



# Shillelagh Sentinel



**AOH, Thomas Francis Meagher Division, PO Box 1916, Helena, Montana 59624**

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## Message from the President

**H**appy New Year, brothers. I wish you all that is good and pray that each person will put troubles behind. Thank God for the opportunities that abound.

Last month I found three themes on which a prolific writer could publish volumes: Irish music, storytelling, and poetry. Each calls out to our Irish soul. Collectively, they define it. Binding our American state of being to our ancient heritage calls us to hold on to the heritage that is ours. That said, I will take narrative license to fill this page with the lyrics of a modern era Irish songwriter and poet.

Back home to Ireland for the first time  
As I gaze on your fields and your shores  
In each Irishman's heart  
there's a part of you inside  
In my heart I have been here before

Time calls upon me to fly o're the sea  
To answer those voices, they're calling me  
home  
The history has taught me what I am to love  
My family, my country, to worship my God  
It's your spirit that lives  
in my heart and the depths of my soul.  
-Donal O'Shaughnessy

Each of us has his unique gift. When shared, it will grow. As a body of Irish souls, we will be the light to those seeking their way back home in Friendship, UNITY and Christian Charity.

Síocháin (Peace)

Jim♣



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## Veterans Note

Greetings and welcome to the New Year! There are a lot of changes coming for all of us, especially Veterans, but until the whole new order is announced and approved, from the proposed VA Secretary Denis McDonough to all of his subsequent appointees, all we can do is wait.

One new thing that appears to be starting sooner is the electronic records that the VA is implementing in the Mann-Grandstaff VA Medical Center in Spokane, WA. While this is something that the VA has been discussing for sometime (since the late 1990's) it seems like the project is making some progress.

The following are quotes from an article entitled "Game Changer" in *The American Legion Magazine*, January 2021 issue:

"On Oct. 24, the Mann-Grandstaff VA Medical Center in Spokane became the first of the agency's health care centers to deploy a new electronic health record that is compatible with a similar system DoD began rolling out at military bases in 2017."

"The new electronic health record will include medical history of patients from the time they enter military service throughout their VA care, according to Susan Carter, director of VA's medical relations office."

"In 2015, DoD awarded a \$4.5 billion contract to the Leidos Partnership for Defense Health to develop its version of the new health record system. It launched the first pilot test of the program at Fairchild Air Force Base near Spokane in February 2017."

"DoD has continued installing the new electronic record at its hospitals and clinics, and expects to have the system up and running at all of its health-care facilities by 2023. VA plans to have the new electronic record system operating at all of its locations by 2027."

Olsen, K. (2021). Game Changer. *The American Legion Magazine*, January 2021, 26-28.

For a more in depth understanding than I can portray in a short article, I recommend that you look up this report at [www.legion.org](http://www.legion.org) and use the key words "Game Changer". The article spells it out much better than I can.

The most recent issue of the VFW Magazine also includes a short article about the launch of new e-health record system. It further expands on the information regarding the Mann-Grandstaff VA Medical Center System and includes the four other clinics that make up the system: Wenatchee, WA, Libby, MT, and Coeur d'Alene and Sandpoint, ID.

VA Begins Launch of New E-Health Record System. VFW Magazine, January 2021, 12.

The upshot is that things appear to be moving on this front and I encourage all of you to contact your Congressional/Senate delegations and urge them to press the VA/DoD to continue this project and to move with all due speed to ensure that all of our Veterans have the support they need in the years to come. 2027/2028 are a long way away, and all of our Veterans deserve the services that this new system is reported to provide.

Again, Happy New Year and, hopefully, it will be better for all of us.

## Message From the:

### "Thomas Francis Meagher Tricolour Celebration"

You will notice we have changed the name of our event to the Thomas Francis Meagher Tricolour Celebration, from the 1848 Tricolour Celebration, thereby giving recognition to our Waterford founder of the Irish Tricolour, the patriot and Waterfordian, Thomas Francis Meagher.

And as 2021 will be the 10th Anniversary of the setting up of the event, it was decided it was an opportune time for the name change, especially as over the years the 1848 Tricolour name seemed unfortunately to have negative connotations for some, and thereby affecting the event.

The dates for next year are 25th, 26th, 27th June 2021, and we will have a full Programme, which we will deliver either virtually, in real time, or a mixture of both, whilst still adhering to Government & Health requirements. It will be a challenge, but with the wonders of IT, and its many variations, this year with Covid has seen so many new ways to do things which were highly successful, we are up for the challenge.

Stay safe and take care.....

Ann Cusack, Chair  
Thomas Francis Meagher Tricolour Celebration



## HIBERNIAN DATES TO REMEMBER

### AOH MEETING

KC HALL AND ZOOM

TUESDAY, JANUARY 12, 2021

6:30 PM - REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING.

### AOH MEETING

KC HALL AND ZOOM

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2021

6:30 PM - REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING

### THIS MONTH IN IRISH HISTORY

JANUARY 1, 1892 - ELLIS ISLAND BECOMES RECEPTION CENTER FOR NEW IMMIGRANTS. THE FIRST IMMIGRANT THROUGH THE GATES IS ANNIE MOORE, 15, OF CO. CORK. JUST 15 YEARS OLD AND TRAVELLING WITH HER TWO BROTHERS, ANTHONY (11) AND PHILIP (7), ANNIE DEPARTED FROM QUEENSTOWN (NOW COBH COUNTY CORK, IRELAND) ON DECEMBER 20, 1891 ABOARD THE SS NEVADA, ONE OF THE 148 STEERAGE PASSENGERS. THE TRIO WOULD SPEND 12 DAYS AT SEA (INCLUDING CHRISTMAS DAY), ARRIVING IN NEW YORK ON THURSDAY EVENING, DECEMBER 31. THEY WERE PROCESSED THROUGH ELLIS ISLAND THE FOLLOWING MORNING, NEW YEAR'S DAY. ALL THREE CHILDREN WERE SOON REUNITED WITH THEIR PARENTS WHO WERE ALREADY LIVING IN NEW YORK. ANNIE MOORE IS BURIED IN CALVARY CEMETERY, QUEENS (APRIL 24, 1874- DEC 6, 1924)

JANUARY 1, 1602 -- HUGH O'NEILL DEFEATED AT KINSALE, IRELAND, END OF OLD GAELIC ORDER.

JANUARY 1, 1863 - LINCOLN, AWARE OF THE PUBLIC'S GROWING SUPPORT OF ABOLITION, ISSUED THE EMANCIPATION PROCLAMATION ON JANUARY 1, 1863, DECLARING THAT ALL SLAVES IN AREAS STILL IN REBELLION WERE, IN THE EYES OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT, FREE.

JANUARY 7, 1922 - DÁIL ÉIREANN VOTES 64 TO 57 TO ACCEPT THE ANGLO-IRISH TREATY, CREATING THE IRISH FREE STATE.

JANUARY 11, 1921 - THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCES THAT ANY UNAUTHORIZED PERSON FOUND IN POSSESSION OF ARMS, AMMUNITION OR EXPLOSIVES IS LIABLE TO BE EXECUTED

JANUARY 10, 1922 - ARTHUR GRIFFITH IS ELECTED SECOND PRESIDENT OF THE IRISH FREE STATE BY DÁIL ÉIREANN

**Your AOH Dues  
of \$40 is Due  
P.O. Box 1916  
Helena, MT 59624**

### THIS MONTH IN IRISH HISTORY

JANUARY 12, 2000 – LIMERICK PEOPLE TURNOUT IN HUGE NUMBERS TO ATTEND THE SELL-OUT FILM PREMIERE OF ANGELA'S ASHES.

JANUARY 12, 1885 - THOMAS ASHE, PATRIOT AND NATIONALIST REVOLUTIONARY, IS BORN IN LISPOLE, CO. KERRY

JANUARY 13, 1800 - DANIEL O'CONNELL MAKES HIS FIRST PUBLIC SPEECH, OPPOSING UNION WITH ENGLAND

JANUARY 13, 1941– JAMES JOYCE, IRISH WRITER DIES IN ZURICH

JANUARY 15, 1861- YOUNG IRELANDER TERENCE MACMANUS DIES IN SAN FRANCISCO, CA

January 18, 1885 – Miles City, Montana - AOH Division #1 Custer County formed.

January 20, 1897 – Joint Installation of Officers for the Anaconda AOH and the Anaconda Daughters of Erin

January 20, 1902 - Kevin Barry, medical student and nationalist revolutionary, is born in Dublin.

January 23, 1890 – Hibernian Hall, Butte Montana dedicated.

January 27, 1908 – D.J. Hennessy –past AOH National Director dies in Butte Montana.

January 29, 1794 - Archibald Hamilton Rowan, United Irishman, tried on charge of distributing seditious paper.

January 30, 1972 - In what is to become known as Bloody Sunday, the British Army kills 14 civil rights demonstrators in the Bogside district of Derry. A 14th marcher later dies of his injuries

## Destination - "Butte City"

By

Michael O'Connor

My story is much like many stories you have heard of how your Irish ancestry got to Montana. Like many of the families from Butte, Montana, the story was just like every other family and not something "special." If they felt they were not "special", your relatives did not talk about their origins. As time goes by, I have not taken my Irish ancestry for granted. In



O'Neill Homestead Ballydonegan, County Cork Ireland

fact, it is quite the opposite. It is incredibly special to me; and I want to find out more and more of my family roots. The answers to the questions that I had about my heritage did not come from my aunts and uncles. Being my family historian, I have found out many of the answers of how my family ended up in Montana.

This story is about my grandmother, Julia O'Neill O'Connor, and her experience in leaving Ireland and ending up in "Butte City". It is a fusion of historical facts and fiction to tell of my grandmother's memorable trip.

Julia's story begins in a place awfully familiar to the people of Butte, the Beara Peninsula, County Cork, Ireland. Where the O'Neill name is very popular. So, you know the excitement I had when I finally located my O'Neill family. Their family farm is not far from Allihies (Copper Mines) in the area called Ballydonegan. Julia was one of ten children to my great grandparents John O'Neill and Margaret Harrington O'Neill.

It was the spring of 1898 when Julia decided to make the trip to Butte. She knew that her older brother, Jerry, had made it to Butte and was employed in the copper mines. My great uncle worked as a black smith in the mines. Julia was planning to leave the first week of May of 1898. When the time came, it ended up that the ship leaving from Queenstown would leave on May 5, 1898. That just happened to be Julia's birthday. As courageous as it was to leave her brothers and sisters and her parents with the anticipation of never seeing them again, she could not build up the courage to leave them on her birthday. So, she contacted the White Star Line in Queenstown and notified them of her cancellation to leave on May 5<sup>th</sup>. Her departure was rescheduled for two weeks later.

What seemed to be the longest two weeks was now past, and the time to leave was the next day. For John and Margaret O'Neill, it was another difficult time of saying goodbye to one more child. But this time seemed more difficult because it was their daughter leaving. To say their goodbyes, the O'Neill's had a get together for everyone in the area. It was much like an Irish wake and, in a sense, it was a wake. They were saying goodbye for the last time to a daughter, sister, and friend.



To arrive on time in Queenstown for the White Star Line ship's departure to the United State, Julia needed to awake early of the morning of May 19, 1898. It was no easy task to travel from Ballydonegan to Queenstown and it would take three different modes of transportation. Julia's father, John hooked up the horse to the cart for their trip from Ballydonegan to Castletownbere. Once in Castletownbere, Julia boarded the steam ship "SS Countess of Bantry", run by the Bantry Bay Steamship Company. These steam ships carried passengers from Castletownbere to Bantry to provide connections to the trains out of Bantry. Once in Bantry, Julia boarded the train to Queenstown, the third leg of her trip. Julia arrived in Queenstown and immediately found the White Star Line ticket office to purchase her ticket. The White Star Line was affiliated with the Great Northern Railroad. The ticket she purchased gave her passage on the Great Northern Railroad from New York City to Butte City. She had several hours to wait until she could board the ship S.S. Teutonic.

Julia and many of the passengers waiting departure from Queenstown had enough time to attend the mass scheduled at St. Colman's Cathedral at the top of the hill. She climbed the steep street to the Cathedral. This was a day of firsts for Julia. The steam ship ride to Bantry, the train ride to Queenstown, and now attending a mass at a cathedral. St. Colman's Cathedral was the biggest Catholic Church she had ever seen! The church was full. Mainly people emigrating to the United States.

The time had come to board the S.S. Teutonic. All were in line slowly boarding the ship realizing this would be the last time they would see their beloved homeland. The next time Julia would see land would be entering New York Harbor and landing at Ellis Island. As the ship began departing Cork Harbor the last thing she saw of Ireland as it faded into the horizon was St. Colman's Cathedral. Even though the spire of the Cathedral had not been completed, it stood out because it was located atop the hill in Queenstown. After traveling on the ocean for six days, you could feel the excitement among the passengers knowing that they would be landing in America the next morning. On May 26, 1898, they could see the Statute of Liberty and their ship was waiting to anchor at Ellis Island to disembark its passengers.

Julia would experience Ellis Island like the other twelve million immigrants that passed through. The inspection process would take 3 to 7 hours. This was a time of high anxiety for those in line, not knowing if they would be denied entry into the United States. This was Julia's first stop in the United States on her way to new experiences and opportunities in a place called "Butte City, Montana."

After being processed through Ellis Island, Julia boarded the Great Northern train for her two-day, 2,300-mile trip. On May 28, 1898, Julia stepped off the train and onto the platform in her new home. It would be a joyful reunion with her brother Jerry who she had not seen in 4 years. She was greeted by my great uncle Jerry and began her life in a place her ship's manifest stated, "Destination - Butte City".



**Michael and Julia O'Neill O'Connor & baby Agnes O'Connor**