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The Sinking of The Brig St John



Of Mud and Ledge Landings in America

**They that go down to the sea in ships,
Doing business in the great waters;
These have seen the works of the Lord,
and his wonders in the deep.**

-Psalm 106:23-24 Douay-Rheims Bible

My great granduncle, Rt. Reverend Monsignor Patrick Francis McSweeney (1837-1907), would oft quote this Psalm in his homilies. He was reflecting on his youthful passage to America in 1848 accompanying his father aboard the *Swatara* out of Cork. The *Swatara* came aground on mud flats at the entrance to Delaware Bay 90 miles short of her destination, the city of Philadelphia.

All 320 passengers walked off the ship with their belongings, if not their wits, intact. Callaghan and Patrick made their way overland to a relative who was the president of the nascent college at Villa Nova.

A same soft landing would not greet the 143 poor souls aboard the Brig *St. John* out of Galway. On the evening of 6 October 1849, the *St. John* driven by a fierce nor'easter inside of Cape Cod came up hard on the granite ledges south of Boston. Less than a mile from shore but inside Minots Light and the dangers it marked, the *St. John* was pounded mercilessly to splinters with the loss of some 120 Irish immigrants. Only 9 crew members and 11 passengers survived. Most of the others drowned at sea, except for 45 bodies that were washed ashore. They were never identified and were buried in a mass grave.

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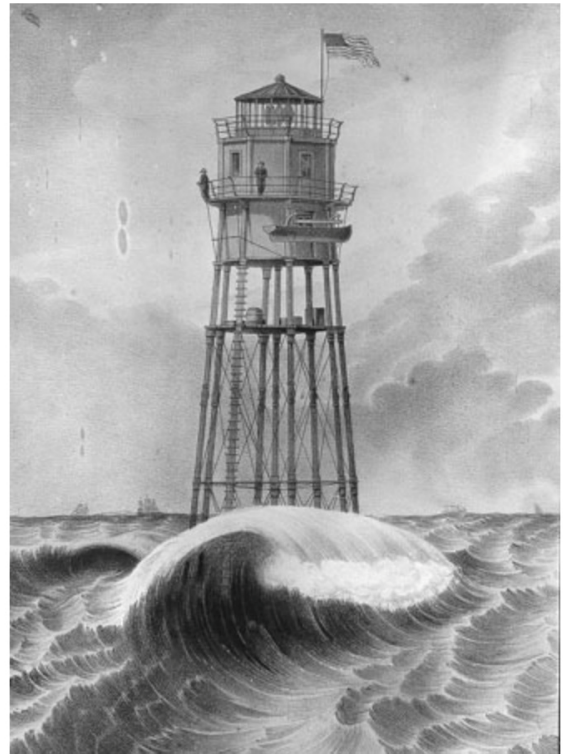
My grandfather, Charles J. O'Malley, who arrived in New York at age 16 from Newport, CO Mayo, under better sailing conditions in 1883, wrote in his 1939 memoir, *It Was News to Me*:

"The shore line in front of my home at Cohasset, Mass. was the scene of one of the earliest tragedies of my people. There were 140 lives lost in the sinking of the brig, *St. John*, out of Galway Ireland. In my youth the story of the great disaster was told and retold and the names of those who had perished were mentioned with great reverence and profound sorrow. Many of my own relatives were among the number."

None other than Henry David Thoreau, 32 at the time, diverted to the coast on a sojourn to Cape Cod from his home in Concord witnessed the carnage just days later. He found the sea "still breaking violently on the rocks." He recorded the scene in his journal: "In the first cove were strewn what seemed like fragments of a vessel, in small pieces mixed with sand and sea-weed, and great quantities of feathers; but it looked so old and rusty, that I at first took it to be some old wreck which had lain there for many years. I asked a sailor if that was the *St. John*. He said it was. I asked him where she struck. He pointed to a rock in front of us, a mile from the shore, called the Grampus Rock...A little further along the shore we saw a man's clothes on a rock; further, a woman's scarf, a gown, a straw bonnet, the brig's caboose, and one of her masts high and dry, broken into several pieces. In another rocky cove, several rods from the water, and behind rocks twenty feet high, lay a part of one side of the vessel, still hanging together

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Another, a large man, stood near by upon a rock, gazing into the sea, and chewing large quids of tobacco, as if the habit were forever confirmed with him, said to a companion, "Come, let's be off. We've seen the whole of it. It's no use to stay to the funeral."



The original Minots Ledge Light

On May 30, 1914, the Ancient Order of Hibernians erected a 19-foot Celtic Cross in Cohasset's Central Cemetery at Joy Place on the high ground above the mass grave to pay homage to the deceased.

Governor David A. Walsh gave the oratory before several thousand onlookers.

"Love of the dead is one of the kindest traits of the Irish character; the memories of the dead are kept green and fragrant, and custom has been sanctified by religion. This memorial erected here upon the round-bound coast to those exiles cast upon the shore is evidence that the hearts of the American Irish are still true to the kindly and reverent traditions of the race."

Gramps closes his book on a similar note: "The Irish in America have attained to distinction which they could not approach in their native land. This in itself is an evidence that liberty and opportunity are the essentials of human happiness and that the spiritual life so dear to the Irish can well find its true expression in freedom. God grant that the Irish will always defend these principles and live true to their adopted or native land---the United States of America.

Thanks to Paul McLoughlin, Colorado, USA for this lovely article

The Sinking of The Brig St John



Brightening up the streets of Cork-Shane O'Malley



It's a riot of colour where we needed it most.

Artist Shane O'Malley is putting the finishing touches on his mural on Cork's Lower Glanmire Road and it's already transformed a dull wall into a destination.

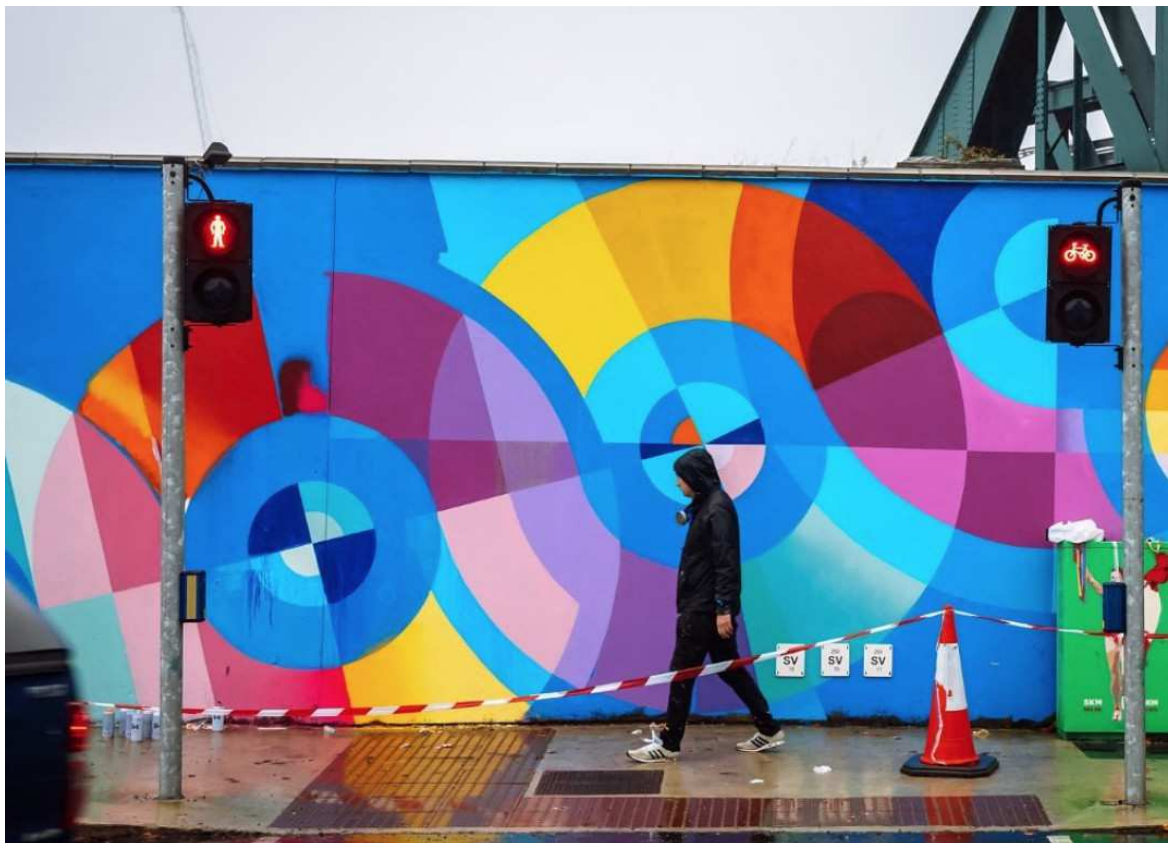
As the second installment of the Ardú Street Art project rolls out across the city, four more large-scale artworks have been revealed or are taking shape.

These pictures by local photographer John Beasley show the newest piece in all its bold glory.

Belfast artist Friz has finished her stunning piece at St Finbarr's Road, with Conor Harrington working at Bishop Lucey Park and Asbestos creating a mural at South Main Street.

Watch how everything comes together by following Ardú Street Art on Twitter.

Brightening up the streets of Cork-Shane O'Malley



The Tall Ship “Grace O’Malley” to take over from “Asgard II”?



Intended to replace the lost *Asgard II*, the Atlantic Youth Trust Charity chaired by Round the World sailor Enda O'Coineen, says a 164ft Tradewind schooner it has identified will act as the new 'flagship' for introducing young people across the island of Ireland to maritime and careers.

In addition, the Charity says the tall ship will have a key role to play in the areas of research, innovation, tourism promotion and providing a support outlet for vulnerable young people.

O'Coineen, a former Director of *Coiste an Asgard*, says "we have long since championed the need to replace Ireland's lost sail training vessel the *Asgard II* in a dynamic and creative new way".

"This would be a strategically important move for ensuring we are well-positioned to maintain our island's rich maritime heritage, skill set and knowledge. This will be vital for connecting future generations with the ocean and adventure who might normally never get the opportunity. As we emerge from the Covid 19 pandemic, the urgency for supporting projects like this has never been more important as we seek to

The Tall Ship “Grace O’Malley” to take over from “Asgard II”?

address growing mental health challenges facing our young people.”

In looking for a solution to this, the Atlantic Youth Trust have identified, a 164ft Tradewind schooner lying in Sweden which is an ideally suited replacement for delivering youth maritime development and sail training. The ship is to be renamed the Grace O’Malley, after the so-called Mayo ‘Pirate Queen’. Built of steel in a modern structure, and elegant lines of a 19th century Tall Ship, she is considered fit for purpose to high safety specifications.



The Grace O’Malley, is a 164ft Tradewind schooner. The ship is a realistic and modern version of her Edwardian counterpart. She is a replica of a timber merchant schooner originally built in Denmark in 1909.

Built to the same design of Lars-Erik Johansson and constructed in Sweden by Kockcums Submarine Yard, she was launched on 10th August 1980.

In 1986 she sailed to Quebec to take part in the Canadian 450th-anniversary celebrations. Under new ownership, she was re-fitted in 1990 and again in 1993.

The interior was fitted out by the Vindo Yacht Yard and the mast and rig in Skagen, Denmark. She is built with submarine standard steel, teak clad superstructure, teak laid decks and oak capping rails.

This elegant and traditional vessel is fully coded with an E100 Pax Certification for 100-day guests and 37 overnight passengers/trainees and crew.



@clanomalley

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[o_malley_clan_association](https://www.instagram.com/o_malley_clan_association)

The O'Malley Clan Association aims to reach out to O'Malleys from all around the world and foster links between the O'Malleys around the globe and the clan at home here in Ireland.

The Clan Association formed in 1953 has been connecting O'Malleys around the world in The US and Canada, Britain, Australia, South Africa, New Zealand, South America, and anywhere else you can think of for over 60 years now.

We hope with our new website, and newsletter, that We can go from strength to strength in our aim to connect all the O'Malleys around the

The O'Malley Clan DNA Project on Family Tree DNA

The most common queries we get at The O'Malley Clan Association are queries in relation to helping to trace peoples ancestors in Ireland. As we all know, written records can only take us so far, (if you're lucky you'll get back to the early 1800's or late 1700's).

Many of the Irish Census Records and other historic documents were destroyed during the early part of the 20th century and as a result it can be very hard to trace ancestors back beyond the 19th century. Church records are a help, but can be patchy at times.

One way of narrowing down the search is through DNA testing. The O'Malley Clan Association is involved in a project with Family Tree DNA to test as many O'Malleys as possible to try and expand our knowledge of our roots as much as we possibly can.

There's a specific page for the project on the Family Tree DNA website:

<https://www.familytreedna.com/groups/omalley/about>

Check it out, there's lots of info there, and administrators also for any questions.

