



Ancient Order of
HIBERNIANS
Irish • Catholic • American



GENERAL MEAGHER'S DISPATCHES

April 2020

Volume 8/No.4

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222 years later we may soon realize Theobald Wolf Tone's dream:

“To unite the whole people of Ireland, to abolish the memory of all past dissensions, and to substitute the common name of Irishman in place of the denominations of Protestant, Catholic and Dissenter...”

President's Corner:

My Brothers,

March, Irish Heritage Month, started out very busy as normal for all Hibernians. It promised parades, festivities, library outreach, masses and other events. Suddenly, we turned all our attention and energies to reversing course. At first, we modified and limited our participation in these activities before finally being forced to cancel them – the last minute cancellation of our division's Saint Patrick Mass on March 17 at Saint Patrick Church was the most awkward.

During April, we will continue to avoid the virus and each other – I can't envision us having a Division business meeting again this month. Here are some ideas that might help fill your days:

- A book, article or on-line research about Irish history, General Meagher, the Irish Brigade

- Other Irish literature (e. g., W.B. Yeats, George Bernard Shaw, Samuel Beckett)
- Download an Irish movie
- Genealogical research
- Plan a trip
- Reconnect with old friends
- In your prayers, include all those affected by this pandemic and those on our prayer list

Slainte, and In Friendship, Unity and Christian Charity,
Dave McLaughlin



As we await Opening Day 2020, here's a story that may be of interest: *The Irish Bambino, Roger Connor*, MLB Baseball Hall of Famer, started his career with the Holyoke Shamrocks (*From Irish America*, by Ray Cavanaugh March / April 2020 (edited for space in Dispatches))

In late 1990s baseballs were allegedly juiced as were the sluggers. Players who had been lanky rookies would later display cartoon-sized muscles.

About a century earlier 15 homers could lead the league. In that era the mightiest power-hitter was Roger Connor, a broad-shouldered 6-foot-3 220 pound player who looked the part of a slugger.

He was born in 1857 in Waterbury, Connecticut, one of 11 children and grew up in the Irish neighborhood known as the Abridador district. His father and mother immigrated from County Kerry. Roger left school at a young age and worked with his father. However, his work ethic wasn't consistent as he was spending time playing baseball. Connor's father "had no sympathy for his son's fixation on a game," and Connor received "harsh

retribution” as told by Roy Kerr in *Roger Connor: Home Run King of 19th Century Baseball*.

At age 14, Connor left home for New York, where he worked odd jobs and tried to find a team that would have him.

In 1876 Connor played for the semi-pro Waterbury Monitors. Two years later, he was playing for the Holyoke Shamrocks, where his power-hitting earned him a major league contract with the Troy Trojans. He made his big-league debut on May 1, 1880. His rookie year batting average was .332, but at 3d base in 83 games, he made 60 errors. He was moved to first base in 1881 and his fielding improved but his hitting declined. That year he married Angeline Mayer.

In 1882 Connor was hitting again with a .330 batting average. In 1883 he joined the New York Gothams later renamed the New York Giants and hit .357, second-best in the league. In 1885, Connor’s batting average was .371 and he was one of the league’s best first basemen.

In 1887, he belted a career-high 17 home runs. In 1888 and 1889, Connor played on two New York Giants championship teams. In 1890, he posted a league-

leading 14 home runs and was statistically the league’s best-fielding first baseman. He continued to put up solid numbers in the early 1890s. By 1894 Connor, began to see his playing time reduced, so he joined the St. Louis Browns. In 1896, he was player-manager for the Browns but resigned after a 15-game losing streak.

For his major league career, he batted .316 and had 2,467 hits, including 441 doubles, 233 triples, and 138 home runs (a record for 23 years until Babe Ruth). During his major league career he was never ejected from the game.

He returned to Waterbury and joined the local team in Connecticut’s minor leagues. He was a player-manager and even player-owner before selling his club and retiring from pro baseball at age 46.

He died on January 4, 1931, at age 73, and was buried alongside his wife in an unmarked Waterbury grave. He was forgotten for several decades until Hank Aaron broke Babe Ruth’s career home-run record. The question then was “whose record had Ruth broken?”

In 1976, Connor was inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame Yet despite that recognition, his grave remained unmarked until a group of local baseball fans paid for a headstone.



WELCOME HOME VIET NAM VETERANS DAY

The Commonwealth of Virginia General Assembly approved House Joint Resolution No. 136 designating **March 30** in 2010 and each succeeding year as “Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day in Virginia.” Sponsored in part by Virginia AOH, this designation recognizes the more than 58,000 U.S. service men and women, including 1,304 Virginians, who lost their lives in Vietnam. More than 262,000 Vietnam veterans reside in Virginia. Virginians are encouraged to observe this day with ceremonies and activities that promote awareness of the numerous contributions made by Vietnam Veterans.



Embrace Your Irish Heritage, Say It on The Census!

March 24, 2020 By [Neil Cosgrove](#) @ www.AOH.com



Amidst the current healthcare crisis, we cannot lose the importance of the United States Census to Irish America. Results of the U.S. 2020 Census will influence individuals, communities, governments, for-profit entities, and nonprofit organizations throughout the next decade. Data obtained will inform decision-makers in all sectors and lead to the allocation of political power and financial resources.

For the first time in many years, the Census form will have a **question on Ethnic Origins** (question 9 for the Head of household, question 7 for remaining household members). It is vitally important that every Irish American record their Irish ancestry and for all other household members when appropriate.

Sadly, we have seen many “pundits” claim that Irish America no longer exists; low “Irish” response to the Census Ethnic Origins question will only further that belief and see Irish American causes and concerns further deprioritized. *“The first rule of Politics is learning how to count.”* We have recently witnessed an unreasonable delay in the appointment of an ambassador to Ireland. Out of 55,000 Diversity Visas given last year, the entire island of Ireland received 32; compare that to 435 from Fiji. Indian nationals

received over 38,000 employment-based green cards in 2018 and are, as per their right in a democracy, using their political clout to ask for more.

If we as a community don't make an effort to be counted, we will see even less traction on such vital causes as Immigration and Irish Reunification. Far too many of our government educational and cultural institutions already ignore the contribution of the Irish, a low Irish American turnout on the census will give them further justification to do so as "they allocate funds to serve the largest communities."

Many of us were disappointed that we could not make a public statement of our Irish pride this March as St. Patrick's Day Festivities were canceled out of proper concern for the COVID-19 crisis. Let us, therefore, resolve instead this year as a community to celebrate our Irish pride and "say it on the census."

ALSO Now that you have time on your hands, check out

- Smithsonian Institution: www.si.edu/spotlight/irish-american
- Library of Congress: www.loc.gov/rr/main/irishamerican/
- National Archives: www.archives.gov/news/topics/irish-american-heritage
- Irish Culture Center of Virginia: <https://irishcultureva.org>



“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

Self Determination in a reunified Ireland – Think Again

Irish Nationalists have been traditionally associated with Catholics, but no more! (Extracted from *Irish Times*, 31 March 2020)

Abortion was decriminalized in Northern Ireland in October 2019 based on legislation passed in the UK parliament. Take a look at how the political entities stack up

Unionist Party: DUP Member of the Northern Ireland Assembly (MLA) Paul Givan said his party wanted to “vote upon the issue and then seek to take forward our own legislation in respect to it”. Mr. Givan said “for many people this is a law which is taking life and which requires an urgent response. We will want to have a motion heard; we will want to seek legislative change so that we have a regime in Northern Ireland that reflects what I believe will be the will of the people on this issue”.

Traditional Unionist Voice leader Jim Allister said that while “the minds of us all at this difficult time are very much focused on the saving of lives, therefore it is all the more abhorrent and perverse that at the very same time we have regulations coming into effect today which will sanction the killing of the unborn”.

Alliance Party: MLA Andrew Muir said the Assembly “had an opportunity to legislate for these issues, and didn’t” as it was not sitting. “This place had an opportunity to affect that change and it failed and we’re a new situation now and I think we have to move forward,” he said.

SDLP: MLA Matthew O’Toole said was glad healthcare for women in Northern Ireland had “evolved to a place where women can access essential services that people in other parts of the UK and now other parts of Ireland can access”.

Sinn Féin: Caoimhe Archibald said it was “only right and proper that woman can access abortion services without having to travel, that they are free to be able to have healthcare in a modern and compassionate way”.

Green Party: MLA Clare Bailey called for telemedicine services to be put in place, as in England and Wales, to allow women to be prescribed abortion pills over the phone and to take them at home.



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- Irish Culture Center of Virginia: <https://irishcultureva.org>



Upcoming Events



Mark Your Calendars!

But keep in mind: The Virginia governor issued Executive Order 55, a 'Stay at Home' order for all Virginians that will last until at least April 30, maybe into the second week of June. Gatherings of more than 10 people can be charged with a Class 1 misdemeanor (fine \$2500 and/or 12 months in jail!). Any business that cannot follow the social distancing order of 10 patrons or fewer is required to close. All elective surgeries have also been postponed. Essentially, Virginians can only leave home for food, supplies, work, medical care, or exercise/fresh air purposes.

On the brighter side, in Germany gatherings of more the 2 people are prohibited.

Also, Virginia ABC stores are essential businesses.

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

21 April: Next scheduled Division meeting. Virginia governor's Wuhan virus edict delivered on 30 March means this meeting will be suspended as well.

9 June: Scheduled "Irish Night" with FredNats – "Mystery" Hibernian to sing the National Anthem. Muggivan Irish Dancer to perform. See President McLaughlin for discounted tickets.

23-26 July: Scheduled AOH National Convention in Orlando, FL



Our DIVISION Prayers



Jack Grey chairs the Division Committee of the Sick: Prayer requests should be sent to Jack not later than the Wednesday prior to the business meeting (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:

- **John Tracy**, COPD
- **John Hogan**, Pulmonary Fibrosis
- **Joe Daley**, COPD
- **Bill Phillips**, severe arthritis
- **Gene McKenna** recovering from double by-pass surgery
- **Brian Kiernan**, VAAOH Vice President, lymphedemic edema
- **Angelique Bolling**, Edwin Hanson's sister in law - brain tumors
- **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
- **Grafton Simpson** Bob Fitzgerald's 92 year old uncle - suffered a broken hip.
- **Ruth Pettinger**, Shawn Lenahan's aunt (Vietnam Vet) 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
- **Nolan Banks**, son of former FS Jeff Banks. Nolan is recovering from soft tissue sarcoma (RMS). *Pray for the intercession of Fr. Augustus Tolton*, a candidate for canonization: <http://www.toltoncanonization.org/prayer/canonizationprayer.html>

Update on Nolan Banks (17 March): Thanks for your continued prayers. Nolan is doing very well. He still gets sick very easily and we had to take him out of school for the year as he was missing so many days. It may take years for his immune system to fully recover from the months of toxic chemotherapy. Scans scheduled this week had to be rescheduled due to his fever. As such, we are especially concerned to keep him isolated during this coronavirus scare we are having.



General Meagher Division Attire

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

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.

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:

Point of Contact for Division logo polo shirts, sweatshirts and ball caps is Shawn Lenahan (s_lenahan@verizon.net)

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

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).

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

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.