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**By: Thomas Hamilton Murray**

THE IRISH VANGUARD OF RHODE ISLAND.

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Irish settlers are found in Rhode Island at a very early period. They were contemporaneous with Roger Williams, John Clark, William Coddington, and other leading men and proved sturdy, energetic members of the community.

Some of these Irish pioneers doubtless came to Rhode Island as soldiers in the Indian wars, and when the latter "remained and went not away." Others, in all probability, came as settlers from St. Kitts, Jamaica, Montserrat, and Barbados. During Cromwell's atrocious regime in Ireland, thousands of Irish were transported not only to the continent of North America but also to the West Indies. Other thousands followed them, forced from home by the iniquitous English policy of extermination.

It is not at all unlikely that Rhode Island received many of these hardy refugees and became to them a land of asylum and permanent home. Nor can it reasonably be doubted that Connecticut, Plymouth, and "the Bay" likewise contributed Irish settlers to Rhode Island at early periods and in goodly numbers. In "Winthrop's Journal," under the date of 1635, is an entry indicating that even as early as that considerable immigration from Ireland to New England was underway. Thus readeth the entry:

"Another providence was in the voyage of Mr. Winthrop, the younger, and Mr. Wilson, into England, who, returning in the winter time, in a small and weak ship, bound for Barnstable, were driven by foul weather upon the coast of Ireland, not known by any in the ship, and were brought, through many desperate dangers, into Galloway<sup>[5]</sup> [Galway] where they parted, Mr. Winthrop taking his journey overland to Dublin, and Mr. Wilson by sea. His ship was forced back by a tempest to Kinsale. Mr. Wilson being in Ireland, gave much satisfaction to the Christians there about New England. Mr. Winthrop went to Dublin, and from thence to Antrim in the North and came to the house of Sir John Clotworthy, the evening before the day when divers godly persons were appointed to meet at his house, to confer about their voyage to New England, by whom they were thoroughly informed of all things and received great encouragement to proceed on their intended course."

Sometimes immigrants from Ireland have welcomed to New England and at other times the contrary was the case.

Under the date of September 25, 1634, the Massachusetts records have this entry: "It is ordered that the Scottish and Irish gentlemen wch intends to come hither shall have the liberty

to sit down in any place Vpp Merimacke River, not possessed by any.” In the Massachusetts records under the date of 1640, is another interesting entry, to wit: “It is ordered that the goods of the persons come from Ireland shall be free from this rate [tax].” And a marginal heading reads: “Irish goods now land free from ye rat[e].”

In the records of Massachusetts, 1652, we find that one David Sellick having craved pardon “for his offense in bringing some of the Irish men on shore, hath his fine remitted, so as the first optunite be taken to send them out of this jurisdiction.” But where could they be sent? Only to some place where they would be likely to get better reception. In this connection, Rhode Island, the refuge of so many oppressed by “the Bay,” would naturally suggest itself, at least to a portion of the Irish immigrants thus proceeded against. The writer inclines to the belief that a number of these Irish, being refused permission to reside elsewhere in New England, finally located in Rhode Island.

### **The Early Larkins of Rhode Island.**

The historic Irish name of Larkin[6] is found in Rhode Island as early as 1655. So far as known, Edward Larkin was the first of name to locate in the colony.[7] In the year mentioned, he was of Newport, R. I. In 1661, he had a quarter share of land in what is now Westerly, R. I. In 1663, he was commissioner from Newport in the “General Court of Commissioners” held at Providence that year. He was an inhabitant of Westerly as early as 1669. In 1671, 111he and John Mackoone were “called on to see how they stand as to their fidelity to his Majestie and this Colony.” Perhaps these two Irishmen had not hesitated on occasion to forcibly express their opinion regarding English tyranny in Ireland.

Edward Larkin had five children, Mehitable, Hannah, Edward, Roger, and John. The family prospered and in time became very influential throughout the colony. Mehitable, who was probably named after her mother or some of the latter’s relatives, married and had five children. Hannah died without issue, Edward, Jr., married twice and had eleven children, Roger married twice and had four children, John had one child. Roger’s estate inventoried £742, 1s., 9d. It included “2 linen wheels.” In 1755, his widow became an inhabitant of Richmond, R. I. Edward Larkin, Jr., and wife of Westerly sold 100 acres of land to Samuel Lewis in 1701.

In 1705–’07–’15, Edward Larkin, Jr., was a deputy to the General Assembly. His will was proved in 1741. It gives “To wife £100, all household goods and improvements of homestead and profits of the sawmill, for life, to bring up the young children, and then the said homestead to go to son Stephen, but the goods and £100 to be free and clear to wife. To son Stephen, the homestead at the death of his mother. To son Nicholas, £100 and 50 acres, at the death of wife, and saw and grist mill. To son Daniel, a farm at age. To their daughter, Elizabeth Babcock, 10 acres where she lives with a house and orchard for life, and then to one of her sons as she sees fit. To daughter Penelope, £30. To daughters Tabitha and Lydia, each £50 at eighteen. To son Nicholas, 10 acres of salt marsh. To son Joseph, 50 acres adjoining land formerly given him. To

grandson Joseph, my son Edward's son, 5s., his father having had. To sons John and Samuel, 5s., they have had. To sons, John and Samuel, rest of estate." The inventory showed, among other things, books, three beds, a pewter, a loom, a linen wheel, a woolen wheel, a card, seven cows, two pairs of oxen, a horse, 37 sheep, etc.

The will of Mary Larkin, widow of Edward, Jr., was proved in 1743. It gives "To son Nicholas, £50, and bonds against him if he is not able to pay them. To son David, great bible, and the mortgage to be cleared off his land, and a house built 16 feet square if he lives to be 21 years of age. To daughter Tabitha, a horse. To daughter Lydia, a little bible and £100. To daughters Tabitha and Lydia, all wearing apparel and a double portion of what is left over the debts. To three sons, the rest equally."

Descendants of Edward Larkin, the original immigrant, are still found in the state. Many of them take notable pride in their Irish ancestry. Since the first Edward's time, other Irish Larkins have come to Rhode Island and have done their share toward the upbuilding of the state.

#### **William Hefernan, an Early Rhode Islander.**

William Hefernan, or Heffernan, was another early Rhode Island settler of whose Irish origin there can be no doubt. He is first heard from at Newport, but in 1671 was an inhabitant of Pettaquamscutt. In May of the latter year "His Majestie's Court of Justices" met at Pettaquamscutt and "ordered that a warrant be issued out to William Hefernan, to warne in the inhabitants of this Plantation to attend tomorrow morning, at six of the clock, at the house of Mr. Jireh Bull."

Notwithstanding the early hour and short notice, the people assembled. "Mr. William Hefernan was chosen and engaged to the office and place of a Conservator of the Peace in joint commission with Mr. Samuel Wilson and Mr. Jireh Bull." In 1674, Hefernan is found with his three sons residing in Wickford, R. I. Later he appears to have taken up his residence in Newport, for on August 25, 1676, he was present as a witness at a court martial there on Indians charged with being implicated in King Philip's designs. A William Hefernan, Jr., was admitted a freeman of the colony by the general assembly in 1724, and another of the name in 1746. The name<sup>[8]</sup> is variously spelled Hefernan and Heffernan. Now and then it appears as Hefferman and Heffermon, which forms are evidently derivative. John Heffernan of Newport was admitted as a freeman in 1759. Descendants of William Hefernan, once numerous throughout Rhode Island, are now believed to be extinct.

#### **Michael Kelly, of the Island of Conanicut.**

The island of Conanicut is situated in Narragansett bay. It has a total length of about nine miles and a width of from one to two miles. It is just within the bay from the Atlantic ocean.

Beaver Tail light on its extreme southern point overlooks the sea, and that portion of the

island's coast frequently resounds with the thunder of the breakers. Indeed, most of the island's shore is exposed more or less to the billows driven in by old ocean.

The island derives its name from Canonicus, an Indian sachem who formerly resided there. It is, of course, a part of the state of Rhode Island and is comprised in the town of Jamestown. The latter was incorporated in 1678 and named in honor of King James II, then heir to the throne which he ascended two years later. Conanicut is about midway in the bay between Newport, Middletown, and Portsmouth on the east, and North Kingstown and the old District of Narragansett on the west. The first purchase of land on the island by whites was made of the Indians in 1657 by Benedict Arnold and William Coddington.

Michael Kelly figures as a freeman in 1667. His wife's name was Isabel. In 1669, he had become prominent on the island. Michael has been especially fortunate in that, so far as known, no one has ever had the temerity to label him "English" or "Scotch." In 1669, he and two others were commissioned by the "Council" to prepare the inhabitants against possible surprises or attacks by the Indians. The order for this action bears the date of August 26, and reads thus:

"Whereas there are several out plantations in this Colony, which are not included in any township, and they being as liable or rather more liable to danger and invasion than where there is more strength; and the Council seeing it incumbent on them to provide for their safety, doe hereby order that the Conservators of the Peace at Pettaquomscut, Narragansett or Acquidneessitt or Block Island, and such persons as the Council shall appoint on the Island Quononicutt, [Conanicut], doe assemble the inhabitants of each of those places and consider among themselves what may be most suitable for their defense and preservation against any mission or insurrection of the Indians, and forthwith to put it in execution; and that a copy of this order is sent to the first Conservator of the Peace in each respective place, and the persons appointed for Quononicutt."

Two days later the following entry appears in the records:

"The persons appointed to execute the Council's order of the 11426th inst., for the Island of Quononicut, are John Homes, John Remington, and Michael Kelly."

The fact that Kelly was one of those selected indicates that he must have been a man of considerable influence at the time. In the will of ex-Governor Brenton, probated in 1674, mention is made of "Michael Kaly," who was no doubt the same individual here described. The following extracts are taken from the will:

"To daughter Sarah Brenton, a farm in Conanicut, in possession of Michael Kaly with the house, etc... To Michael Kaly, 100 acres on Merrimack... To Michael Kaly,  $\frac{2}{3}$  and to his wife,  $\frac{1}{3}$  of £15 due from land granted him at Pattacomscott."

In 1680, Kelly was taxed £5, 18s. 7½d. He died that year. It is not known that he left any

descendants.

### **Thomas Casey, a Pioneer of Newport, R. I.**

Thomas Casey, a Rhode Island settler, was born in about 1636 and died in 1719. That Ireland was his native land is generally conceded. A suggestion has been set up in some quarters, however, that he was of English parentage.

To support this idea, a “tradition” is produced. Yet Casey as a family name is Irish of the Irish. For centuries it has been prominent in the east and south of Ireland. It derives from O’Cathasaigh which has been anglicized O’Casey, Cahasy, Casey, Casie, and Case. That intent on making out an English, rather than an Irish, parentage for Thomas Casey, the immigrant, declares that “By tradition, he was a son of one of the English planting families in Ulster county, Ireland. His father and mother and all his family were destroyed in the Irish massacre [1641], he, a child, was saved by his uncle and carried to his relatives in Gloucestershire. It is further asserted that he sailed for America from Plymouth, England.”

The “tradition” here noted is radically defective. In the first place, there is no Ulster county in Ireland. Perhaps the province of Ulster was what the writer was aiming at. In the second place, the “Irish massacre” mentioned never happened. For a long period, writers in the English interest asserted that on October 23, 1641, the Irish Catholics rose and slaughtered in cold blood thousands of English and other Protestants in the country. But the charge is now rejected as untrue by impartial historians. W. J. O’Neill Daunt brands the story of such a massacre as “a thorough and most impudent falsehood,” and as being another of those “stupendous 115calumnies” circulated by the enemies of the Irish people. Other authoritative writers similarly testify.

“It has been represented,” says Prendergast, a Protestant,[10] “that there was a general massacre [by the Irish], surpassing the horrors of the Sicilian Vespers, the Parisian Nuptials, and Matins of the Valtelline, but nothing is more false.”

Consequently, as there was no massacre by the Irish Catholics, then as charged, Thomas Casey’s “father and mother and all his family” could not have perished in it. In February 1642, however, a dreadful massacre was ordered—not by the Irish Catholics, but by the English lord’s justices. The mandate was issued to Lord Ormund, the lord’s justices signing the fearful instructions, being Dillon, Rotheram, Loftus, Willoughby, Temple, and Meredith.

The mandate for the massacre as issued to Ormund was, “That his lordship does endeavor with his majesty’s forces to wound, kill, slay, and destroy, by all the ways and means he may, all the said rebels, their adherents, and relievers; and burn, waste, spoil, consume, destroy, and demolish all the places, towns, and houses, where the said rebels are, or have been, relieved or harbored, and all the hay and corn there; and kill and destroy all the men there inhabiting

capable to bear arms.”

The orders were only too well obeyed. Men, women, and children perished alike. The English soldiery made no distinction between age or sex. In their savage fury, they committed massacre after massacre. The English garrison of Carrickfergus alone murdered 3,000 men, women, and children in that neighborhood. Lord Broghill perpetrated like cruelties in Cork and Waterford. In County Wicklow, Sir Charles Coote was guilty of a massacre so horrible that after it, to use his own language, “not a child, were it but a hand high, was left alive.”

It is probable that the family of Thomas Casey, the Rhode Island settler, were Irish Catholics, and if they perished in a massacre it is quite possible it was in the one thus inaugurated by the English. It is quite likely that the author of the “tradition” and “Ulster county” got matters somewhat mixed. Hosts of Irish Catholics fled the country during the period mentioned, and if Thomas Casey’s uncle did so, taking the child with him, it would be entirely in accord with the facts and conditions here described. The statement that Thomas eventually sailed from Plymouth, England, if he did so sail, has no particular significance and proves nothing.

Thomas Casey is first heard of in Rhode Island at Newport. His wife’s name was Sarah. They had, so far as known, three children, Thomas, Adam, and Samuel. In 1692, the father and his son, Thomas, witnessed a deed given by James Sweet of East Greenwich, R. I., to Thomas Weaver of Newport. Adam Casey, another son, was a lieutenant in 1742, and in 1750 purchased 50 acres in Scituate, R. I. In 1760, Adam and his son, Edward Casey, sold 100 acres to Nathan Brown of Swanzey, Mass., and removed to Coventry, R. I. Adam Casey’s will was proved in 1765.

Samuel, the third son of Thomas Casey, the immigrant, lived at different times in Newport, Kings Town, and Exeter, R. I. He held various town offices. At his death, his personal estate inventoried £2,803 18s. 6d. He had six children; his brother, Thomas, four; and Adam, five. Several members of this noted family have been distinguished in American civil and military life. The family is still represented in Rhode Island.

#### **John Dailey and Other Early Rhode Islanders.**

John Dailey, in 1689, bought 90 acres of land in Providence, R. I., and the year following exchanged certain lands with Ann Pratt. Dailey is an anglicized form of O’Dalaighe.[11] In Irish history the O’Dalys figure as powerful chieftains. Some of the names were hereditary poets and antiquarians to the MacCarthys Mor. John Dailey here mentioned of Providence had four children, Joseph, Samuel, Elizabeth, and one other, a daughter. In 1703, he deeded to Joseph for “divers good causes,” 40 acres. In 1718, Joseph sold 57½ acres to Peter Ballou with a house, orchard, etc., for £336. Some years previously, Samuel had sold 40 acres to Zachariah Jones for £20. John Dailey, Sr., died about 1719.

**John Maccoone** was another Irish settler of Rhode Island. In the records, the name is variously

written Macoone, Mackoone, McCoon, Mackown, etc. Late generations have sometimes abbreviated it to Coon or Cooney. It probably comes from the old Irish MacCoonan. John, the immigrant, was a resident of Westerly, R. I., as early as 1669. Ten years later he is recorded as taking the oath of allegiance. In 1681, he officiated as a juryman. He had, at least, two children, Isabel and John. In some accounts he is said to have had two others, who went from Westerly about 1695 and settled at Oyster Bay, L. I. Isabel married Edward Bliven and had five children. Her death occurred in 1753. Her brother John received a grant of 100 acres in 1692 and 100 more in 1709. In 1724, he and his wife, Ann, deeded land to their sons, John and Daniel.

**John Malavery** was a resident of Providence as early as 1687. He had 56 acres of land and other property. In 1704, he had 12 acres laid out in exchange with the town. He died about 1712. His son John was the executor. The inventory included 18 loads of hay, 14 barrels of cider, a gun, a sword, etc. John Malavery, Jr., of Providence, died in 1718. In his will, he desires his wife to provide things fit and comfortable for his mother in her old age and authorizes his wife to raise £30, which shall be levied out of his estate. The rest of the movable estate to their wife and income from land and use of dwelling house for life, while his widow. To sons, John and Nathaniel, equally, but if they died before of age, then the land was to go to Michael Inman, David Phillips, and Daniel Mathewson, "my three sisters' three sons." The inventory included "4 guns, 2 swords." A John Malavery of the third generation married Susannah Arnold in 1736.

At a session of the general assembly at Providence, in 1685, **Joseph Devett**, also spelled Devitt in the records, was a member of a committee appointed to consider and report concerning a petition for settling a "Plantation in the Narragansett and Niantick countries." The difference between the names Devitt and McDevitt is not great.

**Owen Higgins** was a resident of Newport, R. I., very early. His wife was born in 1640. In 1701, his son Richard is recorded as a freeman in Newport.

**Charles MacCarthy**, a Founder of East Greenwich, R. I.

Charles MacCarthy was a resident of Rhode Island in 1677. When he came to the colony is unknown. He resided on the island of St. Christopher, otherwise known as St. Kitts, before arriving in Rhode Island, a fact mentioned in his will. Some of the recording clerks of those days were not particularly brilliant in writing proper names, Irish or otherwise. They appear to have in a way adopted the phonetic idea of spelling, that is, according to sound. But it frequently happened that some names sounded differently to different clerks and thus, as in the case of Charles MacCarthy, we have a variety of spelling. At the same time, it should be said, in justice to the clerks, that there were instances, no doubt when they should not be held responsible for variations that appear. Orthography was not fixed then as now.

The Rhode Island pioneer whom we are treating has had his name rendered as Macarte,

Macarta, Macarty, Mackarte, and Mecarty. In his will it is “Macarte,” but whether that was the form authorized by him, or whether it was the work of the clerk who drew up the will, cannot now be determined. The same name applied to other early Rhode Island people is also recorded as Maccartee and McCartie. The style “Mac Carthy,” used, for the sake of uniformity, in the caption of this paper, and in the text, is that common to the MacCarthys Mor, the MacCarthys Reagh, the MacCarthys Glas, and other grand divisions of this great Irish clan.

Charles, the Rhode Island settler, had a brother who went from Ireland to Spain. This brother had been exiled and may have been among the Irish troops who, in 1652, after surrendering to Cromwell and Ireton, were allowed to depart and enlist in the Spanish service. These troops embarked for Spain at Kinsale, Waterford, Galway, Limerick, and Bantry. With them also went many of the Irish nobility and gentry who had been ruthlessly dispossessed of their estates. In more propitious times some of these exiles returned from Spain. Charles’s brother did so and from Kinsale wrote to Charles whom he was supposed to be still in St. Christopher, urging him to return to Ireland. But Charles had, in the meantime, left St. Christopher and was probably then in Rhode Island. Though long delayed, the letter finally reached its destination, but Charles never went back nor, it is believed, did he and his brother ever meet again.

In 1677, Charles was one of a party of forty-eight settlers to whom a grant of five thousand acres, to be called East Greenwich, was made by the general assembly of Rhode Island. The grant was awarded largely for services rendered during King Philip’s War (1675–’76). This would seem to indicate that Charles MacCarthy had been a participant in that war and it is quite within the bounds of probability that he had seen military service, too, in the Old Land. At a session of the general assembly held at Newport, R. I., May 1677, it was

Ordered that a certain tract of land in some convenient place in the Narragansett country, shall be laid forth into one hundred acre shares, with the house lots, for the accommodation of so many of the inhabitants of this Colony are in need of land, and the General Assembly shall judge fit to be supplied.

It was likewise enacted that the said tract be laid forth to contain 5,000 acres. Of this, 500 were to be laid in some place near the sea, as convenient as may be for a town, which said 500 acres “shall be divided into 50 house lots and the remainder of the 5,000, being 4,500, shall be divided into 50 equal shares or great divisions.”

It was further decreed that the persons to whom the grant was made have the rights, liberties, and privileges of a town; also “that they, or so many of them as shall be then present, not being fewer than twelve, on the said land, [are] required and empowered to meet together upon the second Wednesday in April next and constitute a town meeting, by electing a Moderator and a Town Clerk, with such constables as to them shall seem requisite; and also to choose two persons their Deputies to sit in General Assembly, and two persons, one to serve on the Grand



Jury, and one on the Jury of Trials in the General Court of Trials.”

Thus was launched the town of East Greenwich. The founders, no doubt, included “men from all parts,” and if names may be taken as a criterion several of them, in addition to Charles MacCarthy, were from Ireland. The date of the incorporation of the town was October 31, 1677, the year following the close of King Philip’s War and the overthrow of the Narragansetts. Later, the boundaries of the town were enlarged by the addition of 35,000 acres on the western border. Facing a great bay, it was hoped by the founders that the town might in time equal or surpass Newport or Providence. In 1741, the town was divided and the western part was incorporated as West Greenwich. Both towns exist today, East Greenwich with a population of about 3,000, and West Greenwich with a population of between 600 and 700.

The most thickly settled part of East Greenwich is built mainly on a hillside and fronts Greenwich Bay. The town is a favorite summer resort. Some of the early settlers engaged in shipbuilding, and when the town was laid out two locations were set apart for shipyards. The persons named as incorporators of East Greenwich, including Charles MacCarthy, were each required to build within a year, on his lot, a house suitable for habitation, under pain of forfeiture. <sup>120</sup>It was also required that highways be provided “from the bay up into the country” convenient for settlement. In addition to MacCarthy, the founders included Philip Long, Thomas Dungen, and John Strainge—all three names typically Irish. Among the proprietors in 1700 was Anthony Long. About 1732, the town possessed stocks and whipping posts, pillories, irons for mutilating ears, branding faces, cropping, etc., and similar appliances rife at that period.

The records of the “General Assembly held at Newport, the 6th of May, 1679,” show that “Charles Mecarte” and two others “being freemen of the towns of East Greenwich, are admitted freemen of the Colony.” It does not appear that Charles ever married, at least the writer has met no record to that effect. Neither wife nor child is mentioned in the copy of the will extant. It is, of course, possible that he may have had both wife and children in the Old Land and that he survived them, but of that nothing definite is known. His will<sup>[13]</sup> is dated “the 18th day of February 1682,” and was witnessed by John Knight and Thomas Fry, Jr. It was the first will to be recorded in the probate record book of East Greenwich where it was entered by “John Spenser, Town Clark.” Written over two hundred years ago, its quaint phraseology is a source of much interest at the present time. The will thus begin:

Unto all Christian people unto whom these [presents] may com know yee that I Charles Macarte now of the town of Est Greenwich in the Colony of Rhod Island and providence plantations Being in perfect memory but weak in body doe make this my last will and testament.

First, he requests that all his debts be paid. Then he makes John Spenser, Jr., his lawful heir and bequeaths him “my house and Land or Lands in this Towne.” He designates John Spenser, Sr.,

“father to the aforesaid Spencer, Guardian to his son to teak care that my will be performed.”

One Pasco Whitford owed Charles a debt. This debt the latter cancels and, in addition, gives Whitford “half the sheep of mine in his keeping.” The other half he gives to Edward Carter, to whom he likewise bequeaths his arms, i. e., two guns, and a sword, and also his chest “with the lock and cea.” To Charles Heseltun, Jr., he bequeaths a young horse “that will be two yere old next Spring branded with IS on the shoulder.” To John Andrew is given “my biggest iron poot” [pot] and four narrow axes. His pewter he bequeaths Susanna Spencer, the same to be delivered to her when she is of age.

All his carpenter and joiner tools are given by the testator to William Spencer “which shall be reserved for him till he is capable unto mak youse of them,” or of age. After disposing of certain clothing and household goods to Susanna Spencer, Sr., he mentions “one piece of broadcloth that I had to make me a waistcoat”; this he gives to his heir. Unto Hannah Long, the younger, is given “one Heffer of three yere” old, to be delivered her at his decease, and to “John Garard,[14] a poor Countryman of mine” he gives “three bushels of corn to be paid him presently after my disease.” But one of the most striking passages of the entire will is the following:

I have a letter that came from my Brother from Kingsile [Kinsale] after his return from Spain Being forced from home in the war in which Letter he sent for me home, but the troubles in Cristifars at that time forced me from thence to New England and some hee herd, not of mee nor I of him... I will that letter with another [which] within it is be sent unto him with a letter to signify unto him how it hath been with me since and when and where I end my days.

Charles then provides that Richard Dunn of Newport, R. I., be added unto John Spencer, Sr., the first mentioned guardian, to carry out the provisions of the will, and “if either of these soo Before mentioned betrusted should die before that my hair is of the edge [age]; then he that doth survive shall have power, and my will is that he chooses one to him it being one that my hair doth approve of.” The will goes on to say that “My ould mere [mare] I give to Samuel Bennett and hir foule [foal] or the young mere I give unto Mychell Spenser ... and the rest of my Chatel Goodes and cattle [cattle] I give unto John Spenser Senior and all the depths down to me... As Concerning [concerning] the Land that I Give unto my hair and the house my will is that the land and house [be] unto him and his lawful haire forever ... and for the Conformation of this my will and that it may appear unto all parsons [persons] unto whom it may come I have sett to my hand and seal this 122psent 18th day of February 1682.” Charles died soon after, his will be entered in the town records in 1683–’84.

The orthography of Charles MacCarthy’s will must not be severely criticized. It was as correct as that found in the average document of the period in which he lived. Whether it was written by Charles or by someone acting for him, due allowance must be made for the times and conditions and for the fact that educational facilities were very meager then as compared with

those available at the present day.

It is a source of deep regret that so little is known about this Rhode Island pioneer. That he was a man of sturdy character, cannot be questioned. That he was worthy to rank as a founder of a town or a state must also be admitted. He plainly possessed traits and qualities entitling him to a place in the front rank of Rhode Island settlers.

And here we may indulge briefly in a retrospective glance at the status of the MacCarthys in the land of Erin. For from these, unquestionably, the Rhode Island pioneer was descended. Then we will touch upon certain "troubles in Cristifars" which may have been the same as those to which Charles MacCarthy alludes as having forced him to New England.

Burke, Ulster King of Arms, the great authority on the British and Irish peerages, declares that "few pedigrees in the British empire can be traced to a more remote or exalted source than that of the Celtic house of M'Carty." The learned Dr. O'Brien says that it was "the most illustrious of all those families whose names begin with Mac." It has also truthfully been declared that "The MacCarthys may proudly defy any other family in Europe to compete with them in antiquity, or accurate preservation of the records of their descent." Their patrimony was chiefly in Cork and Kerry, where they had strongholds for many centuries. They built over twenty castles there, many of them overlooking "the pleasant Bandon crowned with many a wood."

These castles were massively constructed, the towers and battlements being equal in grandeur and strength to those elsewhere in Europe. For a generation, after generation, they defied the attacks of time and the elements and proudly reared aloft their stately walls. The ruins of some of them still remain, crowned with ivy, and frequented by appreciative tourists. The MacCarthys have been Princes of Carbery, Earls of Clancarthy, Earls of Muskerry, Earls of Mountcashel, Viscounts of Valentia, and have also held other titles. Their history has been replete with chivalrous deeds, brave men, handsome women, noted clerics, generous benefactors, and whole-souled hospitality.

The MacCarthys were the dominant family in Desmond (South Munster), during the period of the Anglo-Norman invasion. The MacCarthy Mor, lord of the elder branch, was generally inaugurated in Kerry. The O'Sullivan Mor and the O'Donoghoe Mor presided at the ceremony. The hereditary judges of the McCarthy Mor were the MacEgans; his captains of war, the O'Rourkes; and his poets and antiquaries, the O'Dalys and O'Quinns. His feudatories also included the O'Donovans and O'Hurleys. Charles, who died in 1770, was styled "the last MacCarthy Mor." The arms of the family have thus been described: "Arg. a stag trippant, attired and unguled or." One branch of the family had as its motto: "Forti et fideli nihil difficile," and another: "Ex arduis perpetuum nomen." The motto of the MacCarthy Reagh was: "Fortis Ferox et celer." "The MacCarthys were a regal and princely house," observes Burke, and he states that at one period the head of the clan could muster 3,000 men-at-arms. The MacCarthys Reagh

constituted the second Sept of the clan in point of importance, while the MacCarthys Glas were also a strong branch of the family.

Dermot MacCarthy, feudal lord and founder of the house of Muskerry, was killed in 1367. Cormac MacCarthy, slain in 1494, had been lord of Muskerry for 40 years. Donoch MacCarthy Mor was, in 1556, created Earl of Clancare (Clancarthy), and Viscount Valentia. Cormac Oge MacCarthy became a viscount in 1628. There was a Ceallachan MacCarthy who married Elizabeth Fitzgerald, daughter of the Earl of Kildare, and died 1676. A Charles 124 MacCarthy, born about 1721, was a solicitor, seneschal of the manor of Macroom, recorder of Clonakilty, and clerk of the crown for the county of Cork. A Donoch MacCarthy, lord viscount Muskerry, was an Irish officer exiled to the continent in 1641–'42. He had commanded the king's forces in Munster against Cromwell. At the restoration of Charles II, Donoch returned to Ireland and contested the right of Florence and Charles McCarthy to the title and dignity of "MacCarthy Mor." He was created Earl Clancarthy and died in 1665.

It is to be regretted that we do not know the name of the brother of Charles MacCarthy, the Rhode Island settler—the one to whom he refers in his will as having written from Kinsale. Did we have access to that letter that Charles of Rhode Island received, the desired knowledge would, no doubt, be obtained. But at this distance of time, all efforts to locate the letter have failed.

It seems reasonable to conclude that the brother of the Rhode Island pioneer was a man of some prominence—possibly of much prominence. It has been suggested that he was Donoch, Earl Clancarthy, just mentioned, but this could hardly have been so, as the Earl died in 1665, and Charles of Rhode Island, when he made his will in 1682, speaks of his brother as still living.

There was another Donoch MacCarthy, a descendant of the first named, who was privately married when but sixteen years of age to Lady Elizabeth Spencer, daughter of Robert Spencer, Earl of Sunderland. It may be recalled, purely as a coincidence, that Charles MacCarthy of East Greenwich, R. I., was an intimate friend of the Spencers of that town and made one of them his heir. It is quite possible that John Spenser, the Rhode Island settler, and intimate friend of Charles MacCarthy, was an Irish officer who, like many other chivalrous spirits of his time, was obliged by the fortunes of war to leave Ireland and reside in other parts. On the arrival of James II, in Ireland (1688), this second Donoch MacCarthy was one of the Irish officers who received him at Kinsale. At the fall of Cork in 1690, MacCarthy was captured and imprisoned in the Tower of London. He had succeeded to the title of Earl Clancarthy and was a man of the immense estate. All this was forfeited owing to his adhesion to the cause of James II. In 1694, he escaped from the Tower and fled to France. Upon rashly going back to England in 1698 he was rearrested and exiled. He died in 1704 at a locality in Hamburg. If Charles MacCarthy of Rhode Island was "forced from home" at the same time as his brother, it would be interesting to know why one went to Spain and the other to the island of St. Christopher. The whole matter,

however, is wrapped in mystery. Charles tells us that his brother returned “from Spain,” which statement reminds us of a prominent fact. King Charles II in a famous declaration mentions a large number of Irish “restores,” who were to be given back their former estates in Ireland for having “Continued with Us or served faithfully under Our ensigns beyond the Seas.” Among these Irish restores is mentioned Col. Charles MacCarthy of County Cork, and Capt. Charles MacCarthy, also of Cork. In another place, Charles II mentions Charles James MacCarthy, Viscount Muskerry.

A fourth Charles MacCarthy is mentioned during the Cromwellian settlement as a “Papist,” whose property was to be confiscated. These four Charles MacCarthys were all Irish officers or leading gentlemen, and the Rhode Island settler may have been one of them.

Yet another point: Charles of Rhode Island tells us that his brother, who was again in Ireland, had written from Kinsale asking him to return. Why? It may be that Charles and his brother were both “restores,” as defined in the King’s Declaration above mentioned.

At what period Charles MacCarthy left Ireland and located in St. Christopher, or St. Kitts, is problematical. If we knew the time of his coming to New England we might be able to approximate the St. Kitts date. It is assumed, however, that he was in St. Kitts as early as 1650. In an old French atlas by Sanson, published that year, Montserrat is described as having been settled by the Irish. Rev. Andrew White, S. J., who accompanied the first colonists to Maryland, in 1634, makes a like statement. He adds that these Irish Catholics had gone first to Virginia, but being refused permission to land had taken possession of Montserrat. Large numbers of Irish are heard from in St. Kitts in 1650. They were visited by Father John Destriche (also written De Stritch) disguised as a trader to protect him from persecution, or even death, at the hands of the English officials who had no tolerance for a priest of the Church of Rome.

In time he collected on that and the neighboring islands a flock of 3,000 Catholics for whom he conducted religious services in the depths of the forest. Persecution at the hands of the English, however, soon broke up this condition of affairs and dispersed the Irish to New England and other parts along the coast. Were these the “troubles in Cristifars” that obliged Charles MacCarthy to leave that place? It is possible. Be that as it may, his coming was of benefit to Rhode Island, it being at a time when stout hearts, strong arms, and vigorous characters were especially desired in the colony.

#### **Early Maguires and Boyds of Rhode Island.**

Constant Maguire settled in Rhode Island prior to 1750. His first name as here given was probably an abbreviated form of Constantine. He was a native of the County Fermanagh, in Ireland, was evidently a man of education, and seems to have taken much interest in matters pertaining to genealogy.

In one record book, he is described as “Constant Maguire, son of John, son of Constantine, the younger, natives of the County Fermanagh.”

It should here be stated that Fermanagh was the ancient patrimony of the Maguires. Thomas Maguire, lord of Fermanagh, died in 1430. He was described by the Irish annalists as “a man of universal hospitality toward poor and mighty, founder of monasteries and churches, ... peacemaker for many chiefs and septs, beloved by all conditions for the excellence of his administration.”

Bryan, another of the Maguires, was made a baron of Enniskillen in 1627. The title was forfeited by his son, Connor, attainted by British law in 1644.

Constantine, or Constant, the Rhode Island settler, located in Warwick, R. I., but later removed to East Greenwich, R. I. His wife’s name was Ruth. Among their children were Mary, born February 16, 1750; Mercy, born March 28, 1753; and John, born April 19, 1755. Mary was born in Warwick and the others in East Greenwich.

Another numerous family in East Greenwich and its vicinity were the Boyds. Some of them were born in Ireland; all are believed to have been of Irish blood. Several bore the name Andrew. One Andrew Boyd is mentioned as having been born in County Antrim, Ireland, of which his mother, Sarah (Moore) Boyd, was also a native. Another Andrew, probably of the same stock, is thus 127mentioned in the records of the Rhode Island Assembly, October 1776:

In Council was read the return of Andrew Boyd, clerk of the company of Kentish Guards, choosing Christopher Greene, of Warwick, son of Nathaniel, second lieutenant of said company, in the room of Thomas Holden, who refused.

The action of the Guards was approved. The East Greenwich records show the marriage of Andrew Boyd and Abigail Moor in 1763; Mrs. Sarah Boyd and Mr. Weeden in 1783; Andrew Boyd and Elizabeth Spencer in 1788; William Boyd and Freelove Arnold, daughter of Capt. Thomas Arnold, in 1792; Hannah Boyd and Capt. Michael Spencer in 1805; William Boyd and Rhoda Andrews in 1819. In Warwick, records is found noting the marriage, in 1797, of Catherine Boyd and Timothy Bentley. In 1798, Hannah Boyd and Darius Havens were married.

#### **A Rhode Islander Becomes an Irish Baron.**

A brother of Baron Kinsale, of Ireland, settled in Newport, R. I., about 1720. Some hold that he was married in the old country; others, that his wife was a Newport woman.

They had a son, Thomas, born in Newport, who early displayed a love for the sea. In due time he has bound an apprentice to Captain Beard. The latter had command of a Newport merchantman and ranked among the ablest captains of his day.

Thomas de Courcy, the apprentice, advanced rapidly in nautical accomplishments and became a general favorite. After serving under Captain Beard, he enlisted in the navy and participated in the honor of taking Porto Bello in 1740.

The manner in which he succeeded to the title and estates of his uncle is thus told by himself. He was serving aboard Admiral Vernon's flagship. The latter was returning to England from the West Indies. While on the voyage they fell in with a merchantman bound from London to Jamaica. She was spoken and on inquiry, her captain sent aboard the flagship two late papers for the gratification of the admiral. The latter read them attentively. Suddenly he exclaimed:

"Ah! the Baron of Kinsale is dead!"

A steward overhearing the remark quickly carried the news to a gallant young tar in the fore-castle whose name was De Courcy.

"Is he dead? Then by the powers! something will come to me," was the reply.

The incident was reported to Admiral Vernon who immediately sent for De Courcy. The following conversation then ensued between the two:

"My lad, what is your name?"

"De Courcy, sir."

"Where were you born?"

"In Newport, Rhode Island, sir."

"Are you related to the late Thomas de Courcy, Baron of Kinsale?"

"He was my uncle, sir—he was my father's eldest brother."

"What induced your father to leave Ireland and settle at Newport?"

"That reason was my father's secret, your Honor, and not mine."

"Well, my lad, return to your station, and whatever may be your change of condition hereafter, I hope you will continue to do your duty faithfully till you shall be discharged."

"Your Honor may rely on that!"

The foregoing anecdote was told by De Courcy, many years after, to Captain Benjamin Pearce of Rhode Island who dined with him at Kinsale. The Baron always entertained great affection for Newport, his native place. It is told of him that no Rhode Islander ever, to his knowledge, came within fifty miles of his residence without being invited to partake of his hospitality. To Captain Beard of Newport his former commander, he annually sent a cask of rare old wine. For years

the people of Newport took a special interest in all that concerned their distinguished townsman, The Right Honorable Thomas de Courcy, Lord Baron Kinsale.

### **Interesting Reminiscences of Newport, R. I.**

Edward Thurston writing from Newport, R. I., March 5, 1767, to James Coggeshall informs the latter that "Mac Gee the baker has failed." Mac Gee was, no doubt, quite an important personage in the community.

Under date of November 15, 1764, is recorded at Newport as the marriage of "John Robinson of Ireland and Mary Cawdry of Newport." Rev. Ezra Stiles performed the ceremony.

Richard Field, a native of Dublin, Ireland, resided in Newport. He died in 1769.

Another prominent Newport family was the Dillons. James Dillon was a native of the County of Roscommon. His wife died at Newport in 1799 and was laid away in Trinity churchyard.

Thomas Green advertised in the Newport Mercury, August 1772, that he had for sale Irish poplins, sheetings, and other goods. He also announces "Lately come to hand, a trunk of choice Irish linens." In May 1793, Thomas Green & Son advertise in the Mercury that "at the sign of the buck, near the red market" they have for sale, Irish linens and muslins "at 14½d. and upward." In the Mercury of April 27, 1772, appears a legal notice regarding "the estate of Edward Keeney, late of Newport, shipwright, deceased." Students of Irish names will recognize in Keeney a typical one.

Moses M. Hays, a Hebrew, advertises under the date of August 3, 1772, that he has, among other goods, "a few barrels of Irish beef for sale." That is beef from Ireland.

The name Murphy has figured in Newport from an early period. Frequently it appears as Murfey. The original comers were, of course, from Ireland. They, doubtless, arrived directly from the old country, from some of the colonies adjacent to Rhode Island, or by way of the West Indies. Many of the Newport Murphys have been mariners, and some of them figured prominently in the Revolution. Edward Murphy died at Newport in 1809, "in the 62d year of his age." In March 1809, the death also occurred at Newport of "Phœbe Murfey, the comfort of Capt. John Murphy, aged 29." The Providence Gazette of February 17, 1810, announces the marriage at Mansfield, Conn., of "Capt. John Murphy of Newport to Miss Adaliza Southworth, daughter of Capt. Samuel Southworth."

An entry in Trinity church Annals, Newport, states that on "May 1, 1775, Lieut. James Conway died and was buried in the churchyard, aged 45 years." Conway was lieutenant of marines on the man-of-war Rose, which was then in the bay. He was probably of Irish origin. Another entry in the same annals informs us that on "October 5, 1783, Gilbert Eames died and was buried in the churchyard." He was a native of the County Limerick, Ireland, and was 54 years of age at the



time of his death. For several years prior to the reduction of Granada by the French in 1779, Mr. Eames had been a member of the Honorable Council for the island.

Rev. Erasmus Kelly, a native of Pennsylvania, was born in 1748, and came to Newport about 1771. On the outbreak of hostilities, he removed to Warren, R. I. When the British overran the latter town they burned the house in which he resided together with its contents. He removed to Connecticut and later to Pennsylvania. At the close of the Revolution, he returned to Newport and died there on November 7, 1784.

In February 1801, there died in Newport, Mrs. Lucia C. Grattan. She was the widow of Colonel Grattan, cousin-german to Henry Grattan, the Irish orator. Her brother was Lord Viscount Falkland. An obituary notice states that "Her remains were interred with every mark of respect."

Among the Newport marriages noted in the Trinity church records are the following: Miles Coursey to Abigail Williams, December 13, 1713; William Cook to Catherine Fallon, August 20, 1723; John Murphy to Mary Casside, March 1, 1732; James Gallagher to Bathsheba Fairchild, March 21, 1736; John Rourk to Ann Drower, January 23, 1742; Patrick Delaney to Margaret McFarling, October 29, 1742; Patrick Rogers to Eleanor Dowling, October 29, 1742; Edward Murfee to Catherine Fitzgerald, October 25, 1743; Patrick Durfey to Elizabeth Lacy, January 17, 1748; Patrick Cenfill to Meriam Powers, October 15, 1752; Edward Pye to Deborah Bourke, January 4, 1756; John Brown to Mary Kelly, March 13, 1756; Thomas Collins to Margaret Bourke, May 29, 1756; John Dwyer to Elizabeth McDaniel, October 10, 1756; Thomas Holland to Mary Dwyer, June 1, 1775; James Dillon to Sarah Dupay, October 13, 1778; James O'Brien to Margaret Dunton, November 23, 1778.

In the records of Newport, the following additional early marriages are noted. To simplify matters the writer gives only the year in which each marriage took place: William Mackey and Eliza George, 1737; Ebenezer Murphy and Mercy Reynolds, 1739; Michael Sullivan and Elizabeth High, 1740; John Lashley and Katherine McKane, 1740; Robert Odlin and Mary Conner, 1742; Patrick Farrell and Rachel Beere, 1742; John Mulholland and Elizabeth Hooper, 1742; James Harkins and Amy Higgins, 1743; Timothy Egan and Hester Wilson, 1745; James Murphy and Margaret Pitman, 1746; John Vial and Elizabeth Donnelly, 1747; John Donnelly and Jane Mence, 1747; Joseph Tally and Elizabeth Naps, 1747; George Smith and Sarah Tally, 1747; William Byrn and Jemima Jant, 1747; Daniel McGow (or McGowan) and Miss Donnelly, 1747; Jeremiah Ross and Mary Brayton, 1749; Elisha Newcome and Elizabeth O'Brien, 1751; James Hickey and Mary Carr, 1752; Thomas Jones and Mary Higgins, 1753; John Dyer and Mary Hickey, 1754; Jeremiah Heffernan and Elizabeth Mackee, 1755; William Cowdry and Mary Murphy, 1756; Michael Ryan and Leah Kelly, 1756; John Magee and Phebe Fairchild, 1758; Mr. Ross and Katherine McGowan, 1758; John Wyatt and Martha Magrah, 1759; John Fairbanks and Amey Heffernan, 1760; Alexander Mullen and Mary Chapman, 1760; James Bourk and Eleanor

Whiting, 1761; Edward Kenney and Patience Chadwick, 1762; Nathaniel Locke and Mary Burk, 1764; Daniel Dennison and Amey Murphy, 1766; Lawrence Carroll and Susannah Holden, 1768; Daniel Read and Ann McMahon, 1793; Eleazer Read, Jr., and Elizabeth Murphy, 1795.

From this it will be seen that the Irish began coming to Newport, and were numerous there, at much earlier periods than has been generally supposed.

#### **Irish Names in Rhode Island Previous to 1776.**

The following is a list of Irish surnames found in the official records[19] of Rhode Island, and in books, papers, and documents relating to the history of the latter. The names appear as early as the year mentioned in each case, but in some instances may have been represented at even an earlier period:

Banon, 1766.

Barret, 1751.

Baxter, 1751.

Bennett, 1646.

Blake, 1675.

Bourk, 1755.

Boyd, 1741.

Boyle, 1675.

Brandon, 1675.

Brian, 1675.

Burg (Burk?), 1667.

Burk, 1764.

Burns, 1772.

Butler, 1670.

Byrn, 1747.

Cain (Kane), 1738.

Carroll, 1768.

Carty, 1721.

Cary, 1693.

Casey, 1663.

Casside (Cassidy), 1732.

Cavanaugh, 1752.

Clinton, 1752.

Cogin, 1755.

Coleman, 1702.

Collins, 1642.

Conner, 1732.

Connor, 1742.

Coursey, 1713.

Crane, 1775.

Creman, 1746.

Cummings, 1739.

Curley, 1775.

Dailey, 1689.

132Daley, 1710.

Daly, 1736.

Darcey, 1718.

Day, 1677.

DeCourcy, 1720–25.

Delaney, 1742.

Dempsey, 1743.  
Dermott, 1761.  
Devett, 1685.  
Devitt, 1685.  
Donnelly, 1747.  
Donohoe, 1758.  
Donovan, 1751.  
Dowling, 1742.  
Downer, 1760.  
Downing, 1731.  
Doyle, 1698.  
Driskell (Driscoll), 1774.  
Drury, 1675.  
Dunn, 1682.  
Dwyer, 1756.  
Egan, 1745.  
Farrell, 1742.  
Fitzgerald, 1743.  
Fitzpatrick, 1761.  
Flannagan, 1762.  
Flynn, 1752.  
Ford, 1675.  
Fox, 1704.  
Gallagher, 1736.

Geery, 1675.

Gibbons, 1636.

Glenn, 1756.

Gorman, 1761.

Hagerty, 1775.

Haley, 1719.

Hanley, 1745.

Harvey, 1746.

Harvie, 1665.

Hartagan, 1753.

Hayes, 1675.

Healey, 1675.

Hearn, 1759.

Heffernan, 1671.

Hefernan, 1671.

Hickey, 1752.

Higgins, 1699.

Holland, 1729.

Hurley, 1740.

Joyce, 1731.

Keeny, 1765.

Kelly, 1669.

Kenney, 1675.

Lanahan, 1750 (about).

Lane, 1675.

Larkin, 1655.

Lawless, 1720.

Linniken, 1690.

Long, 1677.

Lyon, 1737.

Macarte, 1677.

Macfarlane, 1759.

Mackenny, 1720.

Mackey, 1737.

Mackown, 1723.

Macoone, 1669.

MacSparran, 1718.

McCane, 1740.

McCarty, 1677.

McClure, 1748.

McCone, 1740.

McCorrie, 1765.

McDonald, 1745.

McGee, 1767.

McGonegal, 1742.

McGoron, 1758.

McGow, 1747.

McGowan, 1747.

McGrath, 1759.

McKane, 1740.

McMillen, 1754.

Magee, 1758.

Magenis, 1675.

Magill, 1749.

Maguire, 1750.

Mahoney, 1774.

Malavery, 1687.

Maloney, 1675.

133Manning, 1762.

Martin, 1677.

Mitchell, 1703.

Moore, 1700.

Mulholland, 1742.

Mullen, 1760.

Mulligan, 1775.

Murphy, 1675.

Murray, 1752.

Neale, 1675.

Nevill, 1675.

Nixon, 1722.

Norton, 1716.

O'Brien, 1751.

O'Harra, 1728.  
O'Kelly, 1774.  
O'Neil, 1756.  
Orr, 1695.  
Phelon, 1730.  
Read, 1667.  
Reed, 1727.  
Rily, 1675.  
Ring, 1755.  
Roach, 1773.  
Ross, 1751.  
Russell, 1736.  
Ryan, 1756.  
Shay, 1731.  
Sheehan, 1759.  
Sheen, 1754.  
Stewart, 1724.  
Sullivan, 1740.  
Sullivant (Sullivan?), 1733.  
Tally, 1747  
Tracy, 1675.  
Ward, 1677.  
Watson, 1722.  
Walch, 1703.



Welch, 1675.

Welsh, 1738.