon struck a cup mark on the endstone and then moved to the right to illuminate the bottom of the Whispering Stone. Little observational research has been done on the movements of the moon in these monuments.





... and John Hogan passed this article along

### Emigration -- The Irish Leaving Home

As anyone who has experienced the emigration of a family member or close friend will know, there is a painful poignancy to the last goodbye before departure. On the one hand you are excited and happy for your loved one to be striking out on a fresh path; on the other you feel the acute loss of a relationship that will dramatically change, no matter the promises of regular contact by Facebook or Skype and visits home courtesy of relatively cheap air-travel. For our Irish ancestors however, the emotions were all the more extreme.



'Emigrants Leaving Ireland'  
Engraving by Henry Doyle, 1868

Emigration held out the promise of a more prosperous and fulfilling life than Ireland could offer but it came with the almost certain reality that the emigrant would never again see his or her parents, siblings, friends or homeland. For both the dearly departing and those left behind, leaving was as final a parting as death.

A ritual unique to Ireland evolved to mark the departure. It was known by many names in different areas of the island – a convoy, in Ulster; a farewell supper, in Munster; the *Spraoi* (spree), in some Midlands counties; and the Drinking Bottle, in Donegal – but most commonly, in deference to the destination of the majority of emigrants, it came to be called The American Wake.

When this 'living wake' ritual started is uncertain but historians suggest it was performed by at least some departing Presbyterians by the last quarter of the 18th century and was widespread among emigrating Roman Catholics in the early decades of the 19th century. Despite its early practice among Presbyterians, the origins of the parting wake are thought to lie in old Gaelic social customs in which the very notion of emigration went against the tradition of extended family and clan relationships.

The American Wake was held on the night before departure. Preparations began in the week before. While the women spent days cleaning the party venue – nearly always the emigrant family's home – and baking and cooking, the men concentrated on gathering firewood and, if religiously tolerated, organizing supplies of whiskey or poteen, porter or stout. The emigrant-to-be (often referred to as 'the Yankee' by this stage) visited friends, extended family and local clergy to say their personal farewells and to receive advice, lucky charms to guard against drowning, and other precious gifts and tokens to remind them of home and their loved ones.

A not-so-subtle feature of this process was the infliction of guilt and duty on the emigrant, the former for bringing such pain and loss to their family and community and the latter to ensure the emigrant would feel honor-bound in their new life to send financial support to their parents and siblings.

**Funereal processions (says the *Clare Advertiser*), composed of large contingents from all quarters of the country round, may be daily seen wending their way towards the quay of Kilrush at Cappa, where numbers, joining in the *cortege*, take a last farewell of friends they never more shall see on this earth, and gaily "outward bound" go the steamers that convey the Irish emigrants towards their destination. The "American wakes," as they are conventionally called, as a rule precede the nights before those leave-takings, which of course are occasioned by the state of "peace and prosperity" that exist throughout the land. Thus are the ties of kindred rudely severed**

Published in the *Dublin Weekly Nation*, 22 May 1875

In most of these ballads, the emotions of guilt, grief and loss are blamed on outside forces, often unnamed but usually quite clearly pointing a finger at the British for failing to deliver prosperity, opportunity and religious freedom to Ireland. The Emigrant's Farewell to Donegal (1846) is an example:

*'My father holds five acres of land*

*It was not enough to support us all*

*Which banishes me from my native land*

*To old Ireland I bid farewell.*

*My hardships here I can't endure*

*Since here no longer I can stay*

*I take my lot and leave this spot*

*And try the Land of Liberty.'*



In many ways the American Wake was not dissimilar to the traditional Wake held after a death except that, instead of accompanying the dearly departed to the churchyard, friends and relatives would accompany the emigrant in the early morning on the first stage of their journey to the quayside. This might have been to the crossroads on the edge of the village or, as Ireland's public transport system developed, to the nearest town's market square to await the arrival of the jaunting car (from 1815), or to the train station (from the 1840s). Close family and friends would then say their final farewells.

During *An Gorta Mor* (1846-1851), the American Wake was toned down, if held at all, but the ritual continued into the early 20th century in most of Roman Catholic Ireland and was most prevalent along the Atlantic seaboard and the hinterland of Ulster. Some of its traditional elements were beginning to be lost, however, as emigration increasingly became the norm of Irish family experience, as the journeys across the Atlantic or to Australia became safer and quicker, and as more emigrants found the means to return to Ireland for important family events and holidays.

About the Author: Claire Santry runs the Irish-Genealogy-Toolkit.com website and IrishGenealogyNews.com blog. Her new book The Family Tree Irish Genealogy Guide: *How to Trace your Ancestors in Ireland* has recently been published.

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### “Why I’m a Hibernian”

A sincere Hibernian *Go raibh maith agat* to Pat Fogarty, Danny Tryon, and Shane Quinlan for supporting the National AOH recruitment campaign with “Why I’m a Hibernian” essays. There is still time for more TFM brothers to engage in this important work. Send them to me at [sisconsulting@comcast.net](mailto:sisconsulting@comcast.net)

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### Irish Language Tip of the Month

*Is trua liom é sin* -- I'm sorry



**Jack Grey, Committee of the Sick Chairman.** All prayer requests should be sent to Jack not later than the Wednesday prior to the business meeting ([RHGrey@cox.net](mailto:RHGrey@cox.net)//540-373-4496). It might be wise to let your spouse/family member know this too, just in case you become ill or hospitalized.

In July 2016 Pope Francis declared “*We are living in a moment of annihilation of man as image of God*”. He recalled Pope emeritus Benedict’s pronouncement: “*It’s the epoch of sin against God, the Creator.*”

Pray for the repose of the souls of all deceased Hibernian Brothers. Keep in your prayers our family members and friends:

- Bill Phillips’ brother Robert
- Joe Monaghan’s sister-in-law, Donna Maffeo and his father Joseph Sr. who is caring for his mother and uncle (dementia/Alzheimer);
- Hugh O’Brien’s brother, John (recovering from stroke);
- Amy Whittaker (cancer),
- Andy Link’s parents Eileen and Dick (Dick is Eileen’s care giver),
- Matthew Carroll (IVNVMP)



**Bingo!** Every Thursday and Saturday evening 6:30PM at St Michael the Archangel High School, 6301 Campus Drive, Fredericksburg. Bring the family! For Info (540) 548-8748)

*The TFM Summer Family Picnic has been canceled for 2017*

**September 16: Trip for Two to Ireland Raffle** drawing at Adventure-South Oktoberfest to be held at the Quantico Corporate Center, Corporate Road, Stafford 22554. For more information visit <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/adventure-brewings-oktoberfest-tickets-36583372853#tickets>

**September 22-24: VAAOH Biennial State Convention**, Virginia Beach Resort Hotel <http://aohvirginia.org/2017/07/01/2017-aoh-virginia-state-convention-call-to-convention/>

**September 28: Study in Ireland** College Fair (6:30 - 8:30 PM)

Curious about the merits of a four year Undergraduate or Postgraduate degree abroad? Join us for an evening at the Embassy of Ireland where you'll be able to meet and engage with representatives from Ireland's leading academic institutions. Please RSVP at your earliest convenience, as spaces are limited! Click [here](#) for more information.

**September 30: Green Hills, White Houses** (10:00 AM - 4:30 PM)

Celebration of the Irish connection with the city of Washington D.C. to mark the 200th anniversary of the completion of the reconstruction of the President’s House by James Hoban and the 65th anniversary of the completion of the reconstruction of The White House by John



McShain. This event hosted by the James Hoban Society of the United States and Ireland will take place in Washington. Click [here](#) for more information.

**October 17:** Division Meeting; Nominating Committee's TFM leadership picks for 2018

**October 28: Gen. Meagher Division's 30th Anniversary Dinner Party,**  
American Legion Post 320, 8456 Brock Rd, Spotsylvania, VA 22553



General Meagher Division Attire

In a perfect world every brother would have these articles of clothing:

- For **semi-formal/formal occasions**, the AOH "uniform" is green sport coat, tri-color sash, white shirt, Irish theme tie, black trousers and optional ball cap. These occasions include AOH State and National conventions, Masses, funerals, AOH dinners, parades, and other public events.
- At **informal events** (i.e. Division outings (ball games, picnics, meetings, etc.) the division logo polo or sweatshirts (optional ball cap) are appropriate.

**Division Logo Items: The Point of Contact for Division logo polo shirts, sweatshirts and ball caps is Shawn Lenahan ([s.lenahan@verizon.net](mailto:s.lenahan@verizon.net))**

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**Green Jacket:** Brothers procure their own green jackets. One source:

[http://blazerdepot.com/pages/mens\\_blazer/augustagreenblazer.html](http://blazerdepot.com/pages/mens_blazer/augustagreenblazer.html). Visit the website; call the 800 number. Tell them you're with AOH and the \$5.00 small order fee can be waived. Kelly green is the color.

**AOH Sash:** Brothers procure their own sashes. The AOH tri-color sash represents the national colors of Ireland and should be worn over the right shoulder (green closest to neck/collar) crossing to the left hip. Measure from right shoulder to left hip in inches; keep in mind the sash will normally be worn over a jacket, possibly a raincoat/overcoat (and maybe a growing waist line).

Tri-color AOH sashes are available from:

- LAOH Sister Patricia Ankrom. Email Patricia at [traceysbydesign@aol.com](mailto:traceysbydesign@aol.com). She produces 7.5ft long sashes costing \$ 40.00 and guarantees satisfaction: if you're not satisfied send it back for a full refund.
- Gettysburg Flag offers tri-color sashes and offers "special prices" for larger orders. <https://www.gettysburgflag.com/custom/irish-parade-sash>