



Purpose of the Ancient Order of Hibernians

It is hereby declared and decreed that the purpose of this organization, the Ancient Order of Hibernians in America, Inc., is:

1. To promote Friendship, Unity, and Christian Charity.
2. To foster and sustain loyalty to our country and community.
3. To aid and advance, by all legitimate means, the aspirations and endeavors of the Irish people for complete independence, promoting peace with justice and unity for Ireland.
4. To foster the ideals and perpetuate the history and traditions of the Irish people in the United States.
5. To promote Irish culture and language in America.
6. To encourage civic participation by our members.
7. To encourage and promote an equitable U.S. immigration laws for Ireland, and to cooperate with other groups for a fair and just immigration policy in the United States.
8. To accept and support, without prejudice, the concept of a free expression of religious practice for all of the people of the world.

Membership in the Ancient Order of Hibernians in America, Inc. is confined exclusively to practicing Roman Catholics of Irish birth or descent, who are citizens, or who have declared their intention to become citizens, of the United States, Canada, or any country of the Western Hemisphere.



Central Pennsylvania Local Irish/American History

Revolutionary Times:

General William Thompson – The namesake of Cumberland County Division 2 of the AOH, William Thompson was born in County Meath Ireland. He served as a Cavalry Officer in the French and Indian War and was a personal friend of General George Washington. He later like Washington served as a surveyor, until the War for Independence. Thompson lived in Carlisle Pennsylvania and upon recognizing the need of the Continental Army for expert marksman; he formed a unit of rifleman which was made up primarily of Irishman from the central Pennsylvania area, both Catholic and Protestant. These

riflemen became known as Thompson's Rifles and then the Pennsylvania Rifles or the 1st Pennsylvania Militia. This unit was commissioned into service and became the 1st Continental Rifles with Thompson as their Colonel, the first Colonel commissioned into the U.S. Army. Thompson led his rifles to Bunker Hill and then to the Battle of New York, where he provided cover fire which allowed General Washington and his Army to flee the battle and imminent capture. For this service the City of New York named a park in his honor. Thompson then led his men north to fight the British in New York and Quebec. He was part of Sullivan's Army, but unfortunately he was to be captured in the Battle of Trois Rivere, Quebec. He was not paroled until several years later and spent the remainder of the war as a prisoner under extremely harsh conditions. He was finally paroled in 1789 and died within a year of his parole in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. He is buried there in the old town cemetery. His grave is marked with a Connamara Marble Celtic Cross and the local AOH commemorates him every year on the anniversary of that death.

Pennsylvania Rifles – "The Irish Line" Thompson's Riflemen who came to be the 1st Pennsylvania Militia and the 1st Continental Rifles. They fought valiantly throughout the war in almost every major engagement always led by Irish Generals. They were often referred to as the "Irish Line" because the majority of the unit was comprised of men of Irish descent. Their flag which is of course Green, depicts the Lion (England) being netted by a colonial soldier who is armed with the traditional Irish weapon, the pike. The motto on the Flag states "Nolo Dominari". "We will not be dominated".

General Hand - Was born in Tipperary, Ireland and moved to Lancaster Pennsylvania. He was appointed Lieutenant Colonel and served as Thompson's second in command. This made Hand the first commissioned Lieutenant Colonel in the U.S. Army. When Thompson was captured at the Battle of Trois Rivere, Hand took over command of the "Irish Line". He was promoted to general and served in that role until the surrender of the British at Yorktown. He was then promoted to Major General and made Adjutant General of the entire U.S. Army. He also served as a member of Congress following his resignation from the U.S. Army.

General Irvine – Also of Irish descent, born near Enniskillen and educated at Dublin University, also lived in Carlisle, Pennsylvania and was directed by General Washington to lead his force in support of Thompson in Canada. Irvine was also captured, but was paroled within a few months and led the 2nd Pennsylvania Militia. He served in various commands and positions during the remainder of the war and became a member of Congress after his retirement. He was instrumental in obtaining Pennsylvania's outlet to Lake Erie at what is today Erie, Pennsylvania. He attempted to negotiate resolution of the Whiskey Rebellion in western PA and when that failed he led the Pennsylvania Militia in pacification of the rebellion. He had two sons who served as officers in the U.S. Army during the War of 1812.

General Mad Anthony Wayne – The third of Thompson's Colonels, also of Irish descent, but born in Pennsylvania was Anthony Wayne. Wayne survived the Battles in New York and Canada and avoided capture in the Battle of Trois Rivere. He went on to win notoriety as an excellent leader and vicious fighter, which earned him the nickname "Mad Anthony". He was later killed in fighting in the Ohio Valley and it remains a mystery what ever happened to the body of Wayne, which was prepared for shipment back to Pennsylvania, but is said never to have been found.

Molly Pitcher (Mary McAulley) – Also of the Carlisle area and buried in the Carlisle Old Town Cemetery is the legendary Molly Pitcher. She is said to have brought water to revolutionary soldiers in the heat of battle and when her husband fell, Molly grabbed his ramrod and began working as part of the cannon crew. She was the first woman to gain a military pension. Although having a German Maiden name, the local residents of Carlisle stated that Molly always spoke with an Irish brogue and was known to be of Irish descent and of course married an Irishman.

Early Catholic Church – The Catholic Church in central Pennsylvania was largely in its early days made up of Irish Americans. This explains why three of the earliest churches were named for the patron saint of Ireland, St. Patrick. Carlisle and York being the earliest and Harrisburg soon following with the Cathedral being named for St. Patrick. In colonial times, the church of central Pennsylvania was considered a mission church and priests had to ride circuit into the various parishes. The Churches early support of black and Native American education efforts was well known and support by such distinguished early Catholics as Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton, who used her own families wealth to promote the faith in PA.

Whiskey Rebellion - Whiskey (Bourbon whiskey) is an American native spirit, with a history steeped in the cultures of the earliest settlers. This unique American product was involved in the history of the first use of armed force by the new post-Revolution United States of America. Although whiskey was produced throughout the colonies (George Washington was among the noted whiskey producers of the time), the Scotch-Irish settlers of western Pennsylvania are where bourbon roots began, and where rebellion to the United States first was occurred in opposition to an excise tax imposed upon whiskey by the new federal government. The one and only time a U.S. President has led an Army into action was when Washington rallied his "federal" army in Carlisle to confront this tax rebellion, which was quickly resolved without any great loss of life.

Civil War:

Rock of Erin – 69th Pennsylvania Volunteers – That's right New York was not the only State to have an Irish Unit carrying the designation of the 69th. A unit of largely working class Irish who were not completely embraced by the people of Pennsylvania; which was common at that time in Pennsylvania History. They were led by Colonel Dennis O'Kane of County Derry; although organized under a stern Welshman named Owens, who did not particularly care for the Irish. The unit was

force marched from Virginia to defend their native Pennsylvania at Gettysburg. They had gone 48 hours without any provisions when they were sent to the center of the union line near the clump of trees used by General Lee as the rallying point for General Pickett's Force. The second day of the battle at Gettysburg, the Pennsylvanian held off an attack of a Georgia unit, many of whom left their rifles in front of the 69th Pennsylvania's position. O'Kane the strict and frugal disciplinary directed his men to recover these rifles from the ground in front of their position. As a result of this action many of the Irishman were armed with two rifles, loaded and ready for action. The next day, the temperatures were sweltering and this tired unit was left out in the heat of the day protected only by this small clump of trees. O'Kane had his men hold position, but also knew the time to allow his men to relax. His men were said to be unkempt and disorganized; laying around under makeshift tents in the heat of the day. A ferocious artillery barrage began and O'Kane ordered his men into line. The well disciplined unit sprung to life and planted the unit's Green Flag with Harp next to the Flag of Pennsylvania. General Hancock rode along the line and was smartly saluted by O'Kane who asked the General to be careful, he made an easy target. Hancock responded that "Sometimes the Life of a Corps Commander doesn't matter." He was shot moments later, but would recover from these wounds. Pickett's Charge began in earnest and the Irish held and countered. O'Kane told his men to "Stand and Fight for their State." O'Kane was shot in the heat of the battle through the abdomen. He did not leave the field until he lapsed into a coma and died as the result of his wound. His men held the line and the charge was repelled; the center of the line held. This point in the line became known as the "Rock of Erin".

Pennsylvania Buck Tails – Another unit made up of Irish and German frontiersmen and crack shots also was present in the civil war from Peninsula Campaign through Gettysburg and beyond. This unit of frontiersmen who were crack shots and excellent hunters wore buck's tails on their caps and similar to Thompson's men in the Revolutionary War bore the name of their leader and became known as Kane's Bucktails. General Thomas Kane, an abolitionist of Irish Descent from Philadelphia who had moved to north central Pennsylvania, similar to William Thompson almost 100 years before valued Pennsylvania marksmen and formed this group of marksmen to serve in Pennsylvania's Militia and the Union Army. He also like Thompson was captured early in the war, but unlike Thompson was paroled early on and able to return to the fight at his own risk. He again like Thompson never fully recovered from his time as a prisoner and died at a young age, but not until after leading the Mormons under the order of the President from Pennsylvania and surrounding areas to the new territory of Utah.

Father Corby – One of the most famous figures and examples of Catholic faith during the civil war. He gave the Irish Catholic Troops at Gettysburg general absolution before they went into battle. The troops gathered around him and he blessed them and forgave their sins in a special act of general absolution, knowing many of them would not survive the days fight.

Molly McGuires - Many have viewed the Molly Maguires as Irish miners who terrorized the anthracite coal region of eastern Pennsylvania in the 1860s and 1870s. Recent Books and Reviews of the Molly have argued that the Molly Maguire violence was a form of "retributive justice" common in rural Ireland between 1760 and 1850 that "was adapted in Pennsylvania to the conditions of industrial exploitation" that many Irish miners faced. Although there may be evidence that the Molly Maguires were conspiratorial, these accounts argue that the claims that mine owners and other contemporaries greatly exaggerated the conspiracy to discredit enemies which actually had no ties to the Mollies. These included Irish miners, Irish organizations like the Ancient Order of Hibernians (AOH), and the powerful Workingmen's Benevolent Association (WBA).

It may be true that many miners came to Pennsylvania from exactly those parts of north-central and northwestern Ireland where secret agrarian societies like the Whiteboys and the Molly Maguires had retaliated against disruptive landholding practices earlier in the nineteenth century. (The Molly Maguires apparently derived their name from the practice, perhaps borrowed from mummery, of disguising themselves as women.) They eked out meager lives as unskilled miners in Schuylkill County and fumed because the better jobs went to their Scotch, German, English, and Welsh neighbors. The violence attributed to Molly Maguires erupted during the Civil War. The Mollies were blamed for two assassinations, attacks against draft officials and mine owners, and even robbery and brawling. "By the end of the war the term *Molly Maguires* was being used in the lower anthracite region to describe any and all forms of violence and disorder involving Irish mine workers" Kevin Kenny. *Making Sense of the Molly Maguires*. New York: Oxford University Press. 1998. Pp. xii, 336.

Post Civil War

Jim Thorpe – We all know of Jim Thorpe and his success in the Olympics and in Professional Football and Baseball, but did you also know he was of Irish Descent. His mother was Native American from the Oklahoma Indian Territory, but his father was an Irish trader who did business in the Indian territory. Jim Thorpe attended the Carlisle Industrial Indian School and began his early sports successes at that location. He went on to be one of our nations greatest Olympians and a professional athlete in boy baseball and football. The town of Jim Thorpe, Pennsylvania changed its name in honor of this greatest American Athlete.