



Mayo Society of New York

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Founded 1879; incorporated 1891 as Mayo Men's Benefit, Patriot and Social Association of the City of New York; later as Mayo Men's P & B Association and in 1985, gender neutral as the Mayo Society, Inc. of the City of New York.

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Newsletter

Jan 2019

Regular Meeting Tuesday, January 08, 2019

Where: St. Sebastian Parish Center
39-60 57th Street
Woodside, NY 11377

Time: 7:30 P.M. Sharp

Regular meetings are held on the second Tuesday of each month. There are no meetings July & August.

Our President's Note

Dear Members and Friends,

Wishing you all a happy and a healthy New Year and I hope you had a wonderful Christmas with family and friends (and thank God we had no snow).

I would like to say a special thank you to Mike McMahon for donating the food for our Christmas party. As always, it was wonderful.

I was in touch with Father Gibbons over Christmas and he sends greetings from Knock to all our members. We hope to see him in March.

Talking about March, please remember that the Mayo Dance on will be March 9th. Journal ads will be going out shortly. Please support our guests of honor, **Lynn McGoldrick and Tom Henry**, and remember all the years that the Noel Henry band played at the Mayo Dance.

Thank you to our outgoing officers for their hard work and dedication to our Society and welcome to our new ones.

Annual Membership Dues are now outstanding. Kindly return renewal notices and checks to John Gray.

A special thank you to Mary Lydon-Regan and Sharon Trotti on a great job with the newsletter. If you have any interesting news, please send it to Mary, Sharon or myself.

Remember to keep in your prayers our sick and deceased.

Fondly,
Betty

Upcoming Events & News

➤ **United Irish Counties 115th Annual Dinner Dance** will be held in Antun's Queens Village on Friday, Jan 25, 2019.

<https://www.uicany.org/dinner-dance.html>

➤ **The Irish American Society of Nassau Suffolk and Queens will host Cherish the Ladies on Feb 22 at 8pm.** Tickets are \$30 and if anyone would like tickets, please call Betty McLoughlin or the Center. Joanie Madden always puts on a great show.

➤ **Distant Ireland - Migrations to the New World** The American Irish Historical Society is sponsoring an event regarding Irish immigration to the US. The story of Ireland and America are intimately entwined. The hopes and dreams of the Irish were lived out in America and they left an indelible Irish mark on the character of the country. Learn how to trace those elusive Irish and Scots-Irish ancestors with staff from the Ulster Historical Foundation, experts in Irish family history research.

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/distant-ireland-migrations-to-the-new-world-tickets-53754760937>

➤ **1st Irish Festival 2019** The 2019 Origin 1st Irish Festival celebrates its eleventh month-long theatre festival devoted to presenting contemporary plays from the island of Ireland. With 15 events in total, the Festival takes place in several distinguished venues across NYC representing 15 contemporary Irish writers and 6 mainstage productions originating from Ireland and NY. <https://www.origintheatre.org/whats-on/1st-irish-festival/>

➤ **Irish Men-Only Club** to admit women for first time in 235 years. **The Friendly Sons of St Patrick in New York** will allow women to join their March gala. <https://www.irishcentral.com/news/friendly-sons-of-st-patrick-new-york-women-2019>

Charge of the Irish Brigade at The Battle of Fredericksburg: "Never Were Men So Brave"

The Battle of Fredericksburg in The U.S. Civil War was fought on 13 December 1862. The Irish Brigade of the U.S. Army distinguished itself for valor, although the battle was a disastrous defeat. Their bravery was admired, cheered and remarked upon even by their enemies. Their sacrifice earned respect for the Irish in America and proved their loyalty to their new nation. The Brigade was composed of Irish immigrants in the cities of New York, Boston and Philadelphia. Many of them fled The Great Hunger of the 1840's. They were motivated by gratitude to their adopted nation, a desire to preserve the Union, and to improve the standing of the Irish in America; who suffered discrimination. The regiments were: 69th, 88th, and 63rd New York, 28th Massachusetts, and 116th Pennsylvania. Along with the U.S. National flag, each regiment had its own green flag with a golden harp and shamrocks beneath a sunburst; a republican motif signifying the dawning of a new day.

Many of the soldiers of the Irish Brigade were members of the Fenian Brotherhood, a secret oath-bound society dedicated to establishing an Irish republic by force. Many Irishmen would fight on the opposing confederate side, but in smaller numbers. The Irish Brigade was commanded by Brigadier General Thomas Francis Meagher, from Co. Waterford. He was a leader of the Young Ireland Rebellion in 1848 known as "Meagher of the Sword". He was sentenced to death by the British with several of his comrades for his revolutionary activities. His sentence was commuted to transportation to Tasmania. He escaped to New York in 1852 and became a prominent leader in the Irish exile community.

The southern economy was fueled by cotton and tobacco, labor-intensive crops, which were made competitive by slave labor. Cotton was in high demand by British factories. The British were aiding the Confederates with supplies and had massed troops in Canada, threatening to intervene. The U.S. Navy had blockaded the extensive Confederate coastline to cut them off from being supplied by the British. A big part of Confederate strategy was to get the British to recognize the Confederacy and intervene on their behalf, in much the same way as France had done in the American Revolution against the British. General Ambrose Burnside took command of the U.S. Army on 7 November 1862. His plan was to cross the Rappahannock River at Fredericksburg, Virginia using makeshift pontoon bridges delivered by boats, and seize the town. The ultimate objective was the Confederate capital of Richmond, Virginia. However, the pontoon boats were delayed, and the army stalled across the river from Fredericksburg. General Lee and his army wasted no time in fortifying their lines behind a stonewall at Marye's Heights, the high ground overlooking the town. The 600-yard approach to the high ground offered no cover. An artillery officer assured Confederate General James Longstreet: "A chicken could not live in that field when we open on it."

The Union troops finally crossed the river and captured Fredericksburg on 13 December. General Burnside then ordered a direct frontal assault on Marye's Heights. Only the 28th Massachusetts had their green flag that day. In place of the flags, General Meagher ordered the men to place sprigs of green boxwood leaves in their caps to remember their heritage. After two failed Union assaults on Marye's Heights, the next charge was the Irish Brigade. They advanced, facing murderous fire. From behind the Confederate line at the stone wall, they faced the 24th Georgia, commanded by Col. Robert McMillan, a native of Co. Antrim. Thousands of miles from home, Irishmen faced each other in battle. On came the Irish Brigade with a courage and determination that awed and touched friend and foe alike. They withdrew after staggering losses.

There was a total of 14 doomed assaults on Marye's Heights. The Union lost 12,650 killed or wounded, while the south lost 4,200. Of all the failed charges, that of the Irish Brigade was the most remembered. Opposing commander General Lee said of them: "Never were men so brave. They ennobled their race by their gallantry on that desperate occasion. Though totally routed, they reaped harvests of glory." Confederate General George Pickett wrote: "The brilliant assault on Marye's Heights of their Irish Brigade was beyond description. We forgot they were fighting us, and cheer after cheer at their fearlessness went up all along our lines."

Ironically, General Pickett would lead a likewise foolish and disastrous charge ordered by General Lee a few months later at the Battle of Gettysburg, Pennsylvania on 3 July 1863. As the Union troops laid down fire that decimated the advancing Confederates, they vengefully chanted "Fredericksburg!" Pickett's Charge is generally seen as the turning point of the war, which ended with Lee's surrender in April 1865. In June 1963, U.S. President John F. Kennedy brought the second battle flag of the 69th NY to Ireland, where it remains. It stood displayed behind him as he addressed the Oireachtas, and paid tribute to the bravery and sacrifices of the Irish Brigade. His ancestors, like many of those men, had emigrated to the U.S. during the Great Hunger in Ireland.

Kevin Rooney

Some e-mail is "bouncing" back as undeliverable. Email intercommunication is fast and efficient. Advise us of your email address changes ASAP. If you have an active email address and **you are not** receiving your digital newsletter means we do not have your email address. Oblige us ASAP: JCGray77709@gmail.com; maryblydon@yahoo.com

Newsletter Editors: Mary B. Lydon & Sharon Trotti.