Welcome to the latest edition of the IACI e-news.

Founded in 1962, the IACI is the leading Irish American cultural organization. The IACI is a federally recognized 501(c)(3) not-for-profit national organization devoted to promoting an intelligent appreciation of Ireland and the role and contributions of the Irish in America.

Guest contributors are always welcome! Please note, the IACI is an apolitical, non-sectarian organization and requests that contributors consider that when submitting articles. The IACI reserves the right to refuse or edit submissions. The views and opinions expressed in this newsletter are solely those of the original authors and other contributors. These views and opinions do not necessarily represent those of the IACI or any/all contributors to this site. Please submit articles for consideration to cbuck@iaci-usa.org.

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An Irish American Spring Break

by

Raymond D. Aumack

It was a special time in Philadelphia. It was the season of graduations from Pennsylvania’s many colleges and universities. The queen of the universities is the University of Pennsylvania with her long and storied Ivy League history. June Gilliam, who had completed her Ph.D. studies a few months before, was to go through a formal graduation ceremony. Brian Garvey, her boyfriend, had arranged for a surprise party-dinner at his family’s country club for her family and close friends. He had contacted June’s parents and arranged for chauffeured limo transportation from Carlisle, for them and June’s two younger sisters. They would stay at the Sheraton Hotel in the center of Philadelphia. Unknown to June, Brian met with her parents the evening before graduation and asked their permission to propose to June. The permission was readily granted with handshakes, hugs, and twitters from the two teen-age sisters.

On Saturday afternoon, Brian picked up June and presented her with a graduation corsage. After he pinned it on her gown, he gallantly knelt on one knee.

“June, I have known you most of my life, and loved you from afar most of that time. I love you enough to dare to ask, will you be my wife for the rest of our lives? I will love you and cherish you for as long as God gives us to live.”

June was stunned as he opened the ring box. It took her about ten seconds to process the event. She threw her arms around him, crying, “yes, yes, I will be honored to be your wife.”

They kissed passionately and he slipped the ring on her finger.

“I’m sorry to disrupt the pattern, but we have to get to your graduation, or they will keep the diploma.”

As they drove to downtown Philadelphia. June sobbed tears of joy as she stared at the simple diamond ring through her tears. She was overjoyed to see her family and that generated another flood of happy tears. She knew they were coming but didn’t know that Brian made transportation arrangements as well as hotel reservations for the weekend.

As with all graduations, this one was long and tedious. That is until they call your name. The doctoral candidates, ten of them, were called to the stage. They called each by name, gave a brief biography, a brief survey of their areas of study, gowned each with the doctoral hood, and presented their diploma. June’s dissertation was, The Colorful Social Legacy of Women of Color. All dissertations are published as library copies. June’s garnered commercial publication interest and with appropriate editing for commercial presentation, would be published as a book within the next year.

After the graduation ceremony, there were several social amenities that they had to honor. June was totally overwhelmed with the excitement of the day. Her sisters couldn’t take their eyes off
of her. She was radiating joy. Her parents were filled with both pride and joy. Her mother was as
teary-eyed as June.

Brian asked the limo driver to follow him to the other side of town to the Glen Gables Country
Club. A half hour later, John Garvey was on the porch of the club greeting them. At this point,
only the Gilliam family knew that June and Brian were engaged.

They walked through the lobby to the rear of the club, overlooking the golf course. John opened
the room divider and about sixty guests shouted, “Surprise!”

All the friends were there, the entire Garvey family, June’s aunts and an uncle, several Jesuits
and the entire staff of the Jesuit Urban Mission.

June struggled to keep their engagement a secret until after grace. She kept the ring in her clutch.
After mingling, sharing cocktails, constant congratulations on her degree, and totally enjoying
the camaraderie, the head waiter summoned them to the dinner tables. It took a while to transfer
the celebration to the dining room.

Father Jim Keenan, the director of the Jesuit Urban Mission offered grace.

Brian then stood to offer a toast to the most beautiful and gracious doctor in the room, begging
the pardon of all the other beautiful and gracious doctors in the room. “Doctor June has the
added distinction of being the newest fiancé in the room. Earlier today she gave me the highest
honour of agreeing to become my wife. I lift my glass to honor her and pray that the grace of God
will be always with us.”

There was a few seconds of stunned silence, followed by standing cheers and applause as
everyone rushed to their table to congratulate June and Brian.

Dave Garvey told his son, Brian, that he knew how to pull off a real surprise.

“I’m sorry I couldn’t tell you and mom beforehand. June’s graduation provided the timing and I
wanted to give her parents the lion’s share of the spotlight.”

“Well, if that was your motive, we raised you well, son.” said Dave.

Bridgid said, “With all of these weddings, I can only say, it’s about time. What took you so
long?”

“It was always June, mom. It was just a question of timing.”

The poor Maître d’ was beside himself. The dinner would be spoiled. John reminded him that
nothing could spoil and evening like this.

A pianist provided music during dinner and by dessert, the dance floor was filled. The party
continued long into the night.

The next morning it seemed as if the entire party just moved to the church to continue the
festivities at Mass. After Mass, Dave and Bridgid joined their children for the first time at their
Cherry Hill, New Jersey Sunday afternoon hideaway. June’s parents and sisters also joined them.
Maeve was in her glory. What started out as a weekly gathering of four friends was now a major
social event that included her brothers as well as her parents.
Desmond remembered that June brought a fantastic egg nog to the Garvey Christmas party, the recipe for which, she reported, came from her Irish great grandfather. Desmond, a native of Ireland, asked which parent had Irish heritage. It turned out that both of June’s parents had Irish heritage. At the time of the Civil War, the Irish signed up to earn their stripes as Americans and many Blacks came up from the south to join the union cause. In the heat of battle, no one noticed the color of each other’s skin. June’s great grandmother was a courageous battlefield nurse and one of the men whose life she saved was an Irishman who had no concern that she was Black. On her father’s side, an Irish battlefield commissioned colonel saved a Black woman from being beaten and raped by a group of drunken soldiers. They fell in love, married, and settled in Gettysburg. The colonel, who had the secret recipe for egg nog, was clever about amassing the spoils of war. They founded several businesses including a farm and had a comfortable life, employing half the town and leaving a fortune to their children, who continued their parent’s enterprise. They branded the town as a historic tourist site, made famous by the battle that energized the Union cause, and President Lincoln’s great address at the dedication of the cemetery.

The entire group was enthralled by the details of Ben and Jane Gilliam’s story, as were June’s sisters, Susan and Emma, who had never heard the stories of their heritage before.

Patrick was particularly interested. There were no Black people in the north Jersey town in which he was raised. He did not really meet any Blacks until he arrived at Notre Dame. At Loyola where he did his Ph.D. studies, he taught a number of Black students, but he was always aloof from his students. Even, then he was very much into his studies. His only close friend was Paul Moran, who evolved into Father Paul, now the Director of Catholic Identity at the Notre Dame University campus.

June and Brian were exhausted from the activities of the weekend. The limo would take the Gilliam family back to their hotel. Brian and June would meet them for breakfast in the morning and then the limo would take them home.

Theresa would stay over with John. She had another week of day long classes at the University of Pennsylvania before she would begin full time work at Maeve’s firm.

Patrick would stay over with Maeve while he was mulling over another life crisis. He was still overwhelmed by Maeve’s personal wealth and still feeling inferior because of it. They were still talking about it.

Because of their afternoon of eating and drinking, Maeve put together a light supper of soup and snacks. With their food on nearby snack trays, Patrick and Maeve sat on the floor with some pillows in front of the fireplace.

Maeve asked, “Pat, are we still on track about the money issues in our marriage?”

Patrick responded that he thought he was. His traditional values were still shocked that he was not the breadwinner.

“Pat, you will never have to worry about that. We are both partners in this venture of marriage, so we are both breadwinners.”
“I can live with that,” said Pat. “It is a new normal because the only model I had was my parents.”

“Always remember that we are normal, and we’ll always live like that. We’ll never be superior to anyone because we have money. Nor will anyone even know how much money we have.”

“What was Notre Dame like for you,” asked Maeve?

“It was a shock. I was no longer the big man in town or on campus. I wasn’t on any of the athletic teams. I was a big fish in a very small pond at home. At Notre Dame, I was a little fish in a very big ocean. I roomed all four years with Paul. I never saw Paul crack a textbook and he was our valedictorian. Otherwise, Paul read everything else that was printed. He followed sports, went to football and basketball games, and he had a girlfriend on the water polo team. I never thought of myself as conservative. I was just plain ignorant. That was hard for me. I was no longer the kid that knew everything. Paul and I would talk a lot. He opened me up to a world that I never previously knew. We discussed religion, politics, social activities on campus, and various crises in the world around us. He gave me books to read. He introduced me to some of the girls that he got to know on campus. I didn’t have any really romantic relationships. I went to bridge club a lot with one girl, and to chess club with another. It was fun and I didn’t feel threatened by any of them. I dated a little and went to dances and some of the endless rounds of parties that were available each weekend. Some of those were eye-openers. I think I grew up a lot in those four years.

“That is startling,” said Maeve. “One of the things that impressed me about you was your confidence. You kissed me three times on our first date. You are a great kisser. The following week you brought flowers to my office and I was out of town. Poor Susan was overwhelmed by you. She even referred to you as a Greek god. A couple of days later, you brought flowers to my office again.”

“That was because you are so easy to be with and as soon as I met you, I really liked you.. Theresa told me all about you. We met with a group of your friends for Sunday afternoon brunch. You brought me to your parent’s Labor Day cookout, and I met your parents and especially your brothers who, I think, gave me their seal of approval. They were also fun to be with. My family wasn’t that close. I liked your family and your friends. I love June and Maria, my Black and Hispanic sisters-in-law. If Susan thinks of me as a Greek god, then she has good taste. Desmond is terrific and knows more about Irish Literature than I do. In fact, as you know, he has co-authored one of my articles.”

“Do you like us all enough to still marry me?”

“I fell in love you, Maeve, and I liked the feeling. I knew I could trust you. Otherwise I would never have told you my deepest secrets and fears. I have learned more from you than I have in 18 years of formal education. This conversation has been one of the greatest moments of my life.”

“Mine too,” said Maeve.

They rolled around on the floor kissing and embracing until they just dozed off before the fireplace.
Theresa made her way to Maeve’s office. Thursday afternoon was designated as a reading afternoon at U-Penn. Theresa was way ahead on her reading assignments. She was looking forward to her new job and thinking of the future as she made her way to Maeve’s office. She was to have a luncheon business meeting with Dave and Maeve about their plans for her new job. True to form, Maeve had a salad and Philadelphia cheese steak on the table in her conference room. She had known Dave for many years and knew that he was Maeve’s mentor. 

Theresa was on her way to a Ph.D. at Villanova when she ran out of money. So she stopped her program and accepted a Master’s in Psychology. Then she accepted an opportunity at The Jesuit Urban Mission and quickly became the Executive Director. The pay wasn’t great, but it was enough. The experience of working there was an education in itself. The courses she was taking for the job with Maeve’s firm were basically applications of what she already knew. As a manager of about 30 people, she already knew a great deal about coaching and team building. The lack of turnover among the staff is a tribute to her leadership. She would need help with resume writing and Dave would help with that. It is a unique genre. She learned a great deal about business practices and the kind of pitfalls employees would encounter in the job market. She would ask her professor for his bibliography so she could continue reading. Entering into the private sector was a transformational culture shift for her. She and Maeve would continue their volunteer work at the Jesuit Urban Center so she wouldn’t miss the friends that she made there. 

She would still be available to the people with whom she worked, and especially she would be available to June. With June as Executive Director, all the unscrupulous landlords and corrupt business persons who prey on the poor of the city would be quaking in their boots. She was their formidable adversary as a volunteer, and now she was in charge. She would never replace Theresa as the champion of the poor and disenfranchised of the city, but there was nobody better who could replace Theresa. She would create her own coalitions and make a considerable contribution to the neighborhoods and the expectations of the poor of the city, especially with Theresa and Maeve available to guide her.

Dave was very comfortable with Theresa as the key staff person for the new department. Dave had created a business plan which he had previously shared with Maeve, and the three went over it over the next couple of hours. Though it wasn’t Theresa’s but the work of Dave and Maeve, she was even able to contribute with some concepts she learned at UPenn. She applied management by objectives at the Jesuit urban Mission, but there was such volatility in her work that she had to be extremely diligent to keep track of them and the work of her staff. The next week when Theresa was on board, she and Dave would work on resume writing.

Theresa was also going to help orient June together with Father Jim. June was already thoroughly familiar with the Jesuit Urban Ministry and had some expansion ideas using volunteers from among college graduates following the model of AmeriCorps.

The following week, Theresa, Fr. Jim, and June worked together to plan for the new Jesuit Urban Mission. With money in the bank, they would have to hire a staff accountant to keep track of it. Up to this time, Theresa kept track of income, budgeting and accounts payable. Staff would have to be expanded and much time was spent identifying what positions needed to be filled, the work they needed to accomplish, and where their workstations would be. As the general chairperson of
the Gala, Theresa was aware of revenues to date and together with June she helped lay out the plan for additional staff, the credentials required, and the expectations of the new position.

The pilot announced that they were descending into Miami Airport and that passengers should fasten their seatbelts. Desmond had to gently awaken Maria who was soundly asleep and leaning her head on his shoulder. She had been asleep for two hours of the three-hour flight.

Juan Carlos and Anamaria Costa were waiting at the gate, anxious to meet the Irishman who had stolen their daughter’s heart. Maria (called Sandy by her friends, as a nickname tribute to her beach landing after escaping Cuba) saw her parents and started waving to them. Desmond took up the rear dragging two heavy suitcases. Winded and sweating in the unaccustomed heat and humidity, he pulled up behind Maria, a little frazzled for the most important introduction of his life. Juan Carlos welcomed Desmond with an embrace and stepped back to graciously introduce Anamaria. Maria initiated a group hug and then suggested that they get out of the airport.

Juan Carlos was a hero to the Cuban American community and was a prominent Miami attorney. His practice was not on the scale of David Garvey’s, but it was none the less significant. Maria was significant in the Philadelphia community as an educator with two master’s degrees and was well on her way toward an Ed.D. She had no interest in Law and would not follow in her father’s footsteps. In fact her work with the Jesuit Urban Ministry was to be the subject of her dissertation. She was going to use her own experience as a student of English as a Second Language, a teacher of high school Spanish, and her volunteer work with the Jesuit Urban Ministry. She was also fairly fluent in French and Italian. The plan is in the process of taking shape with her research, but the focus will be on her experience. She is a student at St. Joseph’s University.

Juan Carlos was concerned about the ability of Desmond, a waiter in a restaurant, to support his daughter. They would speak together after dinner this evening. There was much on his mind about this proposed marriage.

The Costa home was large but inviting. The house, like most Florida homes, was air conditioned. Desmond was amazed at the quality of the artwork and very much admired the Spanish Colonial furniture and decor. As expected, he and Maria were assigned separate rooms. Anamaria and Maria’s younger sisters were very enthusiastic about wedding plans and kept wanting to stare at their sister’s engagement ring, a simple diamond ring.

After an afternoon of being shown around, they settled down for predinner drinks and conversation. Anamaria wanted to discuss wedding plans. She was already anxious about being the mother of the bride. They would be married in the local parish church and her parent’s relatives and friends would be invited. When they returned home to Philadelphia, their marriage would be blessed at the parish church they attended. Both parents were very pleased that their daughter still attended weekly Mass. They were thrilled to find out about her volunteer work with the Jesuit Urban Mission. They were pleased as well that Desmond was a churchgoer, but there was no need to discuss his deep spirituality and his contemplative prayer life.

After dinner, Juan Carlos and Desmond went into the comfort of the home office for the anticipated inquisition.
How can you support my daughter on a waiter’s salary?

“Mr Costo………”

“Please call me Juan or Juan Carlos. I welcome you into our family.”

“Thank you! Bookbinders isn’t an ordinary restaurant, and I am not a waiter. In another corporate structure, I would be called the chief operating officer. I am responsible for the entire staff of more than 200. Bookbinders is one of the leading restaurants of Philadelphia and the surrounding area. I haven’t discussed this with Maria yet, because it just hasn’t come up and we will be shortly discussing it in our pre-marriage conferences with a priest. Since my first wife died, I have lived very simply and invested wisely. In cash and investments, I have over two million dollars. I am paid very well for my work and have all the confidence of the owner, Emmanuel Bookbinder, to manage the restaurant. Two-thirds of my money is invested in safe and growing stocks and one-third is invested in stocks with a higher return. I own a home that has no mortgage and I have two cars. I am an author, having co-written an article on elements of Irish literature with a professor friend and I have two articles ready for publication on restaurants and the culture of Philadelphia. I take a great deal of interest in the Jesuit Urban Ministry and I serve on the leadership board for a huge fundraising gala.

I ask you to keep this information private until I discuss it with Maria by the end of the month. I don’t think she has any idea.”

“Well, I am pleased to hear that,” Said Juan Carlos.

“Please understand that Maria is a professional with a very good salary, and within a year she will have earned her doctorate. “

“But teachers get paid almost nothing.”

“In Philadelphia, they do very well, with excellent health benefits and an enviable pension.”

“Well, you can imagine that this information is a great relief to a father.”

“You have been married before. Why do you need instructions?”

“It is not so much instruction, but something we do together to prepare. We discuss the issues that we are likely to deal with in marriage. We’ll be discussing the money issue when we get back to Philly. This project was Maria’s idea, but I very quickly bought into it. It has been a big help. We are communicating on a level I never thought possible, and I love it.”

“You are older than she is.”

“I am eleven years older that she is.” When I’m 101, she’ll be 90. We can make that work.”

“You come from different cultures. I can barely understand your Irish way of talking.”

“We are both American and our different cultures contribute to that. I hope you are not trying to talk me out of marrying Maria. I love her and we are very committed to each other.”

“On the contrary, I am very pleased with this conversation,” said Juan Carlos. “You have taken away all my fears. Welcome to my family.”
The two stood together and embraced each other.

The next day, Desmond and Maria had an appointment to meet with the parish priest.

Padre Diego Garcia, dressed in a cassock, was the pastor of St. Mary’s Church. Desmond was startled because he appeared to be so young for such a great responsibility. St. Mary’s was a huge parish and in the winter attendance at Mass more than doubled with snowbirds and winter tourists. He proved to be extremely gracious and affable. He was enthusiastic with his congratulations. While he didn’t know Maria personally, he did know her family who were pillars of his parish. He scheduled the marriage at a nuptial Mass for Saturday afternoon, February 12th, the beginning of Maria’s winter vacation from school.

Desmond and Maria filled out the necessary forms. He presented a letter from Fr. Milos stating that both were free to marry. Desmond gave him a copy of his late wife’s death certificate. Padre Diego stated that it was a state as well as a diocesan requirement that they have six hours of instruction in preparation for marriage. Desmond produced a letter from Fr. Jim Keenan that they would complete about thirty hours of preparation.

Maria said that she had some ideas about music and the liturgy and that they could communicate via e-mail. Padre Diego presented her with a business card with his e-mail address.

It was a very pleasant meeting. They would see the church the next morning at Mass.

When they returned back to her parent’s house, Ana Maria had a huge breakfast prepared. At breakfast, she wanted to discuss the details of the wedding such as where they would have a reception, a band, and Maria’s wedding dress. Maria said that she would be home for Christmas, and they could shop together for a wedding dress. She wanted to know all the details of the plans for the Philadelphia blessing and reception. There weren’t any detailed plans yet, but Maria would keep them informed as they developed. As far as the reception for Miami, Maria would leave that totally in their hands. She would send them a list of friends who might want to attend.

Maria asked her sisters, Eva and Louisa, to be attendants in the wedding party. They were so excited, and Maria and Anamaria were both very pleased.

“We don’t have a maid of honor or a best man, yet,” said Maria. “They will probably be from among our friends in Philadelphia.”

The rest of the week was a blur of activity. They spent some time at the beach, wandered around the docks ogling the yachts of the pretentious millionaires who were escaping the cold and snow of the north, and doing craft shopping. Maria’s mom conned her into going to a friend’s dress shop. She actually picked out a beautifully simple wedding dress with a distinctive Spanish flavor. The dressmaker friend, also a Cuban refugee, measured every part of her body and she would return for a final fitting at Christmastime.

On Thursday evening, the night before their flight back home, Juan Carlos filled their home with friends and relatives for an engagement party. It was a festive event and Desmond felt like he
was hosting a reception back at Bookbinders. He was confronted with almost a hundred people whose name and relationship he couldn’t possibly remember.

Later in the evening when they had a few minutes to themselves, Maria thanked Desmond for being so gracious. “I think my mom is planning the wedding she always dreamed of but could never experience in Cuba.”

Desmond responded, “if it is important for them, it is important for us. They have earned some joy in their lives because they paid a big price and took some incredible risks for it. It is an honor for us to provide that joy for them.”

Maria warmly hugged and kissed him, and whispered, “thank you.”

At breakfast the next morning, Anamarie carefully interjected a discussion of the reception.

Maria suggested a big tent for their ample property behind the patio and the pool. Caterers would be anxious to bid on such venue. She recommended a DJ to provide music for dancing. They could blend Hispanic, American, and Irish music. Her mom could choose the menu.

Desmond will recommend some music and teach me some Irish dance steps.

Desmond laughed, but applauded the entire idea.

“Mom and dad, what do you think?”

Juan Carlos thought it was a great idea, but he would like to think it over. If nothing else, it was a good beginning.

Later on in the day, when he was driving them to the airport, Juan Carlos said it was a good idea and that he had to factor in business obligations and parking problems for such a big event in his neighborhood. They could discuss it by email and telephone conversations.

Maria looked sadly at Miami through the plane’s window as it banked over the ocean to head to Philadelphia. She hadn’t seen her parents since Christmas and thoroughly enjoyed this visit. Desmond squeezed her hand and she reached up to kiss his cheek. A brilliant future was opening before her.
BUNKER HILL - 17th June 1775

…Among those Sons of Liberty who rallied ‘round the flags of Liberty were large numbers of Irish. Historian Michael J. O’Brien wrote of The Irish at the Battle of Bunker Hill (17 June 1775), most notably of Dr. Joseph Warren. O’Brien also wrote of the Irish contribution to many other aspects of the achievement and defense of the Independence of the United States. His research confirmed that the Irish in America, from Richard Montgomery, Anthony Wayne and John Sullivan, to Stephen Moylan, Daniel Morgan, Timothy Murphy and Hercules Mulligan, and to many who lie in unmarked Patriot graves, volunteered for the Patriot cause in greater proportion to their numbers in the population than probably any other group.

“How don’t shoot ‘till you see the whites of their eyes!”

Here stand the raw American militia, untested in formal battle, in the main redoubt at Breed’s Hill as they are about to fire upon the seemingly endless advancing ranks of British regulars. The President of the Massachusetts Provincial Congress, Dr. Joseph Warren, is the senior officer present, here standing on the rampart, encouraging his fellow Patriots throughout the battle. Warren would be killed during the third and final assault, after the defenders’ ammunition had begun to run out. Colonel William Prescott stands on the works with his sword ready to give the famous command that would reshape American history forever.
Thomas Fleming, one of America’s leading historians, in 1958, while doing research in the Boston Public Library for a book he was writing on Bunker Hill, serendipitously came upon A Hidden Phase of American History – Ireland’s Part in America’s Struggle for Liberty by Michael Joseph O’Brien (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1920). The book was as much a revelation for him as is has been fore me. In a full page article, “Looking again at the Irish at Bunker Hill,” in the IRISH ECHO newspaper (June 16-22, 2010, page 13), which was brought to my attention by Rear Admiral (Retired) J. Robert Lunney, a former president of the Sons of the Revolution (as well as being a scion of a Fermanagh Irish rebel family). Thomas Fleming went on to write a most important book about the Battle of “Bunker Hill,” which actually took place on Breed’s Hill, as the “rebels” moved forward from their position on Bunker Hill to more directly challenge the 5,000 British regulars occupying Boston. The great, un-answered question of the day was, though the Americans had demonstrated that, in irregular warfare, they could effectively harass regular troops, as they had demonstrated during the British retreat from Concord on the 19th of April 1775, could they stand up to the British regulars in formal battle (?). Fleming’s book, Now We Are Enemies: The Story of Bunker Hill, republished in 2010 by American History Press, Staunton, Virginia (Anniversary Edition), demonstrates that at “Bunker Hill” they not only could, but did, “on ground of the American’s choosing,” with great effect, stand up to the trained, professional, British regulars, until the Americans ran out of ammunition. The book also verifies O’Brien’s research, which found over 600 Irish (including two Flemings) involved in this iconic battle in the American Revolution.

O’Brien points out that the term “Scotch-Irish” was unknown in 18th century America. If you were from Ireland you were Irish, plain and simple. Thomas Fleming concurs that it didn’t matter if the Irishmen were Protestant, Catholic or Dissenter, “they all had scores to settle against England for centuries of abuse and exploitation.” Fleming goes on to state that his research not only confirms O’Brien’s conclusions, but also convinced him that, without the Irish, “the battle would have been a catastrophic defeat that might have snuffed out the embryonic American Revolution…”

[Washington would not arrive from Congress and take command of the Continental forces until 3rd July 1775, after Bunker Hill had been fought.]
What frustrated the British attempt to turn the American left, by an attack along the Mystic River, was the identification, fortification and defense of this approach by a significant number of Colonel John Stark’s New Hampshire veteran (and expert) riflemen. The remainder of Stark’s riflemen would be on the ramparts of “Bunker Hill” when, their flanking movement having failed, the Brits tried a frontal assault.

**Over one thousand** British officers and men killed or wounded in the battle testify both to the American resolve, and to the American capability to fight. Although the Brits eventually gained control of the hill, General Howe wrote to his brother, Admiral Lord Howe, “the success is too dearly bought.” And Thomas Fleming cites American General Nathaniel Greene of Rhode Island, “I wish we could sell them another hill at the same price.”

At least forty of John Stark’s men were born in Ireland, and Fleming points out that dozens more were first-generation Irish-American. He also states that the company from Bedford were almost entirely Irish, and that there were numerous Irish among the Massachusetts and Connecticut regiments. Thomas Fleming notes that most of the Irish remained in what would become an 8-year war, until the achievement of American Independence.

**John Stark** was born 28th August 1728, of immigrant parents, who were part of the settlement, of some one hundred Irish families in 1719, in one of two New Hampshire towns, Derry and Londonderry (different sources attribute his birth to one or the other town, however, the highway marker noting his birthplace is in Derry). These settlers brought not only their strong desire for freedom with them to New Hampshire, they also introduced the potato. When John was eight years of age, his family moved to Derryfield (now Manchester – the School District is still Derryfield), which remained his home for the remainder of his life. A frontiersman, he, and his second in command at Bunker Hill, Major Andrew McClary, had been members of Roger’s Rangers during the French and Indian War. In 1859, then Captain John Stark, who was second-in-command over all of the Ranger companies, declined to go with Rogers when the latter was ordered, with genocidal intent, by General Jeffrey Amherst to attack the Abenaki (Jesuit mission) Indian village of Saint Francis in Quebec (in 1852, John Stark had been captured, and then adopted by the Abenaki, with whom he lived for over a year).
Jeffrey Amherst (later Field Marshal Lord Amherst) is better known for having introduced biological warfare into the suppression of Pontiac’s Rebellion, in a letter of 16th July 1763, approving the sending to the Indians of blankets infected with smallpox as well as "to try Every other method that can serve to Exterminate this Execrable Race.”

United in the face of a common enemy (1775/76), the American Patriots soon realized that the success of their defense of Liberty would require the putting aside of many old differences; in State after State freedom of conscience in worship and in speech replaced old laws and practices regarding the establishment of religion. Americans in every State were determined that an alien government should not have the opportunity to foster differences which had divided a minority from the majority in the past (as, in fact, the English would attempt during the course of the conflict). These freedoms would later be enshrined in the Constitution of the United States of America, under the First Amendment (“Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.” American “Bill of Rights” – Ratified 15 December 1791).

The words of the American Declaration of Independence, 4th of July 1776, which should be music to the ears of decent men everywhere, were particularly sweet to the Irish, for whom the experience of tyranny had been first-hand in their homeland. [In part: “…We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. That to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. That whenever any form of government becomes destructive to these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness….”] †

[ By Derek Warfield, excerpt from, Washington’s Irish: Irish Music of America’s Wars for Independence, 1765 - 1815 ]
Specific sources for additional reading include:

*Now We Are Enemies: The Story of Bunker Hill*
by Thomas Fleming

*In Defense of the Public Liberty: Britain, America, and the Struggle for Independence – from 1760 to the Surrender at Yorktown in 1781*
by Samuel B. Griffith II (Brigadier General, US Marine Corps (Ret.))
(Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1976)

*Decisive Day: The Battle for Bunker Hill*

*1776*
and
*John Adams* (Pulitzer Prize)
both by David McCullough

*Bunker Hill: A City, a Siege, a Revolution*
by Nathaniel Philbrick (New York: Viking, 2013)
Civil War Humor

Every now and then, I read something funny.

From Burke Davis, “Our Incredible Civil War”

A Monsieur Chillon, a French army veteran who had migrated to California, walked cross-country to war in 1861, through Indian territory accompanied only by his donkey, Jason, with whom he slept. Chillon was welcomed by the French-speaking 3rd Louisiana of the Confederate Army and settled down.

There was one trouble: the regiment’s colonel bore a strong resemblance to old Chillon, and at bedtime Jason invariably pushed into the commander’s tent and tried to curl up next to the officer, to the joyous yelping of the troops.

“A Rebel Battery enfiladed our Brigade and a shot striking the horse of Captain Kempf commanding the 5th Wisconsin Vols., then bounded down the line of his regiment and wounded several men. The horse, a large white animal, had a part of his flank shot off and started on a run with his tail hanging by a piece of flesh. The Captain jumped to his feet and shouted: “There goes my…..horse, my……haversack, my……blankets, my…….canteen” and he also named over all of his traps that went off on his horse (The blank spaces above may be supplied with adjectives). Notwithstanding the fact that shot and shell were plunging into our brigade, the group of officers including myself who witnessed this scene rolled in the sand convulsed with laughter. We had to change our position, for the Rebels seemed to have the exact range of our line.”

From Elisha Hunt Rhodes “All For The Union.” P 183 Sept. 21, 1864, speaking of the Battle of Opequon Creek, Va., on September 19, 1864.

Sunday, May 22, 1864 Grant

Early in the afternoon, Grant and his party stopped to rest at a plantation that commanded a fine view of the Mattapony valley. Grant fell into conversation with the two women of the house, one of whom had a husband serving with Joseph E. Johnston in the west. Neither believed Grant’s statement that Sherman’s army was steadily pushing Johnston’s men back toward Atlanta, but even as they were arguing, a courier arrived with dispatches that confirmed his words. Both women were shocked by the news. The portly Ambrose Burnside rode up, made an exaggerated bow, and conversationally inquired as to whether the ladies had ever seen so many Yankee soldiers before.

“Not at liberty, sir,” one of the women snapped back.

Remembered Horace Porter, “This was such a good shot that every one was greatly amused and General Grant joined heartily in the laugh that followed at Burnside’s expense.”

From Noah Andre Trudeau “Bloody Roads South” P 223

The men thought up many parodies of the songs they sang. A parody of “Just Before The Battle, Mother” goes:

“Just before the battle, Mother,
I was drinking mountain dew,
When I saw the Rebels coming
To the rear I quickly flew.”

Irish Brigade

Brigadier General Thomas Francis Meagher resigned in May, 1863.

“Gen. Meagher’s departure was greatly regretted. A most brilliant leader he was, who seemed at his best in the midst of a combat. He had great faith in

“buck and ball and the bayonet,” and frequently urged on the men the use of the latter weapon.
“Take everything with the bayonet,”

was the standing command when about to close with the foe; and that well-known and oft-repeated order was the occasion of a most amusing incident. One evening the brigade commissary had received new supplies; and among other things, some barrels of molasses beside which a young Irishman was placed on guard to prevent the men from getting at it until the proper time. Seeing no one around as he walked up and down, he thought he would enjoy the sweets of life, and succeeded in picking a hole in one of the barrels with his bayonet. Then dipping the weapon into the molasses, he would draw it out and transfer it to his mouth. Meagher happened to catch the boy in the act, and reproached him in rather strong terms for stealing the molasses over which he was placed to guard. The young man was astounded and overcome with terror for a moment at seeing the general, but quickly recovering himself, he quietly pushed the blade into the syrup, pulled it out dripping with the sweet liquid, took a big lick of it and reminded the General: “Sure, don’t ye be always telling us to take everything wid the bayonet?”

From Corby, Memoirs of Chaplain Life, P. 384

“One dark night, when we were marching away from Falmouth, the brigade was groping along a by-path, the men growling about the roughness of the walking, now and then tripping over a log, and plunging headlong into the darkness. A man remarked to his comrade, who was grumbling and falling more frequently than the others: “Whist, Jimmy, ye’ll be on the main road in a minute.” “Bedad, Barney,” replied the unfortunate one, “Oi’ll nivir get onto a mainer road than this!”

From Corby, Memoirs of Chaplain Life, P. 355 Both of these are from St. Clair A. Mulholland

“One slightly wounded man complained that he had to walk to the rear. A more seriously wounded comrade replied, “Ah Duffy, hold your tongue. There’s a lad over there with his head shot off and he’s not making a complaint at all.”

Spotsylvania, May 12, 1864 Mule Shoe Salient, “Bloody Angle” from Patrick O’Flaherty History of the Sixty-ninth

General Robert E. Lee

From “Lee Of Virginia” by Douglas Southall Freeman

On September 16, 1864, Wade Hampton captured 2,486 beef cattle belonging to the Federal Army. “For days after that the soldiers had beef instead of the thin slice of “Nassau bacon” that had been issued them. The temporary contrast between fat beef and rancid bacon gave point to a joke that then was going the rounds of the educated soldiers. They of course were proud to call themselves the Army of Northern Virginia, but for a shorter name they preferred now to be known as ‘Lee’s Army.” Still another name, they said in grim jest, was appropriate to them.

Victor Hugo’s novel “Les Miserables” was being republished in the South and was much read in the army. The title seemed distinctly personal to the men: They were-

“Lee’s Miserables,” they said.

I have a friend who lives in West Virginia. He has a book that I looked at one night, by Kenneth Davis “Don’t Know Much About History.” This contained some errors about the Civil War, and had the following statement in a section discussing economic aspects of the war:

“In addition, the North vastly outproduced the South in agricultural products and livestock holdings (except asses and mules).”

Would it have been just as funny if he had written “mules and asses?”

What do you think? Does this make you laugh, or does it only slightly amuse you?

Is it just me?
I don’t think the author meant that to be funny.

So is the author correct, the South had more asses and mules than the North ?
One of the author’s errors was the statement that the North spent 9 million dollars on the war. I knew immediately that this was wrong, because General Earl Van Dorn burned Grant’s supply base at Holly Springs, Mississippi, on December 20, 1862. Van Dorn estimated that he burned one and one half million dollars worth of supplies.

It would have been closer to say that the North spent 9 billion dollars, and even better to say the number was 15 billion. I don’t think this includes the money spent on pensions. Kenneth Davis also states that the South spent six million dollars.

“There were many instances in which the turmoil of hand-to-hand conflict caused a soldier to lose most or all of his clothing. One such recorded loss took place at the September 17, 1862 battle of Antietam.
Pvt. Barney Rogers of the Sixty-first New York raced toward the Bloody Lane without a belt, having improvised one from a ragged strap. While crawling over a fence, the strap snapped and caused his trousers to fall down around his ankles, hobbling him. Sgt. Charles Fuller cut the impeding garment off with a pocket knife, evoking raucous laughter from Roger’s comrades when a lull in the fighting gave everyone a chance to gawk conspicuously at Rogers’s “bare backside.”

“The Amazing Civil War”  Webb Garrison  P. 105  Chapter 9  “Out of Uniform  Soldiers In The Buff”

During Burnside’s famous “Mud March,” an officer put in a request for “50 men, 25 feet high, to work in mud 18 feet deep.”

Writer Shelby Foote was featured in the 1990 Ken Burns documentary “The Civil War.” He recounted a story of a rabbit that popped up during Pickett’s Charge at Gettysburg, and bounded through the Confederate lines toward the rear. A Rebel soldier saw it, and called out: “Run, old hare ! If I was an old hare I’d run, too.”

When the 3rd Wisconsin broke at the Battle of Winchester, Virginia, on May 25, 1862, Major General Nathaniel Banks called out: “Stop men ! Don’t you love your country ?” Whereupon one of the fleeing men replied: “Yes, by God, and I am going back to it just as fast as I can.”

There are two that I wish I could find again:

There were two men carrying a man on a stretcher. A shell crashed nearby, and all three men took off running.

An officer had a horse that was so afraid of combat, it would always turn away from it.

The officer had to sit in the saddle backwards, and look over the rear end of the animal.

Union artillery men were firing their cannons from positions in Ever Green Cemetery on Cemetery Ridge before Pickett’s Charge, when they noticed a sign. “All persons found using firearms in these grounds will be prosecuted with the utmost vigor of the law.” As the powder streaked men read the sign, they howled with laughter.

Sylvia G. L. Dannett  A Treasury Of Civil War Humor  1963
Irish American Cultural Institute’s Language Course Declared Success by Students

On Thursday evening, May 2nd, an Irish Language Course sponsored by the local chapter of the Irish American Cultural Institute [IACI] successfully concluded. The course which began at the end of February was held weekly at the Sea Girt Lighthouse. Micheál Ó Máille a native of Connemara, County Galway who grew up speaking Irish as his first language instructed the course, providing a unique blend of language, history and culture.

Ó Máille, an award-winning teacher, has experience instructing all levels of language training in immersion programs across the U.S. and abroad. He is a member of a number of various Irish language organizations, such as Daltaí na Gaeilge and Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann and has hosted the Irish radio hour at WRSU, Rutgers. “I’ve taught Irish for many years, in many settings, and I’ve never met a more committed group of learners. By the end of the course, students had a good basic vocabulary and were able to recite a poem and introduce themselves in Irish. For beginner students, that’s an achievement and a testimony to their dedication.”

Eighteen men and women from area towns including Avon, Belmar, Brick, Brielle, Manasquan, Point Pleasant Beach, Sea Girt, Spring Lake, Toms River and Wall came together weekly on Thursday evenings from 7 p.m. to 8 p.m. for the 10-week course. Although the majority of them had never taken an Irish class before this one, they made use of class material and instruction combined with online videos pertaining to each class to study and practice pronunciation. Maria Baker of Spring Lake said, “The ten weeks flew by. I’ve learned so much and had so much fun. I don’t want the class to end!” Similar sentiments were expressed by her fellow class-mates.
Dr. Peter Halas, Chairman of the IACI Jersey Shore Chapter said, “This was our first-time offering a course in the Irish language in an effort to advance our mission to provide resources to preserve, interpret, and promote Irish and Irish-American cultures. We weren’t sure what to expect. Our hope was that there would be local interest in the course since many area residents claim Irish-American heritage. The fact that we had such a strong turn-out was wonderful and the students’ positive feedback at the end of the course was extremely gratifying.”

The IACI also hosts talks on various aspects of Irish history and culture on the second Monday of every month at 7:00 p.m. at the Friendly Sons of the Shillelagh in Belmar. Admission is free for IACI and FSOS-Belmar members and $10 for guests. All are welcome to attend. For more information on IACI activities, follow them on Facebook at facebook.com/IACIJerseyShore.
On this Day in Irish History
June

1st 1944 - Fianna Fáil wins the general election.
2nd 1942 - Speed limits are introduced to reduce wear on tyres.

4th 1984 - US President Ronald Reagan addresses both houses of the Oireachtas.

7th 1921 - James Craig is elected first Prime Minister of Northern Ireland.
1944 - Further rationing of electricity is announced.
1996 - Garda Jerry McCabe is shot dead by the IRA in Limerick.
2001 - Ireland rejects the Nice Treaty in a referendum.

8th 1886 - Home Rule Bill is rejected, triggering riots in Belfast.

9th 1903 - University of Dublin agrees to award degrees to women.

10th 1961 - Prince Ranier and Princess Grace of Monaco are received in Dublin.
1983 - Sinn Féin leader Gerry Adams is elected MP for West Belfast.

11th 1843 - Tuam is the location of the first of a series of Monster Meetings calling for Repeal.

12th 1986 - Two giant pandas arrive at Dublin zoo.

13th 1951 - Éamon de Valera becomes Taoiseach with a tiny majority.

14th 1928 - Amendment to the Court of Justice Bill ensures certain judges must have competency in Irish.

15th 1977 - Fianna Fáil win the general election.
1988 - IRA kill six British soldiers in Lisburn.

16th 1871 - Westmeath Act allows detention without trial.
1904 - James Joyce meets Nora Barnacle, and later sets Ulysses on this day.
1922 - A general election in Ireland shows 75% support the Anglo-Irish Treaty.
1997 - National University of Ireland, Maynooth, comes into existence.

18th 1969 - French President Charles de Gaulle meets President De Valera in Dublin.

20th 1890 - St George's covered market is opened in Belfast.
1936 - Irish government declares the IRA an illegal organisation.
22nd 1911 - Sinn Féin protest Irish participation in the coronation of King George V.
1932 - 31st Eucharistic Conference opens in the Pro-Cathedral, Dublin.

23rd 1914 - Government of Ireland Bill introduced to the House of Lords.
1929 - Pontifical High Mass at Phoenix Park marks the centenary of Catholic emancipation.
1993 - Dáil Éireann passes a bill to decriminalise homosexuality.

24th 1973 - Éamon de Valera retires from office aged 90.

25th 1938 - Douglas Hyde is inaugurated as the first President of Ireland.
1945 - Seán T. O'Kelly is inaugurated as the second President of Ireland.
1959 - Éamon de Valera is inaugurated as the third President of Ireland.
1966 - Éamon de Valera is inaugurated for a second term as President.
1970 - Bishops lift the ban on Catholics attending Trinity College Dublin.
1973 - Erskine Childers is inaugurated as the fourth President of Ireland.

26th 1887 - Highest temperature ever recorded in Ireland (33.3C, measured at Kilkenny Castle).
1949 - 80,000 people attend a Pioneer Total Abstinence Society meeting at Croke Park.
1991 - The wrongful convictions of the Maguire Seven are quashed.

27th 1963 - US President J. F. Kennedy addresses both houses of the Oireachtas.
1998 - The Republic of Ireland qualifies for entry into the Economic and Monetary Union of the EU.

30th 1922 - Anti-Treaty forces storm the Four Courts and take 33 prisoners.
1932 - The Tailteann Games open in Croke Park.
1981 - Fine Gael leader Dr Garret Fitzgerald is elected Taoiseach.
1. The Titanic was built in which Irish city?
   a. Galway  c. Waterford
   b. Belfast  d. Dublin

2. What color was originally associated with Saint Patrick?
   a. Blue  c. Purple
   b. Yellow  d. Brown

3. What’s the name of the lead vocalist of the band The Corrs?
   a. Sharon Corr  c. Andrea Corr
   b. Jim Corr  d. Caroline Corr

4. How long was the Irish War of Independence (aka the Anglo-Irish War)?
   a. 1 year  c. 3 years
   b. 5 years  d. 6 years

5. The famous Delorean car was built in Dunmurry, Northern Ireland. It also featured in the movie trilogy ‘Back to the Future’. What was the name of the movies’ professor?
   a. Doc Holliday  c. Doc Payne
   b. Doc Brown  d. Doc Jones

6. What are Pear Picking Porky, Joker and Polly Pineapple?
   a. Whiskey  c. Mushrooms
   b. Cardgames  d. Lollypops

7. Frank Pantridge was born in Hillsborough, County Down. What was he famous for?
   a. Discovered the first radio pulsars  b. The development of the modern tractor
   c. Creating the ejector seat  d. Introducing CPR to the world

8. Which of the following ISN’T a famous Irish brewery?
   a. Guinness  c. Bulmers
   b. Smithwicks  d. Harp Lager

9. You’re testing out your Irish slang and suddenly say “we had a bit of gas that day”. What are you saying?
   a. Had a row that day  c. Had rain that day
   b. Had fun that day  d. Had no money that day

10. What is the national symbol of Ireland?
    a. Crown Jewels of Ireland  c. The Celtic Harp
    b. The Celtic Cross  d. The Irish Wolfhound

11. What the heck are crubeens?
    a. Boiled pigs’ feet  c. A type of black pudding
    b. Bread fried in bacon fat  d. Mashed potato with scallion

12. Which county is the most heavily populated in Ireland?
    a. County Dublin  c. County Wexford
    b. County Kerry  d. County Tyrone

13. What is Phillip Treacy (born in County Galway) famous for?
    a. Ships  c. Farming
    b. Politics  d. Hats
14. In which year did Ireland join the European Community?

15. Which of these men is not an Irish actor?

16. What are Kilkee, Youghal and Bundoran?

17. Which Irish band had a hit song called ‘Drunken Lullabies’?
   a. Dropkick Murphys  b. The Cranberries  c. Flogging Molly  d. Two Door Cinema Club

18. Who said “I had that stubborn streak, the Irish in me I guess”?

Irish Trivia Quiz - Answers