

# *A Thread In Time*

*Volume 1 Issue 1*



**Newsletter of the  
National Association of Textile Workers of America, Inc.**

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## *President's Message*

Happy New Year! This is the start of our fourth year as a hereditary society. What a wonderful three years we have had. The Society was officially incorporated as of January 1, 2007. There were three people with a vision. It took nearly the entire year to get all of the official papers and numbers together. We were granted 501© (3) status.

Our second year, 2008, saw a growth in membership and the beginnings of realizing our Mission. We now had eleven members, four officers and our first year book. The snowball was rolling.

Last year, 2009, we grew to twenty members with three additional applications expected any time. We awarded our first scholarship, initiated a website ([www.textileworker.com](http://www.textileworker.com)) with the expertise of Webmaster Tracy Crocker, defined a new life membership category and made our first donation to the endowment fund of the Windham Textile and History Museum. In addition, a banner was developed and its inaugural presentation was at the Connecticut Massing of the Colors. The Hereditary Society Community has recognized our Society and we are listed on their web site ([www.hereditary.us](http://www.hereditary.us)).

What's ahead? We are looking forward to continued growth in membership, increasing the scholarship(s), the publication of more newsletters, determining how to organize subchapters of our National Society, an insignia pin, and perhaps some fundraising. These are a few of the goals for 2010, but we are not limited by this list. Please mention your ideas and let's get started working on them.

Thank you for your continued support of NSDTWA and I look forward to working with you on the various committees as they develop.

I invite you all to contribute to our newsletter. Please send me your articles, information, bulletins, etc.

Regards,  
*Mary Brown*

## ***Calendar of Events***

**May 16, 2010** - Annual Meeting 1 p.m.

Windham Textile and History Museum  
Willimantic, CT

**October 24, 2010** – Massing of the Colors 3 p.m.

Procession line up 2:30  
First Congregational Church  
Lebanon, CT

What is the Massing of the Colors? It is a gathering of hereditary and patriotic societies. The flags of each group are presented and displayed. The speaker talks about a subject germane to history, America, patriotism, etc. This year, the speaker will talk about Governor Jonathan Trumbull on the occasion of his 300<sup>th</sup> birthday. Some patriotic music, a drum beat for the procession and a brief prayer for everyone's continued health and longevity add to the celebration. The celebrants then recess to the church hall for refreshments and socialization. This colorful event is accompanied by many period outfits of the participants. Please plan to attend and support NSDTWA.

## ***Membership Notice***

The opportunity to enjoy life membership is now offered at

Under age 50 – 30 times the annual dues

Age 50 and older – 20 times the annual dues

We established this category of membership to allow members the privilege of a onetime payment and membership for life. This frees up our treasurer from multiple mailings for dues notices. You also have to consider that at sometime in the future dues will increase. This insures that you will not be affected by a dues increase. All life membership funds will be placed in a dedicated fund and only the interest will be used annually.

Currently, the annual dues are \$10. We know that we can't keep them at that level for long, so it may behoove you to purchase a life membership now. If you have already paid your 2010 dues, deduct them from your life membership check. Checks should be made out to NSDTWA and mailed to Gail Rebello, treasurer, 4 Village Hill Rd., Lebanon, CT 06249.

## ***Website***

Please visit our outstanding website at [www.textileworker.com](http://www.textileworker.com). This website was designed and is maintained by Tracy Crocker. You will notice that some of the honor roll members have special attachments with anecdotes about their life. You are welcome to submit material about your ancestor. Please contact or Tracy Crocker at [Tracy@tracycrocker.com](mailto:Tracy@tracycrocker.com) or Mary Brown at [mbrown51@snet.net](mailto:mbrown51@snet.net) for submission of this material.

## ***Scholarship Established***

A goal of our Society is to provide scholarships to Vocational School students. We are a new Society and this is our first award. The scholarship does not have to be used for college. It can be for licensing fees, tools, etc. Our Society will award \$100 to the student from your school who meets the following criteria:

1. Exemplary work ethic
2. Respect for self, family, peers, and persons in authority
3. Strong background and interest in American History
4. Good academic performance
5. Attendance record indicates no suspensions or unexcused absences

## ***Scholarship Recipient***

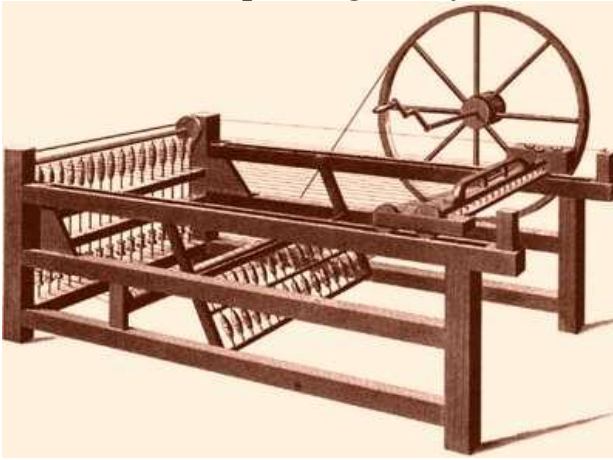
Timothy Meyer of Coventry, CT is a graduate of Windham Regional Vocational Technical School, Willimantic, CT. Tim is attending Vermont Technical College and is majoring in Architectural Technology which was the shop he was enrolled in at Windham Tech.

Dear NSDTWA

I want to thank you for your time and for awarding me this scholarship. I greatly appreciate your generosity. This scholarship will help to offset the growing cost of getting a degree and for this, I can't show you my thankfulness. Once again, thank you.

Sincerely,  
Timothy Meyer

## *The Spinning Jenny*



James Hargreaves was born in Blackburn, England about 1720. He was a carpenter and weaver with an interest in engineering. While residing in the village of Stanhill, England in the 1760's he came upon the idea of an invention, the Spinning Jenny, that would help launch the textile industry into the Industrial Revolution.

Spinning is the process of twisting several separate fibers into one thread. Before the Industrial Revolution, yarn was spun at home by women using a spinning wheel. One spindle created one thread. The Spinning Jenny enabled eight threads to be spun simultaneously with eight spindles. The resultant fibers are not as strong as single spun threads, but are suitable for the filling of the weft threads on a loom. (The weft threads run horizontally).

It was reported that spinners in Lancashire were upset with his cheaper competition. They marched on his house, forced entry and destroyed his equipment. He moved to Nottingham and erected a small spinning mill. Hargreaves applied for a patent in 1770, but others had already copied his machine and he earned no money from this. When Hargreaves died in 1778, there were over 20,000 Spinning-Jenny machines being used in Britain.

We have used the Spinning Jenny as a watermark for the stationery, application forms, etc. of the NSDTWA.

Source: Bellis, Mary, <http://inventors.about.com/library/inventors/blspinningjenny.htm>

## **In Search of Cornelius**

By Michael Steinberg

My mother (Midge) had always told us that her grandfather, Cornelius Donahue, had come to this country from Ireland, but exactly where in Ireland was murky. Maybe County Cork, maybe not.

At a certain point, my brother (David) and I became interested in obtaining dual US/Irish citizenship for ourselves and for our mother. But in order to do this, first of all we had to document where in Ireland Cornelius came from.

So began my quest, "In Search of Cornelius."

I enlisted Midge's help in this, as she seemed to know the full and complete history of even the most obscure relation as far back as she or anyone else could recall. Besides which, the idea of gaining Irish citizenship intrigued her. Mom told me Dad wanted no part of it though. When she informed him the dual citizenship status would only apply to her, he was relieved. Born a first generation US citizen on the Fourth of July, Lou wanted nothing but to be an All American guy.

So, at my request, one day Mom took me to St. Agnes Cemetery in Manchester, CT. There she showed me Cornelius and Mary Ann's tombstones, one next to the other. His said he was from Ireland, but not specifically where. I noticed that on the back of Mary Anne's stone was an inscription for Owen Tammany and remembered her maiden name was the same. When I looked at Mom for guidance, she responded instantly, "Oh that's Mary Ann's brother. He liked to go barefoot."

To the right of Cornelius' stone, but not directly, was another, even older gravestone. The inscription said it was for Catherine Donahoe (a variant of Donahue). It said she was from G\_\_\_\_\_ in County Limerick, Ireland. The rest of the letters after the G were too worn away for me to make out what municipality Catherine came from. Family lore tells us Cornelius was from County Cork, but Cork and Limerick share a border.

"Who's that?" I asked Midge. For once she was stumped.

As with the other gravestones we visited that day, I took a snapshot of it.

Mom led me to another part of the cemetery, and showed me where her mother and father were buried, side by side like Mary Ann and Cornelius. I was relieved to see that no one else's information was carved into the other side of either tombstone.

Midge also told me, for the first time, the story of how her father had to bury her stillborn sister Mary Ellen nearby, but beyond, the cemetery grounds, because the dogma of the time decreed that the child did not yet have an immortal soul, and so was denied admission into the official dead club's premises.

That day Midge also took me to Buckland, where she showed me the house on Adams Street where three generations of Donahues had lived, hers being the last, as well as the house next door where her father's older brother Bill and his family had lived. We took a little drive down Adams Street next, and Mom pointed out the paper mill where Cornelius had worked, now the Paper Mill Restaurant. A little further down the road we took a right over a small bridge, and then came upon the former woolen mill where 14 year old Pa had been working in 1900 along with Bill. The old mill was now being used as a furniture warehouse, but still had a plaque on it stating that blankets for the War of 1812 had been made there.

On the way to the cemetery that day we'd stopped for lunch at the Shady Glen Restaurant, not far from where our old house on Glenwood Drive in Manchester, and the strawberry field where I'd tried to evade kindergarten. We were both tired after traipsing around St. Agnes Cemetery and then the old home place in Buckland, but on the way back Midge insisted we stop at the Shady Glen again.

"But we just ate there!" I groused.

"We didn't have dessert," Midge replied. "It's a family tradition here of long standing."

So I reluctantly pulled into the parking lot one more time. I learned again that you should always listen to your mother, and it turned out to be a delicious suggestion.

At the same time all this family history interest had been taking hold of me, a woman named Sue Way in Manchester, CT, had been putting out a newsletter called "The Buckland Times," recounting the history of the area. In one article she ran a feature story, "The Donahues of Adams Street." In her story she reported much of the family history Midge and I had investigated in between our stops at the Shady Glen.



I contacted Sue Way with a bunch of questions, and told her of my mission to uncover Cornelius' place of origin. She agreed to send

me copies of the old census records and other historical document, like death certificates, that she'd obtained. This information gave me a bunch more clues in pursuit of Cornelius' town of birth, as well as a better understanding of Mom's family history.

Cornelius Donahue first appeared in the 1870 Census as living on Adams Street in Buckland. He was then 23, from Ireland and "works in a paper mill." Also listed in the household, with "?" written in the name space, was a female aged 62, also from Ireland. Catherine Donahoe's tombstone in St. Agnes Cemetery, next to Cornelius', listed her age at her death in 1875 as 64. Not a perfect match with the census info, but nearly so.

In Sue Way's info packet Cornelius' Death Certificate indicated he was in his early 40s when he died of "Consumption," now known as tuberculosis. Mom had told me he died from destroyed lungs due to exposure to dyes in the paper mill. His parents were listed on his Death Certificate as Bill and Kate Donahue from Ireland, exact towns of origin left blank. So was Catherine Cornelius' mother, Mom's great-grandmother and my great-great-grandmother?

I sent some of the documents to the County Limerick Genealogy Office in Ireland, requesting that they research exactly where Cornelius was born. They wrote back fairly soon to let me know that they needed more information before they could proceed with their investigation. So I sent more info, including the snapshots from Midge's and my visit to St. Agnes cemetery.

Soon I heard back. The snapshots had helped a lot. They had identified the town starting with G on Catherine Donahoe's tombstone as Garvahy, in a region not far from the County Cork border, and known for its paper mills. The office had also found a William and Catherine, or Kate, Donahue from the region, who had three sons: John, William and Eugene. They were born in 1834, 1841 and 1845, respectively. They couldn't find a son named Cornelius. However, they reported that the parish records (which included births), for the period during which Cornelius would have been born, had been lost.

If, as the 1870 Census indicates, Cornelius was 23 then, he would have been born in 1847. That year in Irish history is known as Black 47, the worst year of the “Irish Famine.” So it would be plausible to infer that parish birth records might go missing, when death was taking up so much of everyone’s time and so many lives.

By the way, it bears repeating that the so called Famine occurred when there was plenty of food sitting in British warehouses in Ireland. That food, however, was not available to the starving Irish peasants. Those cash crops were, with some few exceptions, shipped to England. There they were at the exclusive disposal of the British royalty and ruling class.

Could it be that Cornelius and Catherine were the only survivors of another famished family in Ireland? What happened to Father William and his sons John, William and Eugene?

Another fly in the ointment: Cornelius’ Death Certificate is from 1892. If he was born in 1847, that would have made his age at his time of death as 46, 3 or 4 years older than the 41 or 42 his 1870 Census record indicates. But it’s common knowledge records in those days were not as accurate as we think ours are today.

Another intriguing find in the course of my research was revealed when I obtained Mary Ann Tammany Donahue’s (barefoot) brother Owen’s Death Certificate from the Manchester Town Hall. This showed that both of their parents, Patrick and Mary Ann, were from Armagh in the North of Ireland, a fact previously unknown to Midge or her siblings. In addition, the document indicated that Mary Ann the elder’s maiden name was Cassidy. So who knows, we may be related to Neal Cassady of the Beats or Jack Cassidy of the Jefferson Airplane and Hot Tuna.

What a trip!

In the end, I never was able to pinpoint where Cornelius came from to the satisfaction of Irish regulations for granting dual citizenship. But it turns out that wouldn’t have mattered anyway, in terms of David and I getting Irish citizenship passed on to us if Midge had obtained hers. Because, I found out, Mom could only have passed it on to kids she gave birth to *after* she’d been granted Irish citizenship. This wasn’t very likely for a 70 something grandmother.

I guess Lou had the last laugh there!

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