



Ancient Order of  
**HIBERNIANS**  
 Irish • Catholic • American



**GENERAL MEAGHER'S DISPATCHES**

**November 2019**

**Volume 7/No.11**

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

**Veterans Day, Monday, November 11<sup>th</sup>**

*“to honor and thank everyone who served in the U.S. Armed Forces”*

**U.S. Marine Corps Birthday, November 10<sup>th</sup>**



The “Continental Marines” formed on November 10, 1775. with two battalions to serve as landing forces with the Continental Navy. After the Revolutionary War, the Continental Navy was dismantled along with the Marines. However, after increasing conflict with revolutionary France, the Marine Corps was formally re-established.



The nominees for the 2020-2021 division board are:

- |                                   |                                  |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| President: Dave McLaughlin        | Vice President Dennis O'Leary    |
| Financial Secretary: Edwin Hanson | Treasurer: Jeff Everett          |
| Recording Secretary: Bill Halpin  | Standing Committee: Ed Hennessey |
| Marshal: <i>nominee withdrew</i>  | Sentinel: James Lenahan          |

## President's Corner:

Brothers:

Thank you to all our veterans for your sacrifice and service to our country!

We have a very important business meeting this month. We will be nominating the slate of officers for the next two year term. The nominating committee will make a recommendation but if you are interested in a position, come make your case!

I wish each of you the happiest of Thanksgivings. If your holiday includes travel, please be safe and enjoy your friends and families.

Especially in November, please remember to pray for one another and our fallen brethren.

In Our Motto,

Shawn Lenahan



The Division's annual Memorial Mass was celebrated on 5 November at St Mary of the Immaculate Conception Church. The celebrant was Division Chaplain Father Jerry Wooton. Brother James Lenahan was the altar server and Brother Neil O'Leary did a phenomenal job as cantor. Joan McCarthy and Joyce Cranshaw attended along with about 20% of the division membership.

Deceased General Thomas Francis Meagher Division Brothers

John A'Hearn (Charter Member, Division and State President)

Phil Booty - 12 Feb 2015 (Past President)

David Coon (Charter Member)  
 Ed Cranshaw - 21 July 2016  
 Ronald Cullen - 19 Jul 2016 (Charter Member)  
 John Cunningham (Charter Member)  
 Jeff Fitzpatrick - 14 Oct 2016 (Division Vice President, Financial Secretary, St Mary Liaison)  
 William Fitzpatrick (Charter Member)  
 Richard Fleming – February 2013  
 John A. Glancy (Charter Member) 1 Feb 2006  
 Thomas G. Leahy (Charter Member) 6 Dec 2007  
 Michael “Mick” Linehan - May 2015  
 Jim Mannion (Charter Member) - 4 Dec 2012  
 Francis Maxey (Charter Member)  
 Joseph McCardell (Charter Member)  
 Bill McCarthy - 8 May 2015 (Division President)  
 Neil Mulcahy - 8 Feb 2017 (Division Sentinel, Golf Committee)  
 Rev Fr John Munley (Charter Member)  
 Joseph O’Connor - 1 Dec 15 (Charter Member, Financial Secretary & Treasurer)  
 John O’Toole (Charter Member)  
 John F. Parker (Charter President) 25 May 2010  
 Larry Pratt - 20 July 2016

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***The 2019 Trip for Two to Ireland winner is...***

Kingsley Haynes, professor emeritus, George Mason University and resident of Lake of the Woods. He is the fifth LOW resident to win the raffle. Susan and Kingsley plan to visit Ireland in the coming years but chose the monetary award. Bill Halpin sold the winning ticket (again).

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**NEWS FLASH!**

The **Irish Cultural Center of Virginia** was officially incorporated in the Commonwealth of Virginia on 30 October 2019 and registered with the IRS as a non-profit organization. Although technically separate from the Virginia AOH, the relationship is apparent as six Hibernians from various divisions are on the Board of Directors. The Corporation is designed to maintain a center for the Irish and greater

Celtic community of Virginia. It will promote educational, benevolent and social pursuits, establish and maintain places for social interaction and research. Further, it will foster Irish heritage, cultural and educational endeavors in language, music, dance, visual arts and theater, and sponsor Gaelic games among other activities. Through fund-raising activities the foundation will rent and/or purchase facilities to accomplish the stated objectives while embracing the principles of Friendship, Unity and Christian Charity. When IRS and Virginia tax status is attained, the Corporation will be positioned serve all of the Virginia AOH.

Our first Irish heritage visual arts project is an ambitious one: delivering a life-size, bronze statue of Colonel John F. Fitzgerald to the Basilica of St Mary in Alexandria. The Very Reverend Edward Hathaway agreed to place the statue on church property at 313 Duke Street. His staff will coordinate with the city government as needed. Fitzgerald, together with George Washington, provided the funding that established St Mary as the first Catholic Church in Virginia (1795). See attached for snapshot of Fitzgerald's accomplishments.

The estimated cost is \$80,000, with \$30,000 due when the contract is signed. From that date, we anticipate about 18 months to delivery. We anticipate 501c.(3) approval within the next two months. When received, we'll need to jump start publicity and fund raising. As a state-wide initiative, the Fitzgerald statue is the first of many Irish cultural and heritage initiatives. Every division's participation will be essential. Some support ideas may include hosting fund raising events (dinners, etc.), placing announcements in local newspapers, and including donations to ICCV, Inc. in your annual division budgets. More to come...

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### *Beginner's Guide to Irish Family History Research*

Shannon Combs-Bennett, MSc, QG

[tntfamilyhistory.blogspot.com](http://tntfamilyhistory.blogspot.com)

Facebook: [TntFamilyHistory](#) | Twitter [@tntfamhist](#)

The Golden Rule of Genealogy is to start with what you do know and work into what you do not know. Which means start your family tree with yourself and then only adding a generation as you gather the documentation and link a child with a set of parents. While that can be very hard, it will keep you from making leaps in logic. Which often lead to researching the wrong family.

To start your research, here are a few things to keep in mind:

- Take a survey of what you do know and collect it together in one location.
- Keep a journal or research log. You will very quickly accumulate stacks of papers (online and in real life!) Keeping yourself organized in some way will make the process much easier and will keep you from looking at the same website or record ten times!

- Work here in the US first before trying to jump to Ireland. To be successful in Irish records, you need to know the townland the immigrant relocated. Which is very often is the stumbling block to discovering your Irish roots.
- Be understanding that spelling was very fluid and a surname may change over time or location. Make a list of all the possible spellings you can think of for each surname you are researching.
- Just like spelling, realize that not everyone from poorer classes knew their exact dates of birth. You may see a range of years for the same person.

Below are a few places to help guide your research. Some may seem like common sense, but others might not. Genealogically significant records are in many different places. Teasing information from unusual sources is one of the critical ways to knock down an ancestral brick wall. I encourage you to read, explore, ask questions, and most of all have fun with this new tool in your toolbox. It can open doors for you in your research. All you have to do is take the first step.

**Census records (US and Ireland):** US census records come out in years ending in 0 and UK/Ireland in years ending in 1. Also, many states had censuses taken in off years and can help fill in missing details from the decade between US censuses.

**Immigration/Naturalization records:** always double-check the immigration laws from the period(s) in question. US immigration laws evolved slowly over time and changed frequently. Depending on the time you can locate immigration records at either a county, state, or federal level. These records contain vast amounts of information including where the person was born and family structures. Note: not all immigrants choose to become naturalized which can throw a wrench into the search.

**Immigrant bank records:** many immigrants, particularly those who came through New York, had accounts with the immigrant bank. These banks catered to the needs of immigrants and often collected familial information.

**Immigrant newspapers:** these community-specific papers would contain information on families looking for loved ones, people arriving, people leaving, and other information that could point you to your family.

**Church records:** parish registers sometimes contain letters of introduction or notes about families.

**Land records:** depending on when your ancestor arrived, they could have accessed federal land grants or homesteads. These federal land records can lead you to more resources like deeds which once again can hold genealogical information.

### Websites

- The National Archives of Ireland <http://www.nationalarchives.ie/>
- IrishGenealogy.ie <https://www.irishgenealogy.ie/en/>
- FindMyPast (paid site) <http://www.findmypast.ie/>

- FamilySearch – Ireland section [https://familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/Ireland\\_Genealogy](https://familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/Ireland_Genealogy)
- Fáilte Romhat <http://www.failteromhat.com/>
- American Ancestors: Irish Genealogy <https://www.americanancestors.org/education/learning-resources/read/irish-guide>
- Roots Ireland <https://www.rootsireland.ie/>

### Blogs

- Timeline Genealogy in Ireland <http://timeline.ie/timeline-irish-genealogy-blog/>
- Irish Genealogy News <http://www.irishgenealogynews.com/>
- Irish Genealogical Society International <http://blog.irishgenealogical.org/>

### Books

- *Tracing Your Irish Ancestors* by John Grenham
- *Irish Libraries, Archives, Museums and Genealogical Centres: A Visitors' Guide* by Robert K. O'Neill
- *Your Irish Ancestors: A Guide for Family Historians* by Ian Maxwell
- *Born Ireland... What's Next* by Ulster Historical Foundation

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### Our DIVISION Prayers



**Jack Grey, Committee of the Sick Chairman.** 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).

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

- **Nolan Banks**, son of former FS Jeff Banks. Nolan is recovering from soft tissue sarcoma (RMS). *Pray for the intercession of Father Augustus Tolton*, a candidate for canonization (the prayer: <http://www.toltoncanonization.org/prayer/canonizationprayer.html>)
- **John Tracy**, COPD
- **Joe Daley**, COPD
- **John Hogan**, vascular irregularities
- **Bill Phillips**, *severe* arthritis
- **Brian Kiernan**, VAAOH Vice President, lymphedemic edema
- **Angelique Bolling**, Edwin Hanson's sister in law - brain tumors
- **Candy O'Donnell**, Jim's wife is recovering from back surgery
- **Jake Ruppert's** mother, cancer -- recovering from surgery
- **John O'Brien** Hugh O'Brien's brother-- recovering from stroke

- **Jerry O'Brien**, Paul O'Brien's brother – cancer
- **Ruth Pettinger**, Shawn Lenahan's aunt (a Vietnam Vet) diagnosed with inoperable brain tumor.
- **Donna Maffeo**, Joe Monaghan's sister-in-law and his father Joseph Sr. care giver for his mother and uncle (dementia/Alzheimer)
- **Patricia Stephen**, mother of Rusty O'Brien's friend Ann-Marie Sharratt -- acute myeloid leukemia
- **Amy Whittaker** – cancer

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### Upcoming Events

*Mark Your Calendars!*

**Bingo!** Every Thursday and Saturday evening 6:30PM at St Michael the Archangel High School, 6301 Campus Drive, Fredericksburg. Bring the family!

**November 19:** Division Meeting - Election of 2020-2021 officers

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### 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))

**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 waistline).

Tri-color AOH sashes are available from:

- LAOH Sister Patricia Ankrom produces a 7.5-foot sash; satisfaction guaranteed. Send a personal check for \$60. Turnaround time is about 10 days. The sash will be sent to you via Fed Ex or UPS -- signature required. Her address: Patricia Ankrom, 7400 Airport Dr., Quinton, Va. 23141-2400. Email [traceysbydesign@aol.com](mailto:traceysbydesign@aol.com)
- Gettysburg Flag offers tri-color sashes and offers "special prices" for larger orders. <https://www.gettysburgflag.com/custom/irish-parade-sash>

**This newsletter is an unofficial publication providing information to members of the Gen Thomas F Meagher Division and others who may have interest in division activities. It is published by Bill Halpin and unless shown otherwise, he is the author of the contents.**



## An Irish-American Patriot and Civic Leader



Born in Wexford, Ireland, John F. Fitzgerald immigrated to Alexandria in 1769. He was one of the first and most prominent of the early Catholic settlers in Alexandria, at a time when Colonial law did not tolerate the Catholic religion.

He must have been a man of culture, refinement and education, as well as possessing means enabling him to enter into mercantile life and the social circles important in the Virginia port and town. In 1770, he was elected Burgess and became a friend of George Washington.

With the outbreak of the Revolutionary War,

Fitzgerald joined the Continental Army, as a captain in the 3rd Virginia Regiment. In the summer of 1776, his regiment joined the main army in New York and help defeat the enemy at the [Battle of Harlem Heights](#). The 3rd Regiment's major died from wounds during the battle and John Fitzgerald was promoted to major on October 3, 1776. Finding Fitzgerald to be "*an Officer of unexceptionable merit,*" George Washington appointed him as aide-de-camp. Fitzgerald was on the battlefield fields of [Trenton](#), [Princeton](#), [Brandywine](#), and [Germantown](#), and in non-battlefield conflicts like the [Conway Cabal](#) incident. He wintered at Valley Forge and crossed with Delaware River with Washington to join the fight at Trenton. In June 1778 he was wounded at the Battle of Monmouth and returned to Alexandria. Secretary of War, John Armstrong described Fitzgerald as a "*warm hearted, brave and honest Irishman*".

*In 1778 Fitzgerald purchased the south side of the 200 block of King Street and the town trustees granted them the "sunken ground" on the south side of King Street east of Lee Street and location was the site of John Fitzgerald's warehouse. (Note: The next time you are drinking coffee at Starbucks on the southeast corner of King and Union Streets, look around. You are in an eighteenth-century warehouse built by John Fitzgerald.)*

In April 1781 Fitzgerald's military expertise was called upon again when a British naval force arrived at Alexandria with the intention of burning the town. He assembled all of the men he could and deceived the enemy into believing a formidable force was waiting on shore. The British did not land, although they outnumbered Fitzgerald's meager force 5:1.

Fitzgerald was Alexandria's leading Catholic layman, one of the first directors of the Potomac Company and its president from 1793 to 1796. He was mayor of Alexandria (1786-87), a member of the Alexandria committee to ratify the U.S. Constitution in 1788, commander of the Alexandria Independent Dragoons, a founder of the Bank of Alexandria in 1792, and founder of the Alexandria Library in 1794. In 1793 President George Washington appointed him Collector of Customs of the Port of Alexandria. George Washington's diary shows that he and Fitzgerald met together frequently, sometimes at Fitzgerald's home on the southeast corner of King and Fairfax Streets.

Since there was no Catholic church in Alexandria at that time, services were sometimes held in Fitzgerald's home. While dining there on Saint Patrick's Day 1788, George Washington contributed to the fund to build Alexandria's first Catholic Church, today's Basilica of St. Mary, the oldest Catholic parish in Virginia. Colonel Fitzgerald died in 1799 and is buried at St Mary.