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The Gift Givers of St. Bernard's Catholic Church Nineteenth-Century Memorials in Stained Glass

The radiant rays of the morning sun flowed through the stained glass windows, illuminating images of saints and symbols of the Roman Catholic faith. Beneath these beautiful figures, my eyes rested on the names of the forgotten souls who donated the windows or who were memorialized by others' gifts. Clergy and parishioners gave the windows to beautify St. Bernard's Catholic Church, their beloved church on a hill in the village of Tariffville, a section of Simsbury, Connecticut. All of the Gift Givers were Irish—Quinn, Walsh, Shea, Connelly, Condon, Carroll, Winters, Starrs, Convey, Baldwin, Wall and Penders. Their names recalled my own Irish roots and stirred in me a genealogist's desire to find out more about them.

St. Bernard's parish was founded as a mission church in the mid-nineteenth century, the time of great migrations of Irish to places all over the world, but especially to America. When they outgrew this small church named St. Paul's on the west side of Mountain Road, the parishioners built a larger one in 1876 on the north side of Winthrop Street, where the parish cemetery is today, and eventually dedicated the church to St. Bernard.¹ A fire in 1892 destroyed that building and caused the great effort needed to build the present building at the corner of Winthrop and Maple Streets. One can only imagine the disappointment and frustration of the newly appointed parish priest, Father James Walsh, and his parishioners as they contemplated what had happened and what had to be done. Like the phoenix the new church rose from the ashes bigger and better than ever and adorned by stained glass windows given by people whose stories are full of hope and tragedy and of love, faith and duty.²

About the Author

Thomas F. Howard is a retired high school teacher who lives in East Granby. He is also an historian and professional genealogist who has written for the *Berkshire Genealogist* and *Connecticut Nutmegger*. He is president of the Connecticut Professional Genealogists Council and chairman of the Connecticut Genealogical Coalition. He serves as a director of the Connecticut Society of Genealogists and of the New England Regional Genealogical Conference. He will co-chair the NERGC genealogical conference in Hartford in 2007.

Mr. Howard was president of the East Granby Historical Society for many years and is currently president of the East Granby Land Trust. He has taught genealogy courses and he lectures often on a number of historic and genealogical topics. He is in the process of restoring an ancient smallpox cemetery on Hatchet Hill in East Granby. He and his wife, Virginia, have a son Stephen, a daughter Karen and four grandchildren.

The Gift Givers and those who were memorialized did not come to the United States together. There is no evidence that they ever knew each other before they met in church in the 1850s, 1860s or 1870s. They came from six counties of Ireland and at different times: Longford County (Rev. John F. Quinn, before 1860); Tyrone County (William Starrs, about 1850); Tipperary County (Jane Condon, before 1860); Roscommon County (Patrick Carroll, in 1846); Galway County (Michael Connelly, about 1846, and Thomas Winters, 1845-47); and Wexford County (Michael and Mary Penders in 1846). Three of them were born in America, all in Connecticut. Rev. John J. Quinn was born in Hartford, James W. Convey was born in Thompsonville and Rev. James S. Walsh, who gave the window above the main altar in memory of his parents, was born in South Windham. Only two of the Gift Givers were women. Mrs. Jane Condon, widow of Maurice Condon, and Bridget Winters. Most did not live near each other, but several families eventually intermarried. One window displays two surnames: William Starrs, the only Civil War veteran, and his son-in-law James W. Convey.

Most of them were farmers, two were priests, three worked for the railroad and one was a cigar maker. Starrs, Convey, Connelly, Wall and Penders lived in Tariffville. Shea lived in the center of Simsbury and Baldwin in West Simsbury. In the 1880s St. Bernard's drew people from East Granby (Condons and Carrolls) and Granby (Winters).

In Memory of Thomas and Margaret Walsh

The place of honor in the center window above the altar was given in memory of the parents of Father James Walsh. Father Walsh was the priest who had the unfortunate experience of having his church burn down on Ash Wednesday in 1892. He was born in South Windham on August 24, 1852 to Thomas and Mary Walsh, who were both born in Ireland in 1826. Their other children were Thomas, John, Joseph J. and Mary.³ Father Walsh grew up in the Windham/Willimantic area, was confirmed there in 1867 and attended St. Joseph's Seminary in Troy, New York. He was ordained December 17, 1881. He was assigned to Bristol and Waterbury parishes before arriving in Tariffville on December 30, 1890, to take over St. Bernard's parish.⁴

The loss of the church building in 1892 put a strain on the parish resources. Father Walsh arranged to hold services in other churches or meeting halls in 1892 and 1893 while the present church was under construction. The dedication of the church was in May 1895.⁵ The next month Father Walsh was transferred to Cornwall. He served Cornwall and its mission parish in Sharon, later Ansonia. In 1899 he returned home to Willimantic. In 1902 he was at St. Mary's in New Britain, in 1907 at St. Peter's in Danbury and in 1909 at St. Francis in Middletown. He was appointed chaplain of St. Mary's Home in West Hartford in 1910. In 1909 and 1911 Father Walsh had personal problems that affected his ministry for a short time.⁶ He was assigned in 1912 to St. John's in Stamford. On September 2, 1914, at the age of sixty-two, he died in Atlantic City, New Jersey, after a two-week illness. His obituary in the *Catholic Transcript* summed up his life: "He erected the parish church and contributed notably to ecclesiastical works.... Wherever he labored he won affection of the people and news of his death will be heard with regret in many places."⁷

In Memory of Rev. John F. Quinn

The window above the altar and to the right was in memory of John Francis Quinn, the first pastor in residence of the independent parish of St. Bernard's. Father John F. Quinn was born in 1846 in County Longford, Ireland, to John F. and Maria Quinn.⁸ Nothing is known about his youth or where he grew up. He graduated from St. John's College, which later became Fordham University, in 1864.

Position of the Stained Glass Windows

The three windows above the altar and the first window to the right of the altar are given by or dedicated to members of the clergy or their parents.

Gift of
Thomas and Bridget Winters

In memory of
Thomas and Margaret Walsh

In memory of
Rev. John F. Quinn

In memory of
Michael and Mary Penders

Gift of
Ref. John J. Quinn

Gift of
Michael Wall

Gift of
John Shea

Gift of
Michael Connelly

Gift of
John Baldwin

Gift of
Patrick Carroll

Gift of
Mrs. Jane Condon

A Friend

Gift of
William Starrs
J. W. Convey

He was sent to Paris for special study and was ordained early in 1868. He first worked as assistant pastor in Hartford at St. Patrick's Church. Then he worked in New Haven, Moodus, Warren and Danbury before his assignment to St. Bernard's. He was appointed pastor of St. Bernard's in 1881.

His reports on the financial and spiritual health of his parish from 1881 to 1890 show a man sensitive to the views of his superiors and skeptical of the spiritual commitment of some of the souls under his care. Sometimes when the young parish was unable to meet its financial obligations, its financial condition put a strain on him personally, as he gave money back to the parish from his own meager resources.⁹ Shortly after noon on December 19, 1890, he was sitting in a chair in his residence when he collapsed and died of apoplexy at the age of forty-four.¹⁰

Father Quinn's only material assets when he died were his personal library and a piano, valued at \$35.00 and \$100.00 respectively, and \$7.90 in the bank. His only living relatives were his two cousins, Mrs. Catherine Hart Cusick of Tariffville, wife of William Cusick, and Sister Bernadine Hall of New Bedford, Massachusetts, and a half-brother, Michael Quinn of New York City. His best friend, Father James Hughes, handled the funeral arrangements and was executor of his estate. Parishioners and friends raised over \$760 to pay his debts and to cover funeral expenses.¹¹ His legacy to his church went far beyond those mundane figures, however. Father John Francis Quinn was buried in the parish cemetery near the steps of the second church in the parish he helped to establish.

Gift of Rev. John J. Quinn

The first window on the right (or north) side of the church was a gift of Father John Joseph Quinn. He was born in Hartford to William and Margaret Kennelly Quinn, who were born in Ireland. William was a blacksmith. He and Margaret had six children: Thomas, born about 1853; John J., born October 30, 1855; Michael, born about 1857; James J., born about 1858; Mary E., born August 10, 1860; and William J., born about 1863.¹² James became an attorney and Mary became Sister Rosalie of the Sisters of Mercy.¹³

The future priest was baptized at St. Patrick's Church in Hartford and went to church schools in the city. He also attended St. John's College (later Fordham University) and on December 18, 1880, he was ordained a priest in Montreal, Canada.

Father Quinn was a parish priest in Norwich, Willimantic and Coventry. Then in 1889 he was assigned to St. Patrick's Church in Collinsville, which had been the mother parish for St. Bernard's before the second church was built and before the parish was formally established. While at St. Patrick's he became a mentor for Father James Walsh, during whose pastorate at St. Bernard's the church burned down. The Collinsville parish gave significant support to St. Bernard's parish as the church was being rebuilt, including Father Quinn's gift of the stained glass window.¹⁴

Father Quinn later received assignments that took him to the Taftville section of Norwich, Connecticut, in 1901 and to Richmond, Virginia, in 1903. In February 1904 he disappeared during a stormy voyage on the *Jamestown* of the Old Dominion Line out of Norfolk, Virginia. The ten-year-old, 300 foot steamship ran into a northeaster on its way to New York. It arrived in New York on February 24, but without Father Quinn. He was forty-nine years old.¹⁵ After Father Quinn's family and friends reported not hearing from him for seven years, his estate consisting of three insurance policies totaling \$6,000 was given to his last parish, Sacred Heart in Taftville.¹⁶ A biographical sketch written while he was alive says of him, "He is a man whose learning and piety make him a power in the community. While he has exceptional gifts as an orator and spiritual teacher, he is also an able administrator...." It adds, "He is a man of broad views, which he can present effectively and eloquently, his rich voice adding to the pleasures of his hearers.... His manner is genial yet unassuming, the index of a generous nature."¹⁷ And so he is remembered because he gave so generously to the former mission parish of St. Bernard's in Tariffville.

These are the three priests who are remembered as Gift Givers. It is noteworthy that they had close relatives who also chose the religious life. Two of the following gift Givers had sons who became priests, the Winters and the Baldwins.

Gift of Thomas and Bridget Winters

The window above the altar and to the left was given by the Winters. Thomas Winters was born in County Galway on December 20, 1813.¹⁸ He married Bridget Fogerty (born June 1813) in Ireland in 1844 and they emigrated between 1844 and '47 with two of their children, daughter Mary and son James.¹⁹ Michael (1847), John (1854), Thomas, and Hannah K. (1857) were born in Connecticut.²⁰ They located by 1870 on Kelly Lane in Granby, Connecticut, where they had real estate worth \$3,000 and personal property worth \$8,000.²¹ According to the Federal agricultural census of 1870, the farm had eighteen acres, one horse, one cow and farm products worth \$490.²² The 1880 agricultural census shows the family had added a second cow, a pig, two sheep, twelve chickens,

tobacco and farm products worth \$350.²³ The farm's products sustained the family and brought in cash.

The Winters must have been proud that their son James Michael went into the law. He later became a Superior Court judge in Indianapolis, Indiana.²⁴ Their daughter Mary married Patrick Hinchy on November 15, 1864, and had four children, one of whom inherited the Winters' farm.²⁵ Thomas and Bridget Winters son, John Thomas, was ordained a priest on December 18, 1880.²⁶

When Thomas Winters died on November 26, 1901, at the age of eight-seven, he was one of the oldest citizens in the town of Granby.²⁷ The same was claimed for Bridget Winters when she died on August 4, 1905, at age eighty-nine.²⁸ His obituary tells us, "He was an industrious hardworking man and was held in high esteem by the residents of the town.... He and his wife celebrated their Golden wedding anniversary in 1894." Her obituary says, "Her illness was borne with sincere Christian fortitude and she died with all the consolation of her faith.... Mrs. Winters possessed the strong Irish faith and the ordination of her son the Rev. John T. Winters, the much beloved pastor of St. Mary's Church [New Britain] was one of the happiest occasions of her life."²⁹

Gift of John Shea

The next window on the north side was the gift of John Shea, who was born in 1838 in Ireland. His parents may have been Matthew Shea (1801-1879) and Margaret Shea (1799-1867). His siblings were possibly Patrick, born about 1833, and Matthew, born in 1844. The family emigrated in 1853. John married Mary Dunn on January 2, 1858.³⁰ She was from County Waterford. They had five children: James K., Mary J., John, Margaret A., and Julia. In 1880 John Shea had a twenty-one acre farm in Simsbury, consisting of sixteen tilled acres and five acres of meadow, that was valued at \$2,340. He had one horse, four cows, three calves, two pigs, and twenty-five chickens. The farm produced three bushels of beans, twenty bushels of Indian corn, seventy-five bushels of Irish potatoes, 250 dozen eggs, 400 pounds of butter and 700 pounds of tobacco. That year the total value of the farm products came to \$411.³¹

Mary Shea died February 19, 1908, at the age of seventy-four.³² She left personal property valued at \$1,385.56 and real estate valued at \$2,000.³³ Four years later John Shea followed her in death on February 5, 1912, age seventy-four.³⁴ His obituary referred to him as "A successful farmer and useful citizen.... Mr. Shea was a steady hardworking man, who had the respect and esteem of all in Simsbury."³⁵ John and Mary were survived by their five children and nine grandchildren. John Shea had the distinction of presenting a gift of a window to St. Bernard's Church and he did the same thing for the mission church of the Immaculate Conception (forerunner of St. Mary's Church) in the center of Simsbury.³⁶ Although his funeral was at Immaculate Conception, he and his wife were buried in St. Bernard's Cemetery.

Gift of John Baldwin

The next window was the gift of John Baldwin of West Simsbury, who was born in County Waterford, Ireland, in August 1831. He emigrated before 1860 and became a naturalized citizen by 1870.³⁷ He had at least one sibling, his sister Ellen, who married into the families of two other Gift Givers, the Walls and the Connelys. John Baldwin married Ellen A. Cusick, whose surname also figures in the family structure of several of the Gift Givers. Ellen was born in Ireland and emigrated with her parents, who were probably John and Margaret, at the age of ten. She had a sister Catherine

and a brother William.³⁸

John and Ellen Baldwin were married in the original mission church of St. Paul's on Mountain Road in Tariffville by Rev. Lawrence Walsh.³⁹ They had seven children, all born in Simsbury: Alice (born December 30, 1870), William Patrick (March 1872), Margaret M. (March 25, 1874), John F. (June, 1875), Edward T. (August 1876), Mary E. (September 22, 1878) and Joseph W. (July 30, 1883).⁴⁰

Like so many of the Gift Givers John was a farmer. In the 1870 census he was listed as a laborer, but by 1880 he was a farmer and by 1900 he was listed as a farmer who owned his own farm free of a mortgage. The 1880 agricultural census provides a clear look at the farm. It consisted of ten tilled acres, seventeen acres of meadow and three wooded acres and it was valued at \$1,235. The farm animals included one horse, four cows, five calves, two pigs, two unspecified animals and twenty-five chickens. These had produced 500 pounds of cheese and 150 dozen eggs. His land yielded two tons of hay, sixty bushels of Irish potatoes and 550 pounds of tobacco. The value of that year's farm products was \$385.⁴¹ It is interesting to note that in John's 1911 probate inventory that all the cows were named, but none were named for the women in his life, which is not surprising considering the fate of livestock. For the record, the fifteen cows' names were Dosie, Gem, Blossom, Pearl, Belle, Peg, Kitty, Dot, Polly, Molly, Nellie, Daisy, Nancy, Lyda and Fannia.⁴²

John Baldwin "was a great reader of the *Hartford Times* for over fifty years" that paper stated in his obituary. It also says that when he died on March 15, 1911, he was the oldest resident in Simsbury. The paper gives his age as seventy-three, but he was actually seventy-nine and a half years old. He left his wife, six children, three grandchildren and a sister.⁴³ The farm had prospered to the point that it was worth \$4,000 and his total estate came to \$5,315. It included three parcels of land amounting to over 120 acres with buildings, some of which he rented out. His son Edward received the land and he remained in farming. His widow got \$1,000 in cash and she lived on the home lot in West Simsbury until her death on September 7, 1919, at the age of seventy-five.⁴⁴

The children all survived their parents, except for the last child, Joseph W., who died in 1884 at the age of one. The girls, Alice, Margaret and Mary remained single and continued to live in West Simsbury, as did Edward. William married Sarah Agnes O'Meara on June 15, 1898 and by 1904 they had two children.⁴⁵ John F. Baldwin became a priest and he served in Plainfield and Lakewood, New Jersey. He was a Monsignor at the latter place. He died in 1964 and was buried next to his parents in St. Bernard's Cemetery.⁴⁶

Gift of Mrs. Jane Condon

The only woman to be a Gift Giver in her own right was Jane Cleary Condon, the widow of Maurice Condon (1805-1873). She was born in County Tipperary in 1814 and she married Mr. Condon, who was from County Limerick, sometime in 1836. The birthplaces of their children show a great deal about the family's movements. Six of their ten children were born in Ireland: Patrick (County Limerick, 1838); Ellen (Ireland, 1839); Sarah (1841); John (1844); Mary (1847) and Margaret (1849). They emigrated between 1849 and 1853. Michael (1853) was the first to be born in Connecticut, then Maurice (Ansonia, 1856), William (New Hartford, 1858) and Jennie (New Hartford, 1859).⁴⁷

In March 1854 Mr. Condon had applied for U.S. citizenship in New Haven County Court and

he was granted citizenship in Hartford Superior Court on March 3, 1860. The family was in Tariffville in 1868, when twelve-year-old Maurice Jr., eleven-year-old William and nine-year-old Jennie, were enrolled in Tariffville Elementary School.⁴⁸

Maurice and Jane Condon were probably the most financially successful of all the Gift Givers. Maurice was working in the carpet mill in Tariffville by 1860 and in that year he had a personal estate of \$60. He owned a small piece of land next to the carpet company, borrowed \$1,200 on the land in 1864, used that to buy 120 acres in East Granby and paid off the note in four years. He sold the original land for \$2,000 in 1869. Other land purchases and loans he parlayed into a fine farm on the south side of Hatchet Hill Road. By 1870 Maurice was a successful farmer whose farm was valued at \$4,300 which produced goods worth \$2,121.⁴⁹ When Maurice died at the age of sixty-nine on April 23, 1873 his estate was worth \$9,000. Personal property accounted for \$4,000 of the total and included \$1,400 in the bank and \$1,800 in loan notes he had made to other people. His estate went to his wife, Jane, for use in her natural life, after which it would be divided among the children or their surviving heirs.⁵⁰ In 1880 the farm included 130 acres which put it in the top ten percent of East Granby farms.

Jane Cleary Condon continued farming after Maurice's death. By 1880 the farm had one horse, two oxen, twelve cows, three pigs, and twenty chickens. In that year the farm produced 1,560 pounds of butter, 150 dozen eggs, 150 bushels of Irish potatoes, thirty tons of hay, ten cords of wood and 3,670 pounds of tobacco. In spite of increased production compared with that in 1870, its value was given as just \$975.⁵¹ Nevertheless, Jane and her family had enough to live on and more. She could afford to give her church a gift of a stained glass window in 1892, which helped the parish recover from the destruction of the second church.

Jane Condon died in 1895 and she and her husband are buried in the church cemetery along with some of their children. The family scattered to New Haven, Waterbury, Hartford and New Hartford, but Maurice Jr. remained in East Granby on the family farm. He or his son Maurice W. took an interest in local politics and won a two-year term as Town Clerk, beginning in 1927. John F. Condon would later become East Granby's First Selectman in the years 1936-38 and 1948-53. They were Democrats.⁵² William Condon married Phebe Dunn and located in Tariffville as a cigar maker. Ellen Condon married Patrick Collins and lived in Simsbury.⁵³ All that is left of the Condon place in East Granby is a cellar hole and barn foundation, but in the 1870's and 1880's and later it was a thriving farm.

Gift of William Starrs and James W. Convey

William Starrs was born in County Tyrone in December 1830. No record of his parents has been found, but he may have been the brother of Charles Starrs.⁵⁴ William married Rose Guilomie in Ireland and their son John J. was born in New York about 1849.⁵⁵ By about 1851 they were living in Ghent, Columbia County, New York in a residence at Chatham Four Corners. Their daughter Sarah was born in Chatham, Columbia County, New York, in February 1853.⁵⁶ Their son William F. was born in New York in 1855 and died October 17, 1877.⁵⁷ Sarah married the future Gift Giver James Convey on February 23, 1879.⁵⁸ Rose Starrs died July 9, 1893, age seventy-one, of diabetes.⁵⁹

During the Civil War, William Sr. served in Company E of the 128th New York Volunteer Infantry for three years. He enlisted from Ghent in August 1862 and was honorably discharged July 26, 1865, with the rank of sergeant. He participated in several battles, including the Battle of Port Hudson in Louisiana.⁶⁰

William Starrs was important to the day to day operation of St. Bernard's Parish. One of its early fundraising activities was the parish fair that raised at times as much as twenty-five percent of the annual parish revenue. The *Connecticut Catholic* had an article in its October 11, 1879 issue testifying to William's contribution. The Tariffville column says that William Starrs of the Western and John O'Rourke of the Canal railroads "should have a vote of thanks from the parish for the success of the fair is in great measure due to their efforts." William Starrs died in Simsbury on February 29, 1904.⁶¹

James W. Convey is the second half of the Gift Giver partnership with his father-in-law William Starrs. James was the only non-clergy Gift Giver to be born in this country. He was born May 18, 1849, in the Thompsonville section of Enfield to Patrick and Elizabeth (McCann) Convey who had come to this country from Ireland in the 1840s. James had at least two brothers, who were also born in Thompsonville: Thomas, born about 1850, and John, born August 25, 1855. The 1880 census shows James and his brother John living next door to each other on Mountain Road in Tariffville. Their father Patrick, age fifty-six, lived with James and his wife Sarah. A William Starrs, probably another brother, lived only a few houses away.⁶²

James and Sarah Starrs had married on February 23, 1879. They had four children: Rosa W. (born November 1881, died October 5, 1908), Eliza A. (born June 1883), Catherine S. (born March 1887, married John Atkins in 1908), and James Joseph (born March 1890). She died February 13, 1896, of breast cancer at the age of forty-three.⁶³

James W. Convey had a cigar making business and he leased both his residence and business space from the Tariffville Lace Company. His 1906 obituary in the *Hartford Times* said "he was a traveling man," no doubt to sell his cigars. He was a Justice of the Peace and a member of the Elementary School Board in Tariffville. He was active in several church organizations and fraternal orders, such as the Green Cross Council, Knights of Columbus of Hartford, Tariffville Court of Foresters and the Torrington Lodge of Elks.⁶⁴

When he died at the age of fifty-seven, he did not have a great deal to pass on to his family. He left no will and his estate was valued at \$474.44, plus an unspecified insurance policy. His wife had died ten years earlier and he had somehow brought up four children, two of whom at the time of his death were minors: Kitti, nineteen, and James, seventeen. The children petitioned the court to allow their uncle Thomas W. Convey to be their guardian and the court approved. It is interesting to note that six of his nephews, all Convey men, served as pall bearers as they laid him to rest in the cemetery across the street from St. Bernard's.⁶⁵

William Starrs was one of the last Gift Givers to come to Tariffville. The window next to his was given in memory of possibly the earliest parishioners named, Michael and Mary Penders.

In Memory of Michael and Mary Penders

Michael Penders was born in Ireland about 1813 and Mary A. Penders was born there about a year later. They were married in County Wexford and emigrated to America about 1846. Michael was naturalized a citizen on April 1, 1852. He and John Penders (possibly a brother) were made voters in Simsbury two days later.⁶⁶

Michael and Mary Penders had eight children: Joannah (born in Ireland in 1840), Edward (Ireland, 1842), James (Ireland, 1844), John (born 1847, about the time they emigrated and died May 13, 1858), Michael (Simsbury, May 1848), Thomas (Connecticut, 1852 and died February 22, 1852),

Logforte (1852), Bell (1858). Their son Michael was one of the first children to be baptized in Tariffville when he was baptized July 7, 1850.⁶⁷ Thomas and John were buried in the nonsectarian cemetery that predates and is next to St. Bernard's cemetery.

Michael Penders was listed as a laborer on the 1850 and '60 censuses, but the 1860 agricultural census shows that he had a good sized farm of seventy acres that was valued at \$1,500. He had one cow that produced 250 pounds of butter and a hundred pounds of cheese. The family grew two bushels of peas/beans and 150 bushels of Irish potatoes along with some orchard products and five tons of hay.⁶⁸ It is likely that he worked for a time in the mills in Tariffville, which were very near his home. Michael and Mary left Tariffville after 1860 and possibly located in Hartford. Three of the children may have been in Tariffville/Simsbury in 1870 and later. The girls may have married there. In any case, when the new church needed stained glass windows in 1892, one of them was dedicated to the memory of Michael and Mary Penders, parents of one of the earliest parish families.

Gift of Michael Wall

Michael Wall was born in County Waterford, Ireland, in May 1835, probably to John and Mary Wall. He was from a very large family that may have emigrated with him when he came to America in 1856.⁶⁹ All located in or around Simsbury. His siblings were likely Patrick (born 1823), Bridget (1828), Edward (1835) and James (1837). Still others were John and Thomas Wall. The Simsbury birth records have a total of thirty-two Wall children born between 1854 and 1882, often two or three in the same year. Baptismal records show the siblings as sponsors for each others children.

On November 26, 1863 Michael Wall and Susan Boardman were married by Father Fagan.⁷⁰ A large family of ten children resulted from this union, but it was often struck by tragedy. In the 1870s and '80s seven of those ten children died, many in the prime of life. The children were all born in Simsbury: John B. (born November 7, 1863, died of constipation on November 24, 1885 at the age of twenty-two), Thomas F. (August 24, 1865, died October 14, 1872, age seven), Mary Ann (August 2, 1867, died of consumption March 4, 1891, age twenty-three), Sarah (June 24, 1869), Alice (December 27, 1870, died of consumption July 26, 1888, age seventeen, just a month after her mother died of breast cancer at the age of fifty-four), James E. (June 1873), Francis P. (April 1875, died at twenty-seven days old), Elizabeth (January 1, 1876, died of pneumonia at twenty-nine days old), a second Michael (February 13, 1879). James became a trolley conductor and Michael worked at a livery stable. Two of Michael's nieces, Lizzie Wall, age twenty, and Annie Wall, age seventeen, were killed in a fuse factory explosion in Simsbury on January 16, 1879.⁷¹

The 1860 census shows that Michael Wall had personal property worth \$450 and that he was a farm laborer. In 1870 his personal property was still valued at \$450. By 1880 he and his family lived next door to Gift Giver William Starrs and his wife Rose on Mountain Road in Tariffville. That year was the first in which he was listed as a farmer. The Census of Agriculture that year showed him with a modest farm of twelve acres: six tilled, four meadow and two woodland. The farm was valued at \$1,440. He had one horse. The three cows, two calves and twenty-five chickens produced 325 pounds of cheese and 150 dozen eggs. The land yielded twenty-five bushels of corn, twenty bushels of rye, a hundred bushels of Irish potatoes, four tons of hay and ten cords of wood.⁷² From these assets he raised enough money by 1892 to pay for a stained glass window in the new church. The passing of his wife and so many of his children only a short time before the rebuilding of the church had to have been difficult. Michael Wall died of apoplexy on September 25, 1904, and was buried with the rest of his

family in the church cemetery.⁷³

Gift of Michael Connelly

Michael S. Connelly was the last of the emigrant Gift Givers to arrive in America. He was born in County Galway, Ireland, on September 27, 1838, son of Martin Connelly.⁷⁴ His wife, Ann Diviney, daughter of James and Mary Diviney, was also born County Galway, but where he met and married her could not be found.⁷⁵ He emigrated to the United States about 1864 and located in Raritan, New Jersey for a time. At least one of his children, Sara Ann was born there, on February 7, 1878. The family arrived in Tariffville sometime after 1880, making him the last Gift Giver to join the parish of St. Bernard's. The fact that two major railroad lines went through Tariffville may have been what brought Michael, a railroad worker, up from New Jersey.⁷⁶ Michael's wife Ann died in Simsbury of Bright's disease on May 12, 1888.⁷⁷ On November 29, 1892, Michael Connelly, age fifty-two, and Ellen Baldwin Wall, age thirty, were married by Father Walsh. It was the second marriage for both of them.⁷⁸ Ellen, who came from County Waterford in southeastern Ireland, was the sister of Gift Giver John Baldwin and sister-in-law of Gift Giver Michael Wall. Michael had at least five children with either Ann or Ellen, three girls and two boys.

Ellen Baldwin Wall Connelly died on August 22, 1913, at the age of sixty-eight.⁷⁹ Michael would live another twenty years. He moved to Suffield in 1914 to be with his daughter Sarah, who by then had married William Cusick, whose family is often mentioned in parish annual reports in conjunction with three other Gift Giver families: Quinn, Baldwin and Condon. For a time Michael Connelly was a railroad watchman. When he died in Suffield of a cerebral hemorrhage on August 22, 1934, at the age of ninety-five, he had outlived all the other Gift Givers.⁸⁰ His obituary stated that he was the oldest resident of Suffield and had lived there twenty years. He was active in St. Bernard's parish and after moving to Suffield was active in Sacred Heart Parish. He was buried in St. Bernard's cemetery next to his first wife, Ellen and daughter Sarah. He was predeceased by a son, M. Joseph, who died on August 19, 1901, age eighteen, and his daughter Sara Ann Cusick, who died of scarlet fever on January 20, 1925.⁸¹ He left two daughters and two sons: Mrs. James Garrity of Simsbury, Mrs. Anna Obare of Springfield, Massachusetts, Edward Connelly of Hartford and Patrick Connelly of Worcester, Massachusetts. He also left fifteen grandchildren and twenty-six great grandchildren.⁸²

Gift of Patrick Carroll

Patrick Carroll was born in the village of Fenry, County Roscommon, Ireland, in March 1822 to Thomas and Catherine (Brohancy) Carroll. In January 1848, at the age of twenty-four, he sailed for the United States on what he called a "tempestuous voyage" on the ship the *R.J. Skipper*. It took six weeks to cross the North Atlantic before arriving at the Port of New London, Connecticut. More is known about Patrick than any other Gift Giver because his biography appeared in the *Encyclopedia of Connecticut Biography*.⁸³

Like a number of other Gift Givers, Patrick became a railroad worker, first in Rhode Island and later in the Connecticut towns of Willimantic and Bristol before ending up in East Granby in 1857. During his first three years in town he lived near the Central New England Railroad station. Eventually he bought the farm owned by the Kelly family estate that was located at the northwest corner of Floydville Road and Hartford Avenue (Rt. 189). In time the corner became known as Carroll's Corner. Patrick worked the farm at the same time he was the railroad section master. He worked for the

railroad until 1899, some forty-two years.⁸⁴

Patrick married Mary Hyland sometime around 1856. She was born on February 18, 1830 and she came to America from County Cavan, Ireland in 1850. Patrick and Mary, like so many other Gift Givers, lived long and prosperous lives here in America. Their children included: Thomas F. (born February 24, 1859, died March 28, 1889, at age thirty), John J. (July 12, 1861, married Jennie Hughes, resided in Westfield, Massachusetts, was a railroad conductor and died in a railroad accident on May 22, 1913), Edward P. (October 8, 1863, married Ann Ryan and later was also a resident of Westfield), William, P. (September 1866, died November 4, 1866), Catherine (April 1, 1868, married Charles O'Toole on October 3, 1899, and died on April 23, 1913), Mary A. (October 22, 1872, died 1966) and Charlie T (June 21, 1874, died on June 20, 1938). Michael also may have had a sister or sister-in-law, Elizabeth Carroll, who was the baptismal sponsor for his daughter in 1868.⁸⁵

In the 1870 and 1880 censuses Patrick was listed as a railroad division master, but by 1900 his occupation was given as a farmer. His farm of twenty-two acres was included in the agricultural census of 1880. It was modest when compared to other East Granby farms, but comparable to the farms of his fellow Gift Givers. It was valued at \$1,500 and produced goods valued at \$375, while he retained his railroad job.⁸⁶ The farm was very productive, as was the additional twenty acres that he purchased on Hatchett Hill Road that had the Central New England Railroad track running through it. He also acquired ten acres on top of Hatchett Hill and one other parcel. When Patrick died on June 5, 1911, he left an estate valued at \$2,500 to his wife and partner of fifty-five years.⁸⁷ He was eighty-nine years old. Mary died twelve years later on April 23, 1923 at the age of ninety-two, leaving two daughters, two sons and at least two grandchildren.⁸⁸

"The Life of Patrick Carroll was plainly, quietly lived, but so long as it was necessary he continued in active labor, then retired to a contented old age, happy in the community and no man had a better record as a man of honest, upright live. He took interest in town affairs, always voting the Democratic ticket as a principle.... Thus the life of this quiet, domestic, home-loving man...was lived simply, but usefully and honorably. He possessed the sterling principles of character, loved liberty and died true to his ideals."⁸⁹ Such sentiments were the mark of most of the Gift Givers of St. Bernard's Parish.

While this article is about a dozen people of faith and their families whose names are prominently placed on the stained glass windows in St. Bernard's Church, they are not the only members of the parish who gave unselfishly to their beloved parish when the present church was built. There is no list of these people, but the cost of the church was high and the insurance from the second church did not cover the new construction expenses. Many donations were needed for the building itself, for the altar and for other sacred interior effects. There were many unnamed Gift Givers. The gift giving tradition continued into the 1980s at St. Bernard's, when the church building underwent a much needed complete renovation. To finance it, parishioners answered the call and raised over \$500,000. The many names of those who contributed are shown on a plaque on the rear of the church. My wife and I are proud to be among these modern Gift Givers to the beautiful church on the hill, St. Bernard's of Tariffville.

By Thomas F. Howard

Notes

1. Church historian Arthur J. Hayes Sr., in a presentation to the St. Bernard's Parish Society on October 3, 1956 (reported in the *Springfield Republican* of October 5, 1956) disproved the notion that the first church on Mountain Road burned down. He showed photographs and a letter dated Sept 29, 1956, from a former pastor, Father Connor, that indicated the building was, in fact, raffled off to a Mr. McMahon of Unionville, who then moved the church to Unionville and made it into a residence and business on South Main Street. The land for the second church was purchased in 1876, the cornerstone was blessed October 29, 1876, and the church was dedicated to St. Bernard on November 23, 1879.
2. The cause of the fire that started at 1:00 A.M. on March 1, 1892, was never proven, but speculation blamed Lenten candles. The damage exceeded insurance on the building by \$2000-\$4000. See *Hartford Courant*, March 2, 1892.
3. Obituary of Thomas Walsh in the *Willimantic Chronicle Weekly*, February 20, 1889. Headstones in the family plot in St. Joseph's Cemetery, Willimantic.
4. Hartford Archdiocese Chancery Archives (hereafter cited as HACA), Register of Clergy, Priests Ordained 1852-1903 for the Hartford Diocese, 10.
5. The land purchased for the new church was next to the parish rectory on Maple Street. Bishop McMahon blessed the cornerstone of the new church on September 25, 1892. Though the church was open in 1893, it was not dedicated until May 1895. See Joseph W. Duffy, *Hartford's Catholic Legacy: Parishes*, (Hartford: Archdiocese of Hartford, 1994), 371.
6. HACA, Record Group 300, Bishops Correspondence, January 1909.
7. *Catholic Transcript*, September 3, 1914:1.
8. Simsbury Deaths, 2:499.
9. HACA, Tariffville, St. Bernard's, Annual Reports, 1881-1890 (hereafter cited as Parish Report). Also Simsbury Probate Records, 23:380.
10. Simsbury Deaths, 2:498. Obituary of Rev. John F. Quinn, *Hartford Daily Courant*, December 20, 1890.
11. Ibid.
12. U. S. Census, 1860, Hartford, 258, 916.
13. Obituary of Sister Rosalie Quinn [Mary E. Quinn], *Hartford Courant*, December 22, 1949.
14. HACA, Collinsville, St. Patrick's Parish, Annual Reports, 1892-93.
15. HACA, Record Group 300 RIP, Pl-Re, Box 29.
16. Ibid.
17. *Commemorative Biographical Record of Hartford County, Connecticut...*, (Chicago: J.H. Beers & Co., 1901), 664.
18. Headstone, St. Bernard's Cemetery. Charles R. Hale, comp., *Headstone Inscriptions of Simsbury, Connecticut*, (n.s., 1937), 116.
19. Ibid. U.S. Census, 1860, Granby, 37.
20. U.S. Census, 1900, Granby, Enumeration District (hereafter ED) 138:2A.
21. U.S. Census, 1870, Granby, 13, 414.
22. U.S. Census of Agriculture, 1870, Granby, 428-30.
23. U.S. Census of Agriculture, 1880, Granby, 10.
24. Correspondence with Barney Thompson, Reference Librarian, Indiana State Library, February 9, 1999.
25. Simsbury Marriages, vol. 1864, November 15.
26. HACA, Register of Clergy, 9.
27. Granby Deaths, vol. 1901, 520. Obituary of Thomas Winters, *Hartford Courant*, November 27, 1901.
28. Headstone, St. Bernard's Cemetery. Obituary of Bridget Winters, *Hartford Times*, August 4, 1905.
29. Ibid.
30. U.S. Census, 1900, Simsbury, ED 217:20B. Simsbury Marriages, vol. 1, 1858.
31. U.S. Census, 1880, Simsbury, 24. U.S. Census of Agriculture, 1880, Simsbury, 12.
32. Simsbury Deaths, 2:538.
33. Simsbury Probate Records, 26:458, 27:80.
34. *Farmington Valley Herald* (hereafter FVH), February 9, 1923, 8.
35. Ibid.
36. Conversation with St. Bernard's sextant and historian John Doyle, August 1998.
37. U.S. Census, 1900, Simsbury, ED 217:19B.
38. Obituary of Ellen Baldwin, FVH, September 18, 1919, 1.
39. Simsbury Marriages, vol. 1, 1870, May 4.
40. U.S. Census, 1900, Simsbury, ED 217:19B.
41. U.S. Agricultural Census, 1880, Simsbury, 17.
42. Simsbury Probate Records, 27:548-49.

43. Obituary of John Baldwin, *Hartford Times*, March 16, 1911.
44. Simsbury Probate Records, 28:156. Obituary of Ellen Baldwin, FVH, September 18, 1919, 1.
45. Simsbury Probate Records, 27:545-49; 28:152-57.
46. Obituary of Monsignor John F. Baldwin, FVH, September 18, 1919, 1. Headstone, St. Bernard's Cemetery.
47. U.S. Censuses, 1860-1920, Simsbury and East Granby. Marriage and death records of the children.
48. Ruth Cost Duncan, comp., *Connecticut Common School Register, Tariffville Primary and Grade School, 1866-1868*, (n. p., March 1997).
49. U.S. Agricultural Census, 1870, East Granby, 3-4/268.
50. East Granby Probate Records 1:121.
51. U.S. Census of Agriculture, 1880, East Granby, 3/1031.
52. Connecticut State Registers, 1929-1953, Town Officers: East Granby.
53. U.S. Census, 1880, Simsbury, ED57:33. Simsbury Marriages. vol. 1, 1869.
54. Headstone, St. Bernard's Cemetery.
55. U.S. Census, 1910, Simsbury, ED 237:31B.
56. Simsbury Marriages, 2:304.
57. Headstone, St. Bernard's Cemetery.
58. Simsbury Marriages, 2:304.
59. Simsbury Deaths, 2:504.
60. Civil War Unit Histories, New York State Archives, New York, 58.
61. Headstone, St. Bernard's Cemetery.
62. U.S. Census, 1880, Simsbury, ED 57:590.
63. U.S. Census, 1900, Simsbury, ED:217. Simsbury Deaths, 2:512.
64. Obituary of James Convey, *Hartford Times*, September 6, 1906.
65. Simsbury Probate Records, 26:233.
66. Simsbury Town Records, Book 5:225.
67. U.S. Census, 1860, Simsbury, House 101; 1870, Simsbury, 41.
68. U.S. Census of Agriculture, Simsbury, 5/421.
69. U.S. Census, 1900, ED 217:15A.
70. Simsbury Marriages, vol. 1, 1863.
71. Simsbury Deaths, 2:486, 500, 494, 494, 460, 473 respectively.
72. U.S. Census of Agriculture, 1880, Simsbury, 17.
73. Simsbury Deaths, 2:528.
74. Connecticut State Department of Public Health (hereafter CSDPH), Roll D112, Death Certificate 2138.
75. Simsbury Deaths, 2:494.
76. The New Haven & Northampton Railroad (also known as the Canal Railroad) had local stops in Weatogue, Simsbury and Granby, and a branch into Tariffville. The Central New England Railroad (founded as the Connecticut Western Railroad) went from Hartford into New York State at Millerton. Its local stops were Tariffville, Hoskins, Simsbury and Stratton Brook, with a branch from Tariffville to Springfield, Massachusetts. See Gregg M. Turner and Melancthon W. Jacobus, *Connecticut Railroads: An Illustrated History* (Hartford: The Connecticut Historical Society, 1986), 61-63, 129-154.
77. Simsbury Deaths, 2:494.
78. Simsbury Marriages, 2:319.
79. Headstone, St. Bernard's Cemetery. The discrepancy in Mrs. Connelly's age in the records should be noted.
80. Ibid.
81. CSDPH, Roll D 86, Death Certificate 182.
82. Obituary of Michael Connelly, *Hartford Times*, August 22, 1934.
83. *Encyclopedia of Connecticut Biography*, 10 vols. (n.p.: American Historical Society, 1917-23), 7:160-161. Hereafter ECB.
84. Ibid., 160.
85. Ibid., 162.
86. U.S. Census of Agriculture, 1880, East Granby, 10.
87. East Granby Probate Records, 4:349.
88. Headstone, St. Bernard's Cemetery.
89. ECB, 161. Obituary of Patrick Carroll, *Hartford Times*. June 6, 1911.

SGHRL Updates

Volunteers Needed: Volunteers are needed to abstract and record obituaries from current issues of the *Hartford Courant* for our obituary card file. Librarian Stephen Simon reports that he frequently uses this file to find answers to requests for information about past residents of Simsbury. If you can give an hour or more a week or month, please call him at 658-5382 or e-mail genhist93@hotmail.com

Case Family Material: Arthur W. Sweeton III, our longtime member from Canton, has donated material to our archives concerning the Case family. We are much indebted to him, as the papers are invaluable sources for people looking into the history and genealogy of that family. Our sincere thanks go to Mr. Sweeton.

Computer Table: Shirley and George Damato have donated a computer table to the library. Librarian Stephen Simon is looking into bringing back the old computer so that we will be able to have a second Internet connection. Thank you to the Damatos for anticipating the need for a second table. We appreciate this and all your past help.

Gardening Help: Once again our self-starting volunteers have seen to it that we have pleasant surroundings. Eleanor Werle has weeded the foundation plantings and Joyce Cahill has taken care of watering the plants. You two have our continuing thanks!

Fall Talk: Come to the library to hear Carol Laun speak about the Collections of the Salmon Brook Historical Society on Saturday, November 19, 11:00 A.M. Free and open to all!

Winter Hours & Closings

From Thursday, November 10, 2005, through Saturday, February 25, 2006, the library will be **open** on Thursday, Friday and Saturday from 9:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M.

The library will be **closed** on Friday, November 4. Come see us at the Senior Center's Club & Activities Fair in Eno Memorial Hall, 10:30 A.M. to 1:30 P.M.

The library will be **closed** Thanksgiving Day, but **open** Friday, November 25 from 11:00 A.M. (late opening) to 3:00 P.M. and Saturday, November 26 from 9:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M.

The library will be **closed** from Saturday, December 14 through Wednesday, January 4, 2006.

Query: Looking to purchase *The Yankee Generation, A History of the Case Family in America* by Charles C. Case, University Press of America, 1981. ISBN 0-8191-1948-2; LOC #81-40638 (out of print); also, information to locate author. Please reply to Brice Case Oakley, 418-38th Place, Des Moines, Iowa 50312. 515-277-1749. briceoakley@netins.net

Some Recent Acquisitions

Canton Remembers: Incidents in Local History edited by Dr. and Mrs. Lawrence S. Carlton

Congregational Commonwealth: Connecticut, 1639-1662 by Mary Jeanne Anderson Jones (donated by Margaret Donohue)

The Descendants of Chauncey Pomeroy (1813-1843) of Bristol, Connecticut, and his Wife Harriet (Brown) Pomeroy Goodwin (1818-1904) compiled by Seth Pomeroy Holcombe (donated by the author)

The Descendants of William Phelps, Who Settled in Windsor, Connecticut, 1636-2005, 2 vols., compiled by Verne R. Spear (donated by the compiler)

The German Research Companion by Shirley J. Reimer

The Great Migration: Immigrants to New England, 1634-1635, Volume IV, I-L by Robert Charles Anderson

Nutmegger Index: An Index to Non-Alphabetical Articles and a Subject Index to The Connecticut Nutmegger Volumes 1-28, 1963-1996 by Helen S. Ullman (donated by Jean Perreault)

An Oral History Primer by Gary L. Shumway and William G. Hartley (donated by Jean Perreault)

Preparing a Personal History by William G. Hartley (donated by Jean Perreault)

A Record of the Inscriptions on the Tablets and Grave-Stones in the Burial-Grounds of Christ Church, Philadelphia compiled by Edward L. Clark (donated by Jean Perreault)

Register of the Empire State Society of the Sons of the American Revolution: 1899 (donated by Margaret Donohue)

The Thomas Lamonts in America by Corliss Lamont, et. al., (anonymous donation)

Microfilm: *Hale Collection of Connecticut Vital Records: Surname Index to Headstone Inscriptions and Newspaper Death Notices, Rey through Weaving* (30 reels)

Scottish Heritage

The bi-monthly newsletter of the Americas Branch of Scottish Clan MacThomas has recently been added to our file of periodicals. The specific ancestral names associated with Clan MacThomas are the Anglicized names Tam, Thom, Thomas, Thomson and their equivalents from the Gaelic: Combie, MacOmie, MacOmish, McColm, McComas, McComb, McCombe, McCombie, McComie and McComish. The Americas Branch of Clan MacThomas extends from coast to coast, with the treasurer in California, the convener in Minnesota and the bard, or secretary, here in Connecticut. The editor of this newsletter is Rod Mooney, a member of our library. Members who have Scottish ancestors may find articles of interest and, conversely, they are invited to submit articles concerning their Scottish roots for possible publication. We hope that adding this newsletter to our collection will further stimulate your interest in your Scottish ancestry.

Slainte Mhath! (Good Health!)

Special Fall Speaker

Carol Laun, Archivist
Salmon Brook Historical Society
Granby, Connecticut

"Collections of the Salmon Brook Historical Society"

Carol Laun will encourage you to research your family in Granby, which, until 1786, was part of Simsbury.

Saturday, November 19, 2005
11:00 A.M.
At the library

FREE AND OPEN TO ALL
Refreshments will be served.

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Stephen E. Simon, Librarian & Genealogist

Mary Jane Springman, Editor

