

The Limerick lad, the Burlington lady, and the founding of Saint Michael's College

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3rd Burlington Irish Heritage Festival

In a few years, Saint Michael's College will celebrate the one hundredth anniversary of its founding. Centennial celebrations are a great catalyst for future planning and also a wonderful opportunity to look back into the past. The history of Saint Michael's College is, I believe, a rich field but one that has been rarely furrowed.¹ Like the few others who have studied the history of Saint Michael's, I have found it to be full of surprises. Not the least of the surprises are the roles that an Irish immigrant from Limerick and one of Burlington's most famous women played in the creation of Saint Michael's College. But before examining their roles, permit me sketch out the founding of the College itself.

1. THE FOUNDING OF SAINT MICHAEL'S COLLEGE

On Sunday, 14 September 1904, Saint Michael's College opened its doors to thirty-four boys and young men. The physical assets of the College consisted of one newly-expanded building situated on eighteen acres of land in that part of the Town of Colchester known as Winooski Park. The building was a distinguished old farmhouse, to which had been hastily added a four-storey all-purpose structure. The building stood on the corner of the road (now Route 15) which climbs up from Winooski Falls to the plateau of Winooski Park and continues on into Essex Junction. Since the plateau falls off abruptly to the east of the College, the site affords spectacular vistas of the Green Mountains, stretching across the horizon from Camel's Hump to Mount Mansfield. The core of the

¹Though no comprehensive history of the College has been published, a useful booklet was printed to commemorate the College's golden jubilee: Vincent B. Maloney, SSE, and Jeremiah K. Durick, *St. Michael's through the years* (Winooski Park: St. Michael's College Press, 1955). More detailed studies of the College's early years have been done by Gerald E. Dupont, SSE, "The history of St. Michael's College", a privately published MS, in three parts (Winooski Park: St Michael's College, 1970), and Thomas H. Geno, "From Mont-Saint-Michel to Saint Michael's College: early Edmundite years in Vermont, 1892-1904" (author's MS, 1996); both in the S[aint] M[ichael's] C[ollege] Archives.

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founding faculty of the new College was composed on several French refugees, members of a Catholic religious order now known as the Edmundites or Society of St Edmund. It can be safely said that even three years prior to its opening none of the founders of the College had the slightest idea that they would be starting a college; in fact, most had only recently arrived in Vermont. What prompted the founding of Saint Michael's was not a master plan, but a host of problems that some truly far-sighted and steadfast individuals turned into high-risk opportunities.

The problems were in France, not Vermont. In July 1901, the government of the Third Republic enacted the so-called 'Laws of Associations', which were designed to force all male and female religious orders to submit to government control or else to depart from France and lose their properties. The 'Laws' were the climax of a decade-long contest between church and state in France, and a story too complex for us today.² The result, however, was that thousands of French sisters, priests and brothers fled their native land, leaving behind their families and their labours. Most of the French refugees went to houses that their orders had in other countries.³ Edmundites, unlike most other orders, had done little in anticipation of the chaos which erupted in July 1901. The only house which Edmundites at that time had outside of France was in Swanton, Vermont.

Actually, Edmundites had first come to the 'new world' in 1891 and the following year they made a foundation at Keeler's Bay in South Hero. It was an inauspicious place for men from the old world to encounter the new. Within three years all the Edmundites had abandoned Keeler's Bay, most returning to France. One of them, however, remained in Vermont. He was a young Breton priest, Théophile M. Aubin, SSE [1866-1935], who became "truly the founder of the Edmundites

²Generally, see Maurice Larkin, *Church and state after the Dreyfus affair* (London, 1974); John McManners, *Church and state in France, 1870-1914* (New York, 1972). On the Edmundites specifically, see Michel Denis, *L'Église et la République en Mayenne, 1896-1906* (Paris, [1967]), Alype-Jean Noirot, *Le Département de l'Yonne comme diocèse* (5 vols., Auxerre, 1978-82), 1:273-95 and vol. 3, *passim*, and T.H. Geno, "From Mont-St-Michel".

³Recent studies have found that the laws "were far more damaging than has previously been recognized" (Nicholas Atkin, "The politics of legality: the religious orders in France, 1901-45", in Frank Tallet and N. Atkin, eds., *Religion, society and politics in France since 1789* (London, 1991): 149-65, at p. 150; see also Ralph Gibson, *A social history of French Catholicism, 1789-1914* (London, 1989): 127-33.

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in America.”⁴ Perhaps because they shared a common Breton heritage, Fr Aubin was befriended by the Rev. Jean Louis Cam [1835-1903], the founding pastor of Nativity parish in Swanton. Fr Cam had come to Vermont shortly after the Catholic diocese of Burlington was created in 1853, and five years later, in 1858, he was sent by the first bishop of Burlington, Louis de Goesbriand [1816-99] - another Breton - to found a parish in Swanton. Thirty-seven years later, in 1895, Fr Cam, initiated action to turn the administration of the large Swanton parish over to Fr. Aubin.⁵ In September 1895, Fr Aubin became the pastor of Nativity parish and the superior of a new Edmundite house in Swanton, which consisted of himself and only one other Edmundite.⁶ Yet, from this small base, Fr. Aubin quickly established a solid foundation for the future growth of the Edmundites. In fact, by 1898 a school for aspiring Edmundites, both Vermonters and young Frenchmen, was opened in Swanton.

It was Fr. Aubin who saw the growing church-state problems in France as an opportunity for expanding the Edmundite's presence in Vermont. Most Edmundites, however, saw in the problems only the collapse of their works in France. The magnificent Mont-St-Michel in Normandy, the ancient Cistercian Abbey of Pontigny in Burgundy, and several other institutions which Edmundites had re-built or newly established were confiscated by the French government and sold at auctions.

⁴Aubin, born on 21 June 1866 in Cherrueix (Ille-et-Vilaine), Brittany; made his religious profession as an Edmundite in 1887 and was ordained a priest in 1892 at Laval (Mayenne). He arrived at Keeler's Bay on 26 October 1893, went to Holy Angels parish, St Albans, in May 1894, and was appointed the first Edmundite pastor of Nativity parish, Swanton, in September 1895, where he remained until 1903. He was superior of the Edmundites, 1895-98 and again for the critical period from 2 June 1902 until 16 August 1903. After three years in England (1903-6), he returned to Swanton, 1906-29, then to Pontigny (Yonne), France, where he died 18 March 1935. He was a founding incorporator of both St Michael's Institute (1903) and St Michael's College (1913). (Joseph N. Couture, SSE, *Catholic clergy of Vermont* (2 vols., Saint Michael's College MS, 1964): 2:318-21 (SMC Archives); A-J. Noirot, *Le Département de l'Yonne comme diocèse*, 5:306; Joseph McLaughlin, SSE, *From Pontigny* (Winooski Park: Society of St Edmund, 1978): 24).

⁵See Dupont, "The history of St. Michael's College", 1:7-10. Fr Cam turned over the administration of the parish in September 1895; in November, he went to Winooski Park to serve as chaplain of the newly founded Fanny Allen Hospital, where he died on 24 October 1903 (Couture, *Catholic clergy*, 1:143-45).

⁶The other Edmundite was Ange Marie Filiord [1870-96], who arrived earlier in 1895, was ordained in 1896 at Burlington (the first Edmundite ordained outside of France) but he died after a short illness on 15 November 1896 (Dupont, 1:7).

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People, whose lives and careers had looked so promising in their homeland, witnessed their heritage and their futures thrown into disarray. Yet, Aubin viewed the disasters in France as a chance for a new beginning in Vermont. He himself went back to France in the summer of 1902 and saw for himself what one of his confrères described as “the catastrophe ... the destruction of all our works”.⁷ He managed to persuade six young and well-educated French Edmundite aspirants, including his despondent confrère, to leave with him for Vermont that September. Aubin also persuaded his Edmundite superiors to authorize the establishment of an Edmundite novitiate in Vermont - the first such Edmundite institution outside France. A novitiate is a specially designed house of training in which aspirants to a religious order live for a year so as to experience the order's way of life in order to test their suitability for making profession of religious vows. Establishing a novitiate is a formal and deliberate commitment by a religious order, and it is to Aubin's great credit that amidst ‘the catastrophe’ in France he was able to obtain approval for planting a potential seed of re-birth in a place virtually unfamiliar to his religious superiors.

In fact, Fr Aubin went back to France at the end of July 1902 with even more ambitious plans. Obviously, if a novitiate were successfully launched in Vermont and new members professed, the question would be what would they do next? As important as the Swanton parish was for Edmundites, it could only support a limited number of clergy. Moreover, it was technically a work of the diocese of Burlington and not a distinctly Edmundite work. In early July, the new bishop of Burlington, John Michaud [1843-1908] proposed to Aubin that the Edmundites establish a college at Winooski Park.⁸ Evidently, the bishop's proposal was fashioned with assistance from several others, most notably the founding pastor of St Francis Xavier parish in Winooski, the Rev. Jean-Frédéric Audet [1842-1917], and the Rev. Daniel O'Sullivan [1853-1918], pastor of St Mary's parish in St Albans, who had been the founding president of the short-lived St Joseph's College in

⁷[Victor M. Nicolle, SSE], *Historical sketch of the Society of St Edmund* ([Winooski Park: Society of St Edmund], 1943): 10). Though published anonymously, Nicolle's authorship has never been in doubt.

⁸Aubin to Bishop Michaud, 3 July 1902 (Diocese of Burlington Archives); quoted in Dupont, 1:17-18.

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Burlington.⁹ In the event, when Aubin went back to France at the end of the month he went with some very ambitious plans. He returned to Vermont three months later, on 21 September, with evidence of considerable success: six more French aspirants, a novice master, and approval for his plans.¹⁰ And, on Monday, 29 September, only eight days after returning, Fr. Aubin purchased what was then called the McClelland property in Winooski Park from Mr & Mrs Michael F. Kelly. For a sale price of \$5,500 Aubin purchased eighteen acres of land, a farm house and three small buildings.¹¹ The Kellys had acquired the McClelland property only six months earlier from its absentee owners.¹² The Kellys' purchase was unique in that the entire purchase price was provided by loans secured by two mortgages on the property itself, which suggest that the Kellys were acting with a larger purpose in mind. In the event, on Monday, 13 October, Aubin formally opened the new 'St Michael's House' in Winooski Park, and ten aspiring Edmundites - eight Frenchmen and two Americans - began their novitiate.¹³

⁹Audet's role will become evident shortly. In his letter to Michaud, Audet noted that he had "stopped in St Albans to speak to Rev. O'Sullivan, following the wishes of Your Excellency." Another possible participant in the decision was Mother Emilie Renaud, RHSJ [1850-1918], superior of the newly established Fanny Allen Hospital; see the *Chronicle of Fanny Allen Hospital*, pp. 224-25, which was written after 1911. Another participant may have been Fr Cam, who was chaplain of Fanny Allen.

¹⁰"*Communauté des Oblates des Sacres Coeur établie à Swanton, Vt.: Réunions du Conseil*" (commonly, and subsequently here, referred to the 'Swanton house council minutes'), p. [7-8], entry for 24 September 1902 (SSE Archives).

¹¹Town of Colchester Land Records (City Clerk's Office, Winooski), vol. 32, p. 155: 29 September 1902; 'Swanton house council minutes', pp. [9-10], entries of 4 and 7 October 1902. Records refer to the McClelland's lot being 20 acres more or less, but that overlooks the 2 westerly acres which an earlier owner (the Lanes) conveyed to Winifred McHugo (vol. 24, p. 431: 23 May 1887; and vol. 26, p. 51: 27 May 1887; see also vol. 24, p. 463).

¹²The Kellys purchased the property on 24 March 1902 from Mrs Hattie McClelland of South Braintree, Mass., and Mrs Loraine Gregory of Burlington for \$4,500 (Colchester Land Records, vol. 32, p. 124). These ladies had jointly obtained the property from the estate of their late father, Franklin Woodworth [+1894], on 26 December 1895 (vol. 30, pp. 27-30). The property had changed hands several times, with a high sale price of \$8,500 in 1888 and 1870 (vol. 24, p. 463; vol. 20, p. 57). The farmhouse seems to have been built between 1866-70 by George Babcock, since the value of the property more than doubled between those four years.

¹³"Records, Fathers of St. Edmond, Swanton, 1895-1940" (commonly known as 'The Swanton chronicle'), p. 95, entry of 14 October 1902. The French novices were: Fr Joseph Bidet [1876-?], Pierre Renard [+1918], Edmund Total [+1957], Rogatien Landrin [1885-1944], Alain Lequellec [+1918], Victor Nicolle [1885-1959], J.M. Herrouet [1883-1961]; the Americans were: George Ledoux and William Jeanmarie [1882-1949]. Another Frenchman, Louis Cheray [1879-1949] joined the novices in November.

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Fr. Aubin purchased the Kellys' property in his own name, borrowed a thousand dollars from the Swanton Bank to meet the cash requirement and accepted the two mortgages already on the property.¹⁴ The high financial risks associated with the action reflected the greater overall risks associated with the whole venture. After all, Aubin had only three other Edmundite priests working with him in Vermont; all were Frenchmen, one was in ill-health and Aubin was the only American citizen¹⁵. These four, plus two lay brothers, had to provide not only for themselves but also for two seminarians preparing for ordination and the ten novices.¹⁶ Yet despite all the risks, the acquisition of the Kellys' majestic property was seen even by contemporaries to be a brilliant decision.¹⁷ Two years later, in September 1904, after expanding the farmhouse, St. Michael's House became Saint Michael's College.¹⁸

Among the many questions associated with the founding of Saint Michael's, I wish to explore one: who were Michael and Ann Kelly and how did these Irish-born Vermonters come to possess the magnificent property that they sold to Fr Aubin in 1902 and which became the core property of Saint Michael's College?

¹⁴The Swanton house council minutes', pp. [7-8], 24 September 1902; Colchester Land Records, vol. 32, p. 155.

¹⁵Besides Aubin, there were Frs J.M. Fouillet [1857-1927], Arthur Fricot [1868-1941], Ernest Salmon [1873-1961]. Aubin became an American citizen on 17 September 1901 (Franklin Co. Courthouse Records vol. 1(b), p. 211; cited in T.H. Geno, p. 181, n. 197).

¹⁶The seminarians were Eugene Labory [1880-1975] and Louis Cheray [1879-1949]; the lay brothers were Joseph Michon [+1955] and Prosper Pautrat [+1931].

¹⁷Writing in 1905, J-F. Audet described the site as "un des plus merveilleux et des plus agréables" in the State both in terms of its natural setting and access to human amenities and, using English, "an ideal place" for a college (*Histoire de la congrégation Canadienne de Winooski au Vermont* (Montréal, 1906): 143-46).

¹⁸The expanded building was described in detail by the *Burlington Free Press & Times*, 30 September 1904 (edited version in Dupont 1:37-8).

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2. THE LIMERICK LAD, PART ONE

Though both Michael Kelly and his wife Ann were buried in Burlington during the early part of the 20th century, their lives began across the Atlantic in Ireland. Michael was born in Limerick in 1835; Ann Quinn was born in Co. Cavan four years later, in 1839.¹⁹ Michael was a son of Michael Kelly and Mary Welch; Ann a daughter of Andrew Quinn and Bridget Kelly.²⁰ Unfortunately, at present we know nothing more about the families or early lives of Michael and Ann.²¹ Michael left Ireland at the age of 12, which means that he was among the million Irish who fled the country during the Irish famine or the Great Hunger, the greatest tragedy in Irish history and one of the most tragic events in human history. Between 1845 and 1850, at least one million Irish people died in Ireland and another million - including Michael Kelly - fled.²² Even today, a century and half later, the population of the entire island is only 61 per cent of what it was when Michael left. The particular circumstances in which Michael left - whether alone or with other family members, his means of travel, etc. - are not presently known, nor is the place of landing. I suspect, however, as I shall explain later, that Michael ended up in New York City.

¹⁹Michael and Ann Kelly were buried in St Joseph's Cemetery, Burlington, section E, plots 39 and 40; a large stone marks the spot, and gives the above dates. Also buried with them was John Kelly, who is presumably Michael's nephew and the executor of his estate. On Michael's death certificate, his date of birth is reported to have been 9 September 1837 (Town of Colchester, Death Records, vol. 8, p. 499). No date of birth is given for Ann (vol. 7, p. 51). Birth dates for pre-famine Irish immigrants are notoriously unreliable; only after 1864 were Catholic births officially registered (John Grenham, *Tracing your Irish ancestors* (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 1992): 1-2). I use the gravestone dates.

²⁰Town of Colchester, Marriage Records, vol. 4, p. 59. Ann's death record gave Ann as her mother's first name; the marriage record seems more reliable.

²¹Kelly and Quinn are, respectively, the second and twentieth most common surnames in Ireland, with the Kellys most often associated with east Galway and the Quinns with Tyrone (Edward MacLysaght, *Irish families: their names, arms and origins*, 4th ed. (Dublin, 1985): 112-3 and 141).

²²Exact counts are not possible, but the above reflects the current scholarly consensus; see Christine Kinealy, *This great calamity: the Irish famine 1842-52* (Dublin/Niwot, Co., 1994); Cormac Ó Gráda, *The great Irish famine* (New York, 1989), and his *Ireland: a new economic history, 1780-1939* (London/New York, 1994); Peter Gray, *The Irish famine* (New York, 1995).

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The first record of Michael in the United States is as a soldier in the Union army during the American civil war. Michael was one of 144,221 Irish-born soldiers who served in the Union army during that remarkable and tragic war that had such a profound effect on the shaping of the American nation.²³ That so many Irishmen who had fled the horrors of the famine in Ireland found themselves on the battlefields of the war between the states is one history's ironies. In Michael's case, he first appears as a non-commissioned officer in the 5th US light artillery, battery B, at the famous Battle of Cedar Creek during the Shenandoah Valley campaign of 1864. Since Michael was a non-commissioned officer at this time, he must have entered the Union army earlier.

The 5th US light artillery was under the command of Henry A. Du Pont [1838-1926], the heir-apparent to the E.I. DuPont de Nemours & Co. of Delaware, a firm which played a crucial role in manufacturing gunpowder for the Union army during the Civil War.²⁴ Henry DuPont went to the US Military Academy, West Point, graduating at the top of his class in 1861, just as the war began. His first two years in the army were spent in New York harbour, where he was both the 1st lieutenant of the 5th US artillery and assistant adjutant-general of the Union troops in the harbour. Since regimental officers, such as DuPont, played a crucial role in the recruiting of their own soldiers, and since adjutants-general oversaw all recruitment, it seems likely that Michael Kelly was recruited while DuPont was in New York, possibly after the draft was introduced in 1863.²⁵ In the summer of 1863, DuPont's light artillery brigade was sent from New York into the battlefields of Virginia, and joined the Department or Army of West Virginia. During the following summer and fall, DuPont's forces played a prominent role in the so-called Shenandoah Valley campaign.

²³The number of Irish-born soldiers is based on the report of the 1869 US Sanitary Commission (see Paul Jones, *The Irish Brigade* (Washington, DC, 1969): 'Foreword').

²⁴For Henry A. DuPont, see his entries in the *D[ictionary of] A[merican] B[iography]* (11 vols., New York, 1946-58): 3:528-29, and *National cyclopaedia of American biography* (New York, 1896-): 6:457-58.

²⁵The Union's first military draft was introduced in July 1863, and prompted a major riot in New York city; most of the rioters were Irishmen. Several regiments were sent to New York to restore order and insure the execution of the draft (see F.W. Welcher, *The union army, 1861-65* (2 vols., Bloomington, IN, 1989): 1:13-14).

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According to Howard Coffin, the gifted writer of the history of Vermonters in the Civil War:

No place in Vermont looks so much like [the Shenandoah Valley] as the Champlain Valley around the apple orchard towns of Addison and Shoreham: the mighty Adirondacks to one side, the lofty Green Mountains on the other, and down the middle runs Snake Mountain. Without Lake Champlain, the place is almost a twin of the Shenandoah Valley at the Cedar Creek-North Fork confluence.²⁶

The majestic beauty of the Shenandoah Valley also suggests its strategic importance. This “lush strip of fertile, river-bottom land along Virginia’s western border was the breadbasket of the South.”²⁷ The cornucopia between the Allegheny Mountains to the north and the Blue Ridge Mountains to the south, provided abundant food for General Robert E. Lee’s Army of Northern Virginia. Additionally, the so-called Valley Turnpike running through the center of the valley was a virtual expressway northwards to the Potomac River and southwards to the town of Lexington, home of the Virginia Military Academy (VMI), the West Point of the South. Indeed, it was one of VMI’s most distinguished graduates, General Thomas ‘Stonewall’ Jackson, who had successfully secured the Shenandoah Valley for the Confederates in 1862. Two years later, however, with Lee’s forces weakened, the Union government launched its offensive into the Valley.

A recounting of the Valley campaign is beyond our purposes here, but a brief résumé is needed to explain the importance of the culminating Battle of Cedar Creek at which Michael Kelly served with distinction.²⁸ Captain DuPont’s light artillery had its first major encounters in May and

²⁶Howard Coffin, *Full duty: Vermonters in the Civil War* (Woodstock, Vt., 1993): 306.

²⁷Thomas A. Lewis, *The Shenandoah in flames: the Valley campaign of 1864* (Alexandria, Va., 1987): 17.

²⁸My account relies principally on Thomas A. Davis’s *Shenandoah in flames*, Howard Coffin’s *Full duty*, and Shelby Foote’s *The civil war: a narrative* (3 vols., New York, 1958-1974), vol. 3, ch. 4. See also William C. Davis, *The battle of New Market* (Garden City, NY, 1975); Edward J. Stackpole [1894-], *Sheridan in the Shenandoah: Jubal Early’s nemesis* (Harrisburg, Pa., 1961); Edward Raymond Turner [1881-1929], *The New Market campaign, May 1864* (Richmond, Va., 1912); Frank J. Welcher, *The Union army, 1861-65* (2 vols., Bloomington, Ind., 1989).

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June 1864 as part of a Union force of about 8,500 soldiers, mostly infantry, some calvary and fewer light and heavy artillery. DuPont's battery was usually composed of six 3-inch guns which were mounted on two-wheel carriages that were drawn by horses and thus capable of being quickly moved to support the soldiers in the field. Because of their great value and because they covered the foot soldiers in battle, the light artillery were usually placed slightly behind the combatants. During their first three engagements, the smaller Confederate forces won two out of three of the initial battles against the much larger Union army. In these three battles, DuPont and his men learned more than they wanted about how to support a retreating army without letting either their guns or themselves fall into Confederate hand. After the third battle, Union headquarters decided to change its overall strategy. A much larger army, of about 37,000 men, was mobilized and sent into the Valley and placed under the overall command of 33-year-old General Philip Sheridan [1831-88] of Ohio, whose parents were from Co. Cavan.²⁹ In the newly reorganized Army of the Shenandoah under Sheridan's command, DuPont was made commander of the light artillery of Corp. VIII. Also forming part of Sheridan's forces was the First Vermont Brigade, under the command of Colonel James C. Warner of Middlebury, which was attached to Corp. XIX.³⁰ This was the first and only time DuPont's unit served along side Vermonters.

Under Sheridan, the Union forces won two major victories in September 1864, at the battles of Opequan or Third Winchester and Fisher's Hill. DuPont's role in these victories earned him promotion to Major. The Confederate forces of about 21,000 men, led by General Jubal A. 'Old Jube' Early [1816-94] of Virginia, lost those two battles but the men in gray were not actually defeated.³¹ However, Sheridan mistakenly thought Old Jube and his army had fled across the Blue

²⁹For Sheridan, see his entry in the *DAB* 9:79-91; and his *Personal memoirs* (New York, 1891).

³⁰In addition to Coffin, see also Aldace F. Walker [1842-1901], *The Vermont Brigade in the Shenandoah Valley, 1864* (Burlington, 1869); George N. Carpenter, *History of the Eighth Regiment Vermont volunteers, 1861-65* (Boston, 1866).

³¹For Early, see his entry in the *DAB* 3:598-99, and his *War memoirs*, Frank E. Vandiver, ed. (Bloomington, Ind., 1960).

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Ridge Mountains. Based on that mistake, Sheridan made two further misjudgements. He decided to withdraw his forces northwards and to burn the crops and mills of the Valley in order to make them useless to the Confederates. 'The Burning', as it was called, began on 29 September and created a legacy of hatred among the residents of the Shenandoah. The destruction also enraged Jubal Early's army, motivating them in ways that Sheridan had not anticipated. Indeed, Sheridan mistakenly thought that Early's army was no longer in the Valley. In the early morning hours of Wednesday, 19 October, Sheridan's army learned to their great surprise that the Confederates were very much in the Valley; thus began the Battle of Cedar Creek.

General Early's scouts had spotted a strategic weakness in the deployment of Sheridan's army just south of Middleton. However, Early's army numbered less than 21,000 whereas Sheridan had about 31,000. Early decided on a sudden attack before sunrise. Before 5:00 a.m. a large force of Confederates surged against the eastern flank of Corp VIII, where DuPont's brigade was positioned. Fortunately for himself and his men, DuPont was aware of the vulnerability of their position and they reacted quickly to the Confederate onslaught. Half of DuPont's guns fired point-black into the Confederates, while the other half retreated and repositioned themselves. This leap-frogging type of retreat, which they had learned in their earlier defeats, allowed DuPont's soldiers to slow the Confederates advance and to keep their guns from falling into Confederate hands. Meanwhile, the vast bulk of the Union army had been caught in total surprise by the Rebels' attack. As a result, most of the men in blue panicked and "fled in their night clothes, without their guns, hats or shoes", according to one witness.³² "The broad plain was a scene of rout," wrote a Union officer, "wagons, ambulances, artillery, soldiers, every fellow for himself, moving backwards in sullen discouragement in the faces of the yelling victors."³³ One of the few Union units to hold its ground was the 8th Vermont Regiment, under the command of Colonel Stephen Thomas of Bethel. "A sea of Confederate hands reached out for the banner of the 8th Vermont, three color-bearers were killed,

³²Private G.W. Nichols of the 61st Georgia Regiment, quoted in Lewis, pp. 145-46.

³³Quoted in Lewis, p. 147.

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and 'men actually clenched and rolled upon the ground in the desperate frenzy of the contest for the flag'.³⁴ Within a few minutes of hand-to-hand combat, the Vermont regiment lost 110 of its 164 men. Early's army seemed on the verge of tremendous victory.

Meanwhile General Sheridan was about fifteen miles from the battle, at Winchester. The previous day he had spent in Washington trying to get support for his overall strategy. He left Washington on Tuesday evening, 18 October, taking a special train to Martinsburg, and then rode about thirty miles to Winchester, where he spent the night. He was awakened at 6 a.m. with reports of the boom of distant artillery. At first he did not grasp the gravity of the situation, but two hours later, Sheridan perceived that things must be going very badly. He mounted his horse, a black gelding called Rienzi, and rode south towards the fighting. At a distance, Sheridan later recalled, "there burst upon our view the appalling spectacle of a panic-stricken army - hundreds of slightly wounded men, throngs of others unhurt but thoroughly demoralized, and baggage wagons by the score, all pressing to the rear in hopeless confusion."³⁵ Sheridan's reaction to the rout of his army was truly brilliant. He broke from the company of cavalry men who were accompanying him and rode at a rapid clip into the face of his retreating forces. "Thus began one of the most famous rides in military history. ... The effect of Sheridan's presence was remarkable; even Sheridan marveled at how quickly the mood of the men changed 'from the depths of depression to the extreme of enthusiasm'."³⁶ 'Sheridan's ride', as it came to be known, literally changed the course of the Battle of Cedar Creek. By 4 p.m. Sheridan's army had been regrouped and went on the offense. By that evening, Early's Confederate army was soundly defeated. With a bit of legitimate hyperbole, Squire Howard of Jamaica and captain of the 8th Vermont regiment later wrote: "Never since the world was created was such a crushing defeat turned into such a splendid victory as at Cedar Creek."³⁷

³⁴Lewis, p. 147, quoting Capt. S.E. Howard of the 8th Vermont regiment.

³⁵Lewis, p. 151, quoting Sheridan.

³⁶Lewis, p. 152, quoting Sheridan.

³⁷Lewis, p. 134, quoting Howard.

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The human price of victory and defeat at Cedar Creek was great. Confederate casualties were about 3,000; on the Union side, about 5,700, including more than 500 Vermonters.³⁸ The impact of Cedar Creek on Vermonters is also attested to by the monumental painting of the battle that graces the State House in Montpelier, a work that was commissioned by the State legislature and executed by Julian Scott of Johnson, the first Vermonter awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor.³⁹ Militarily, the battle of Cedar Creek meant that Shenandoah's breadbasket fell securely into Union hands, which was a tremendous loss to the Confederacy. Politically, Cedar Creek may well have saved President Abraham Lincoln from defeat in the presidential election. "News of the great Union comeback and of Sheridan's wonderful ride electrified the North. Abraham Lincoln suddenly had no need to worry about the reelection."⁴⁰

"With great pleasure," Lincoln wrote [to Sheridan] three days after Cedar Creek, "I tender to you and your brave army the thanks of the nation and my own personal admiration and gratitude for the month's operations in the Shenandoah Valley, and especially for the splendid work on October 19."⁴¹

For his heroic conduct at Cedar Creek, Henry DuPont earned a promotion to Lieutenant-Colonel and the Congressional Medal of Honor. Before he received either of these justified rewards, DuPont wrote his own account of the battle in which he singled out "the coolness and gallantry" of his two lieutenants, one of whom was killed, the other captured. He also called attention to "the zeal, courage and splendid conduct of all the non-commissioned officers of the battery without exception." After all, the non-commissioned officers had to fill in for the lost lieutenants. Among the non-

³⁸Lewis, p. 158, and Coffin, p. 317.

³⁹Coffin, pp. 359 and 96.

⁴⁰Coffin, p. 317. See also John C. Waugh, *Reelecting Lincoln: the battle for the 1864 presidency* (New York, 1997).

⁴¹Foote, *The civil war*, 3:572, quoting Lincoln.

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commissioned officers of Battery B, DuPont cited four by name, including “Corporal of ordnance Michael Kelly.”⁴² As corporal of ordnance Kelly had the unenviable responsibility of making sure that munitions were supplied to the guns, and that these military assets were kept from Confederate hands, during a strategic retreat. Since 245 rounds of ammunition were expended by DuPont’s battery during the day and only one gun lost, DuPont’s commendation of Kelly was surely well deserved.

Many of those who fought at Cedar Creek were rewarded by being decommissioned, but that was not immediately the case for DuPont’s brigade. DuPont himself even remained in the army after the war, and Kelly may have stayed on a bit longer as well. DuPont and Kelly carried on a life-long correspondence, even after DuPont became a United States Senator from Delaware in 1906.⁴³ Kelly, however, next appears in public records in 1867, living and working in Burlington, Vermont.

The circumstances that brought the 32-year-old Michael Kelly to Burlington have not been discovered. Could he have made friends with Vermonters at Cedar Creek? Could he have accompanied Sheridan when the general visited the Vermont State House in 1867 to commend publicly the gallant Vermonters he commanded at Cedar Creek? Or, did Michael Kelly already have relatives in Burlington? At this point, we can only speculate. What we do know, however, about Michael’s presence in the Queen City is equally curious. *The Burlington City Directory* for 1867 simply reports, “Michael Kelly boards with T.R. Fletcher”.⁴⁴ With that brief entry begins the fascinating story of the Limerick lad’s relationship with one of Burlington’s most distinguished families.

⁴²DuPont to Asst. Adjutant-general R.P. Kennedy, 29 October 1864 (US War Department, *War of Rebellion: official records*, 1st series (46 vols., Washington, DC, 1891-1902), vol. 43, part 1, pp. 419-21 at p. 421).

⁴³DuPont was senator from 1906 to 1917, and chairman, Military Affairs Committee (1911-13) at the time of Kelly’s death in 1912. Michael Kelly’s obituary mentioned that DuPont “corresponded with [Kelly] frequently since the war, these letters being full of praise of his army service” (*Burlington Free Press & Times*, 16 August 1912, p. 8); the correspondence has not been found.

⁴⁴*B[Burlington] C[ity] D[irectory], 1867-68*, p. 50.

3. THE BURLINGTON LADY

In 1867, Thaddeus R. Fletcher [1801-71] and his family lived on a four-acre plot on North Prospect Street, across from Fern Hill.⁴⁵ The Fletcher family had moved there in 1850, building the house which still stands at 179 North Prospect St. Previously, the Fletchers had lived in the towns of Essex and Jericho. Thaddeus had operated a successful general store in Essex Junction, the profits from which he increased through a variety of real estate transactions which made him a very wealthy man. In 1828, Thaddeus married Mary Laurence Peaslee [1810-76] of Gilmantown, New Hampshire; she was eighteen and he was about ten years older when they married. Mary and Thaddeus had five children, but only two lived into adolescence. So, when the Fletchers moved into their new Burlington home in 1850, they were accompanied by their two daughters: Mary Martha, aged 20, and Ellen, aged 16. In 1857, the Fletcher family suffered a tragic loss: Ellen [1834-57] died of consumption. The other daughter, Mary Martha, was similarly struck with consumption that year, and although she survived she never fully recovered, remaining sickly for the rest of her life. Ten years later, then, when Michael Kelly is first listed as boarding with them the Fletchers were reduced a family of three: Thaddeus, aged 66, his wife Mary L., aged 57, and their daughter Mary M., aged 37. Michael was 32.

Michael Kelly was not simply a boarder with the Fletchers at North Prospect St., he was also, in the words of a contemporary, the Fletchers' "man-of-all-work".⁴⁶ The nature of Michael's specific responsibilities would seem to depend upon how the Fletchers themselves lived. By all accounts they lived in "singular privacy and seclusion. Mr Fletcher caused the entire establishment to be run by one servant, the faithful Michael Kelly who did the housework, the ironing and canning, took care

⁴⁵For information on the Fletcher family, I am indebted to Lilian Baker Carlisle, "Humanities' needs deserve our fortune: Mary Martha Fletcher and the Fletcher family benevolences", *Vermont History*, 50 (1982): 133-42.

⁴⁶John B. Stearns, "Burlington's debt to Mary Fletcher", *Vermont Alumnus*, 20:7 (April 1941): 158.

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of the garden, tended the cows, chickens and horses, and served as a coachman in his spare time.”⁴⁷ This list of humble tasks that fell to Michael, if correct, greatly underestimates Michael's role as the one who ran the Fletcher establishment and endeared himself to the Fletcher family. Indeed, Michael Kelly seemingly learned a great deal about real estate from Thaddeus Fletcher.

In December 1871, Thaddeus Fletcher died, leaving a large estate to his wife, Mary. Michael Kelly was 36 at the time and he continued living with and working for the widow and daughter. Two years after the death of Thaddeus, Mrs Fletcher and her daughter made a substantial donation of \$24,000 to the City of Burlington to establish a library, on condition that the city build and maintain a suitable building. The Fletchers' gift was very carefully structured, and it appears to have been the invention of the Fletcher family's physician, Dr Walter Carpenter [1808-92]. Originally of Walpole, New Hampshire and a Dartmouth graduate, Dr Carpenter had moved to Burlington in 1853 and took a “leading part in the establishment of the medical school connected with the University of Vermont.”⁴⁸ From the opening of the Fletcher Free Library in 1874 until his death in 1892, Dr Carpenter was continuously a member of its board of directors. He was also one of the few people who actually knew the Fletcher ladies. Presumably, he attended Thaddeus when he died in 1871 and also when his wife Mary L. died six year later, in August 1876.

With the passing of her mother, Mary Martha, aged 46, was the only Fletcher left living at their home on North Prospect St. As if her mother's death was not shocking enough, Mary was diagnosed that year by a prominent Boston physician, Dr Henry Ingerson Bowditch, to be suffering from a “slow and lingering form of consumption, which having existed for 20 years, might hold out for as many more, though liable to a fatal termination at any time from any untoward circumstance.”⁴⁹ Confronting her mortality, Mary did two important things in 1876. She made out

⁴⁷Vrest Orton, *Mary Fletcher comes back* (Burlington: Mary Fletcher Hospital, 1941): 9-10.

⁴⁸W.S. Rann, ed., *History of Chittenden County Vermont...* (Syracuse, NY, 1886): 807-11 at p. 808.

⁴⁹Carlisle, “Humanities' needs...”, p. 136, quoting Matthew H. Buckham, UVM president (see p. 141, n. 23).

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her last will and testament and she agreed to begin contributing huge sums of money to establish the first public hospital in Vermont, which was named in honour of her mother: the Mary Fletcher Hospital.⁵⁰ Mary Martha's total contributions eventually came to about \$400,000. As her friend, Matthew H. Buckham [1832-1910], the distinguished president of the University of Vermont, observed in 1886, Mary Martha's gift creating the hospital "constitutes by far the largest benefaction made to the public in our State throughout its entire history."⁵¹ By all accounts it was Dr Walter Carpenter, dean of UVM's medical school who spearheaded the establishment of the hospital. In the words of a contemporary, "[Carpenter] was the instrument in securing the magnificent donation which founded the Mary Fletcher Hospital; himself secured the charter, assisted in the preparation of the plans for the edifice, and since its completion has held the joint office of president and consulting physician of the institution."⁵²

The State of Vermont chartered the hospital corporation on 18 November 1876. Shortly afterward Moses Catlin's 30-acre property on Colchester Avenue was acquired. The buildings then on hospital hill had to be removed or destroyed. Michael Kelly purchased three barns and the ell of Catlin's house for a total of \$179. What he did with these buildings is not clear since evidently Michael did not own any land at that time. On hospital hill itself, construction moved ahead and the hospital was completed in January 1879. About \$30,000 was spent on acquiring the property and in constructing the hospital; an additional \$50,000 was spent furnishing and equipping the hospital. The rest of Mary Martha's gifts were for endowments to offset operating expenses or to provide 'free beds' for the needy.⁵³ Apparently, Mary Martha only saw the hospital she had made possible once

⁵⁰Mary Fletcher's initial donation was given on 6 December 1876, a total of \$100,000 in cash and notes (Chittenden District, Probate Court Records: Mary M. Fletcher estate).

⁵¹Matthew H. Buckham, "Mary Fletcher" biographical sketch, in W. S. Rann, ed., *History of Chittenden County* (Syracuse, 1886): 746. For Buckham, see "Historical Sketch", *UVM Notes* 7:3 (Dec.-Jan. 1910-11): 2-5.

⁵²"Walter Carpenter" biographical sketch, in Rann, ed., *History of Chittenden County*, pp. 807-11 at p. 810.

⁵³According to President Buckham, "Among her last gifts [was] ... a payment of \$5,000 to the hospital for the establishment of a free bed in favor of the Winooski Avenue Congregational Church, with which she had her church home. This latter gift, one of the last acts of her life, seemed to give her unusual enjoyment" (in Rann, p. 746).

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in her life time, and that was on Tuesday, 24 February 1885, the day she died.

In the words of President Buckham, "The closing scene in Miss Fletcher's life was especially touching." Fortunately, the story was recounted by both Buckham and Dr Carpenter. Carpenter's account was later put to writing by his neighbor, John B. Stearns.

Miss Fletcher's health had been failing for a considerable time, and on the day of her death Doctor Carpenter, who was then seventy-six years of age, called to see her about two o'clock in the afternoon. He saw at once that she was in a dying condition. She apparently sensed the situation from the Doctor's appearance and manner, and said to him, "Doctor, am I very near the end?" He replied, "Yes." She said, "Will I live until night?" And the Doctor answered, "I am afraid not." She then said, "I want to die in the Hospital." Doctor Carpenter felt that it was impossible to get her there. It was a cold day and snowing hard, and the Doctor had only his old one-seated sleigh. It appeared out of the question to procure an ambulance, and he told her he did not consider it possible to get her to the Hospital.

Miss Fletcher, however, was a woman of iron will, and she said, "Doctor you *must* take me to the Hospital at once. I am determined not to die until I can get there." The Doctor saw it was useless to oppose her, so he called her man-of-all-work, Michael Kelly. They carefully wrapped her up in blankets, and Kelly carried her in his arms from her bed to the sleigh, which fortunately was covered. When Kelly and Miss Fletcher were in there was no room on the seat for the Doctor, so he knelt on the running board and drove his faithful old horse Whiteface as fast as he could through the driving snowstorm to the Hospital. He said, "I was in mortal terror for fear she would die before we could get there." However, they reached the Hospital in safety.⁵⁴

One can visualize the frail body of Mary Martha, wrapped in blankets being held in the arms of the

⁵⁴Stearns, "Burlington's debt to Mary Fletcher", *Vermont Alumnus*, 20 (1941): 158.

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Limerick lad, both inside the sleigh as it sped down North Prospect St. driven by Dr Carpenter who was somehow able to keep himself on the running board. President Buckham continues the story at the hospital.

Taken up from her bed in the arms of her faithful attendant, Michael Kelly, she was conveyed, in a sleigh, to the hospital and laid upon the bed in her own room, where nobody but herself had ever rested, and there murmuring thanks that she was permitted to be where she was, in a brief space she breathed her life gently away, attended by the president, the superintendent, members of the staff, and the nurses of the hospital she had founded. It was all exactly as she might have wished and doubtless did wish, during those many days of weakness and pain, through and beyond which she has now forever passed.⁵⁵

Mary Fletcher's funeral was held at the Hospital on Friday afternoon. The *Free Press* described it as an a funeral that "will long remain as a deeply impressive one in the minds of all who were present." Vermont's Adjutant General, T.S. Peck [1843-1918] was in charge of arrangements. A great number of citizens gathered, including many notable Burlingtonians. For example, among Mary Martha's pall bearers were her physician Dr Carpenter, the Mayor George Morse, Judge Torrey Wales [1820-1902], S.M. Pope, Henry Loomis and Dr A.J. Willard. The service was conducted by the Rev. L.G. Ware [+1891] of Church St. Unitarian Church; a fine eulogy was given by President Buckham. Since Mary had never married and died childless, the task of greeting those who came to pay their respects fell to her father's relatives from Middlebury, to Judge Allen, and, according to the *Free Press*, to "Mr. Kelley"- the only person with an Irish name mentioned in the extensive press report.⁵⁶ After the service Mary Fletcher's casket was carried to the hearse, "and a line of sleighs which extended from the Hospital grounds to Green Mount Cemetery, followed the remains to the grave." There, the Burlington lady was interred with all the members of her immediate family,

⁵⁵Buckham, "Mary Fletcher", in Rann, pp. 746-47.

⁵⁶*Burlington Free Press & Times*, 28 February 1885 (Saturday), p. 4

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at a site overlooking the Winooski River.

4. THE LIMERICK LAD, PART TWO

How was it that the fifty-year old Limerick lad participated so prominently at the funeral of Burlington's most renowned yet most reclusive lady? We may never know the full answer to that intriguing question, but we do have some fascinating clues. I mentioned earlier that in 1876, after the death of her mother and the medical confirmation of her own serious illness, Mary Fletcher did two things: she began her extremely generous benevolence which established the Hospital and she made out her last will and testament. By any standards, and especially for such an extremely wealthy woman, Mary Fletcher's will is extraordinarily simple, yet she never changed it. There were only three specific bequests: she gave five hundred dollars to Green Mount Cemetery for perpetual care of the Fletcher lot; she willed her "home place on Prospect Street" with all its furnishing to her maternal uncle, George L. Peaslee of Auburn, Maine; and, to quote directly, "I give to Michael Kelly my faithful servant Ten Thousand dollars for ever."⁵⁷ Those were all of Mary Fletcher's specific bequests; the residue of her substantial estate she gave "to The Mary Fletcher Hospital, a corporation lately chartered by the Legislature of the State of Vermont". So, in 1876, at which time Michael Kelly had lived and worked with the Fletcher's for only nine years, Mary Fletcher willed to him a very sizeable legacy. Moreover, Michael Kelly is the only person mentioned in her will with any emotive description. He was, she wrote, "my faithful servant". Thus, Michael had earned Mary's respect and affection long before he carried her in his arms in that driving snowstorm nine years later so that she could die within the hospital she had helped to create. In his eulogy for Mary Fletcher, President Buckham recalled poignant words that Mary had spoken to him: "I wish", she said, "to be remembered hereafter simply as one who had an obligation and tried to fulfil it; as one who had a work to do and tried to do it as well as a poor sick woman could."⁵⁸ Curiously, Mary Fletcher's own

⁵⁷Mary M. Fletcher's will, dated 24 November 1876, (Chittenden District, Probate Court Records, vol. 62, p. 68).

⁵⁸Buckham's eulogy, printed in *Burlington Free Press & Times* (27 February 1885), p. 4.

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self-description was that of a faithful servant. Thus her description of Michael Kelly as “my faithful servant” is quite revealing. It has been suggested that Michael “must have been something of a brother to Mary Fletcher”.⁵⁹ Indeed, he might well have been.

On 27 May 1885, Michael Kelly received his \$10,000 legacy.⁶⁰ Four months later in September, Michael married Ann Quinn; he was 51, she was 47. Their marriage was celebrated in the old Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, with the founding bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Burlington, Louis de Goesbriand, officiating.⁶¹ This is one of the few recorded mentions of Ann Quinn. Her only appearance in Burlington city directories was in 1877, where she was described as a seamstress boarding with Edward Dwyer.⁶² Edward Dwyer was a liveryman who lived above his stable located at the corner of Bank and Center streets. He must have been either a relative or close friend of Ann Quinn.⁶³ It is possible that Ann Quinn is also the Anna O'Connor who was listed in 1870 federal census as being a domestic living with the Fletchers on North Prospect St.⁶⁴ Ann clearly must have had some intimate acquaintance with Mary Fletcher since a house and lot on Prospect Street was deeded to Ann on 19 May 1882, a transaction seemingly made possible by Mary

⁵⁹Michael Healy, *Walking in the Spirit* (Colchester: Fanny Allen Hospital, 1992): 19.

⁶⁰Chittenden District, Probate Court Records: Mary M. Fletcher estate, Michael Kelly's signed receipt dated 27 May 1885; also reported in the Court's decree of 25 September 1885 (vol. 62, pp. 441-44).

⁶¹Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, *Matrimoniorum Registrum, 1870-1910* (Burlington, Vt.), n. p.; the exact day was not filled in, but the surrounding entries were 15 and 23 September 1885. In the civil records, 30 September 1885 is given for the marriage date (Town of Colchester, Marriage records, vol. 4, p. 59).

⁶²*BCD 1877-78*, p. 112.

⁶³Edward Dwyer is frequently listed, as described above, in *BCDs*. He was also a pall-bearer at Ann's funeral in 1905 (*Burlington Free Press* (18 April 1907): 5), at which time he was retired and living 112 Cherry St (*BCD 1908*, p. 124). Henry Dwyer was one of the two witnesses to her marriage.

⁶⁴1870 US Census, manuscript records, cited by L.B. Carlisle, “Humanities' needs”, p. 134. The record evidently report that Anna O'Connor was a fifteen-year old Irish-born domestic; Ann Quinn, however, would have been 31 at the time. That census also reports that a Henry Murphy, aged 15 and born in New York, was living with the Fletchers as a laborer. If Anna actually refers to Ann Quinn, Henry Murphy could be Michael Kelly.

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Fletcher.⁶⁵ And the executors of Mary Fletcher's estate allowed payments to only a few creditors, including a small amount to Ann Quinn.⁶⁶ Additionally, shortly after Mary Fletcher's death but before his marriage to Ann, Michael Kelly purchased the Fletcher's home and four acres of land on North Prospect St.⁶⁷ Whether Ann lived at the former Fletcher home or her own home when she married Michael Kelly is not clear.

The marriage register reports that while Ann Quinn was of Burlington on their wedding day, Michael was of Colchester. Five year earlier, on 12 February 1881, while Mary Fletcher was alive, Michael acquired the one-hundred-sixty-acre 'Penniman farm' in Winooski Park from the Rev. Edward Hungerford [1829-1911] for \$18,000.⁶⁸ How Michael managed to acquire the Penniman

⁶⁵City of Burlington, Land Records, vol. 16, p. 426: deed of Burlington Saving Bank to Ann Quinn, 19 May 1882. The sale price was \$2,600 for a corner lot on the Crooker homestead on N. Prospect St., presumably the present no. 152.

⁶⁶Chittenden District, Probate Court, commissioners for Mary Fletcher estate, 24 September 1885; allowed \$29 to Anne Quinn for unspecified expenses she had incurred.

⁶⁷Chittenden District, Probate Court Records (vol. 62, pp. 441-44): the decree of 25 September 1885 reports that Mary's uncle, George S. Peaslee received the property in accordance with Mary's will but he subsequently sold it to the Hospital which later sold the same "to Michael F. Kelly who is the present owner of the same." That is confirmed in the city's records: Peaslee to Mary Fletcher Hospital, 14 April 1885 (City of Burlington, Land Records, vol. 20, p. 386); the Hospital sold it to Kelly for \$7,000 on 26 May 1885 (p. 413). Before the Court's decree was issued, however, Peaslee claimed being entitled to the cash that Kelly had found in the house and turned over to Judge Wales (25 February 1885) plus seven promissory notes for \$1,000 each which Mary Fletcher had against Philip V. Maxwell; the Court decided against Peaslee. The \$7,000 represented the same amount as the appraised value of the 179 N. Prospect St. home and land (Probate Court records: appraisal, 10 April 1885, vol. 62, n. 140). The seven notes in question had been included among the residuary of the Mary's estate, and thus went to the Hospital by the Court's decree that Peaslee had accepted when he received \$1,860, the appraised value of Mary's personal property (12 October 1886).

⁶⁸Colchester Land Records, vol 26, p. 49. Hungerford, who had taught chemistry at UVM before the civil war, had acquired the property in 1863 from the Freemans (vol. 16, p 367), who had purchased it from the Pennimans in 1859 (vol. 15, p. 324). Jabez Penniman, who had married Ethan Allen's widow Frances Montresor, purchased the entire 'Governor's lot' from Ira Allen [1751-1814] on 2 October 1793 (vol. 2, p. 4). The Allens' private partnership, the Onion River Land Company (formed in 1773) acquired the 'Governor's lot' at the time of the American war for independence, when royal claims were voided. The 'lot' of about 500 acres was originally reserved by and to the first governor of the British royal colony of New Hampshire, Benning Wentworth [1696-1770], when he chartered the Town of Colchester on 7 June 1763. Under the Pennimans, the 'lot' was sold off in parcels. (For Colchester's charter, see Ruth Wright, *History of the Town of Colchester* (Colchester, 1963): 188-19; for Wentworth's policy of reserving 'Governor's lots' in the towns he created out of the New Hampshire Grants, see Ira Allen, *The natural and political history of the state of Vermont...* (Rutland, 1969): 19; originally published in London, 1798). The *Atlas of Chittenden County, Vermont* (New York, 1869) depicts the property Hungerford owned and later sold to Kelly. Saint Michael's College eventually

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farm, a substantial property, is not yet clear. What is clear, however, is that unlike previous owners of the Penniman farm, Kelly did not need a mortgage from the seller. A transaction of this magnitude would seemingly have been impossible without Mary Fletcher's financial assistance. Possibly the generous future bequest to her 'faithful servant' that Mary Fletcher included in her 1876 will played some part. If Mary helped Ann Quinn to acquire property on North Prospect St. in 1882, it seems plausible that she would have facilitated Michael's acquisition of the Winooski Park property. In fact, since Michael had purchased four buildings which had to be removed from Hospital hill in 1877, he may have had access to some property even earlier.⁶⁹ In any event, Kelly was a substantial land owner in Colchester when he married Ann Quinn.

After their marriage, Michael and Ann Kelly settled in the house that Joshua Stanton had built on so-called Penniman farm. Within a very short period of time, the Kellys increased their already sizable real estate holdings in Winooski Park by purchasing, in 1886, the former Merrill Race Course and its fifty acres of land, and in 1888 the Austin farm and its fifty acres.⁷⁰ Additionally, as we have seen, the Kellys had their two properties in Burlington, until Michael sold the Fletcher homestead in 1890 and Ann sold her house on the other side of North Prospect St. in 1895.⁷¹ Indeed, the land records reveal that Michael and Ann Kelly engaged in scores of land transactions: purchases, sales, mortgages. The number and complexity of the Kellys' real estate transactions suggest that

purchased the property, then called the Sequin property, for \$48,000 on 8 November 1930 (Colchester Land Record (Winooski), vol. 35, pp. 198 and 591, and (Colchester), vol. 1, p. 67). On the homestead site in now St Joseph's Hall.

⁶⁹Mary Fletcher made a donation of \$25,000 on 26 February 1877 to the Hospital for the purchase of the Caitlin property (Chittenden District, Probate Court: Mary M. Fletcher's estate). As indicated above, Michael purchased four buildings that all had to be removed to permit construction of the hospital buildings, which began in Spring 1877.

⁷⁰Colchester Land Records, vol. 24, p. 336: 4 June 1886 (Merrill Race Course), and p. 462, 22 February 1888 (Austin farm).

⁷¹Kelly kept the Fletcher homestead for five years, selling it on 14 September 1890 to Simon Wright of Williston for only \$5,500, though Kelly had paid \$7,000 for it. When he sold the property, however, Kelly kept a five-year lease on it that he made with Gilbert Harris, which helps explain the relatively low sale price (Burlington Land Records, vol. 29, p. 543). Ann's property was sold on 7 June 1895 to Walter E. Isham of Burlington (vol. 37, p. 212), who promptly sold it for \$2,500 on 8 August 1895 to Anna Maria Knott of Burlington (p. 265).

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Michael must have learned a great deal from Thaddeus Fletcher and also that Michael himself was well-acquainted with prominent members of Burlington's legal and financial communities.

Seven years after the Kellys had settled at Winooski Park they were involved in two major, and seemingly inter-related, land transactions there. First, in March 1892 they purchased the so-called Dunbar Hotel and its sixty acres of land which adjoined their Penniman property.⁷² The Kellys thus consolidated their ownership of about two hundred acres of land in Winooski Park and where their large farm supported fifty-five milking cows. This was a good-sized farm which required three men to run in the winter and five during the summer. The farm's annual income was \$3,260.⁷³ Second, later in 1892, Michael Kelly presented himself to the Most Rev. John Michaud, the new coadjutor Bishop of Burlington, and offered the bishop the Dunbar property for the purpose of creating a Catholic hospital.⁷⁴ It is not clear what prompted Michael's offer. According to Bishop Michaud, who consulted widely before accepting the Kellys' offer, Bishop deGoesbriand had "desired for many years to see a Sisters Hospital established in the city [Burlington] or vicinity". Thus, deGoesbriand himself, who officiated at their wedding, might have suggested the proposal to the Kellys. Or perhaps Michael and Ann, having no children, were influenced by the memory of their former mistress, who was also childless. In the event, on 22 March 1894, the Kellys deeded the Dunbar Hotel and about twenty-five acres of land to Bishop Michaud, receiving in return assurance

⁷²Colchester Town Records, vol. 26, p. 158: 28 March 1892, for \$15,000 to Katharine E. Kelly of Burlington, who was acting as assignee of the estate of Frank J. Dunbar, an insolvent debtor. Arad Merrill built a tavern, called Merrill's Hotel, on the site in 1830. It was purchased on 3 December 1877 by Frank Dunbar (vol. 21, p. 167), who on 9 May 1889 mortgaged the property to Michael Kelly (vol. 25, p. 259). On 23 April 1892, the Kellys consolidated both their Winooski Park and Burlington properties by means of a sale-repurchase deal with Judge Torry Wales (Colchester Land Records, vol. 26, pp. 163-64; Burlington Land Records, vol. 24, p. 430). This complex legal manoeuvre, which seems to have provided the Kellys with the equivalent of today's title insurance, may have been needed to protect the Kellys, since the records indicate that they had obtained a decree of foreclosure against Dunbar in September 1891 (Colchester Land Records, vol. 26, pp. 163-64). The transaction was approved by Elihu B. Taft, as master in chancery, on 29 April 1892.

⁷³These details are provided by Healy, p. 31, based on an assessment made in 1893 in connection with a proposal Michael Kelly presented to Bishop Michaud to provide for the temporal needs of Religious Hospitalers of St Joseph.

⁷⁴Healy, p. 21, on whom I rely for information on the establishment of the Fanny Allen Hospital.

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of “suitable and convenient rooms, board, fire and light in the hospital building whenever they wish, free of cost or expense to them so long as they live.”⁷⁵ On Thursday, 24 May 1894 a community of Religious Hospitalers of St Joseph arrived by train from Montréal at Essex Junction, where they were welcomed by the pastor of St Stephen's Church, Winooski, Father J.B. Whittaker [1872-99]. He conveyed the sisters in his horse-drawn carriage to the Dunbar Hotel, which they begun almost immediately to transform into the Fanny Allen Hospital, named after the first Vermonters to enter their order, Frances Margaret Allen [1784-1819], the daughter of Ethan Allen.

Eight years later, as we have seen, Michael and Ann Kelly sold their ‘McClelland property’ with its eighteen acres of land in Winooski Park to Fr Aubin. Michael and Ann must have watched this property become the new ‘St Michael's House’ and, two years later, its transformation into Saint Michael's College. However, at the time when the College opened its doors in 1904, the Kellys had taken up residence at the Fanny Allen Hospital, as had been provided under their gift. Michael and Ann were then 69 and 65, respectively. They lived together in their humble quarters at the Hospital for the next three years.

On Sunday, 14 April 1907, Ann Quinn Kelly died at the Hospital. The funeral mass for the 69-year-old Cavan woman was celebrated by the founding president of Saint Michael's College, Fr Amand Prével, SSE [1848-1912] in the Fanny Allen Hospital chapel.⁷⁶ The summer after Ann's death saw the building of the northern end of Founders Hall, the expanded building closely resembling what we now see except the house at the southern end still remained a distinct structure, as it was when the Kellys owned it.

⁷⁵Colchester Land Records, vol. 27, p. 500: Kellys to Michaud, 22 March 1894; the trust agreement was made part of the deed.

⁷⁶*Burlington Free Press & Times*, 18 April 1907 (Thursday), p. 5; assisting was the legendary pastor of St Joseph's Church, Burlington Msgr J.-M. Cloarec [1833-1920]; for biographies of each see Couture 2:390-92 and 1:145-50.

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Michael himself passed from this life three years later, on the feast of the Assumption, 15 August 1912, a few months after the sinking of the *Titanic*. The *Free Press* account of his death drew attention to Michael's benefactions:

During the last eight years of his life, which he spent at the hospital, he endeared himself to the inmates, who looked upon him not only as a benefactor but a founder as well. In the establishing of the institution Mr. Kelley has done a great deal to relieve suffering humanity and the world at large must feel him a benefactor. He was also instrumental in the establishing of St. Michael's College at Winooski.⁷⁷

Michael was, indeed, "instrumental in the establishing of St. Michael's" since he was the crucial middleman in the acquisition of the College's core property. By the time of Michel's death in 1912, the College enrolled more than a hundred students, and the old farmhouse had been transformed mainly into today Founder's Hall. And going back to 1902, when Michael and Ann sold their 'McClelland property' to Father Aubin, official Edmundite records indicate that the name chosen for the new house was partly to honor the Limerick lad.

Definitive arrangements having been concluded on September 29 [the feast of St Michael the Archangel], the name of the former proprietor, a good man, being Michael, reasons of a higher nature and all our attachments of the past binding us to the great archangel, the name of St. Michael's House was given to the new foundation.⁷⁸

Michael's funeral mass was celebrated in the Hospital chapel by three French Edmundites, Frs Eugène Alliot [1878-1970], J.-M. Herrouet [1883-1961] and Marcel Guttin [1884-1944], with the new bishop of Burlington, Joseph J. Rice [1871-1938], and two prominent Burlington priests in

⁷⁷*Burlington Free Press & Times*, 16 August 1912 (Friday), p. 8.

⁷⁸'Swanton house council minutes', entry for 4 and 7 October 1902, pp. [9-10].

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the sanctuary.⁷⁹ Also attending were Religious Hospitalers, doctors and staff of the Fanny Allen Hospital, and a sizeable delegation from the Grand Army of the Republic, Stannard Post 2, of Burlington, led by their commander George P. Martin.⁸⁰ Michael's former comrades-in-arms "placed 'the old flag' he served and loved so well upon his body". Michael had been a long-time member of the Stannard Post, which was organized in 1868 and often held its weekly meetings in the Fletcher Library.⁸¹ Just as Michael had probably been the only Irish Catholic who participated at the funeral of Mary Fletcher, it was a fitting tribute to Michael's ecumenism that his Civil War veterans, Yankee Protestants, attended his funeral, celebrated in Latin by French refugees. Michael's remains were carried to St Joseph's cemetery in Burlington where they were interred beside his wife Ann, and just down the street from where they both had lived and worked with Mary Fletcher.

So, seventy-eight years after being born in Limerick, sixty-six year after fleeing the great Irish famine to America, fifty years after heroic service at Cedar Creek, and about forty-four years after coming to Vermont, Michael Kelly's life on this side came to an end. Though he and his wife had no children, tens of thousands of men and women have benefitted from the Kellys' enduring legacies - the Fanny Allen Hospital and Saint Michael's College.⁸² And when Saint Michael's celebrates its

⁷⁹*Burlington Free Press & Times*, 19 August 1912 (Monday), p. 8; the two diocesan priests were Joseph A. Lacouture [1876-1937] of St Joseph's church, Burlington, and E.E.H. Ludger Marceau [1843-1927] of St Francis Xavier church, Winooski. Lacouture later was one of the prime movers and contributors for the purchase of the Sequin property by Saint Michael's College in 1930 (on him, see Couture, *Catholic clergy of Vermont*, 2:356-59; for Marceau, 2:286-87.)

⁸⁰*Burlington Free Press*, 19 August 1912, p. 8; the other GAR representatives were JVC Richard J. Irwin, QM John M. Stafford, Nelson R. Tracy, Lorenzo A. Atwood, Livingston Derrick, Henry W. Farrington, Henry J. Vancor, Joel W. Thomas and Augustus C. Stoughton.

⁸¹Robert B. Beach, *History of the Grand Army of the Republic* (New York, 1889): 395-403; the *BCD 1908*, for example, reports that the post met at the Library, which had been built in 1904 (p. 34).

⁸²Michael Kelly's will, signed on 5 February 1909, appointed a nephew, John R. Kelley, as executor and left small monetary gifts to children of kinsmen, with residue to his niece Anna R. Kelly (Probate Court, Chittenden District, Records, vol. 88, pp. 55ff). At the time of his death, the commissioners of his estate estimated Michael's total assets (all cash and securities) at \$4,816.80 (*ibid.*, vol. 100, pp. 619-21). The estate was contested by Maximilian S. Peck (27 June 1913, *ibid.*, vol. 89, pp. 286-88), and the estate was not finally settled until 11 October 1918.

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centenary in 2004, I hope someone standing that day upon the farm the Kellys owned will raise a glass to the memory of the Limerick lad and his wife and to their mutual friend and benefactress, the Burlington lady. Their friendship and goodness has made us all inestimably richer.

Joseph McLaughlin, SSE⁸³

Saint Michael's College

16 March 1998

⁸³In addition to the people and sources previously cited, I wish to acknowledge and thank the Burlington Irish Heritage Festival Committee for inviting me give this lecture, to thank John Sheehey, Prof. Amy Werbel (curator, Sloan collection) and Richard Comerford Welch for their assistance in putting the lecture together, and to thank the curators of the University of Vermont, Bailey-Howe Library and Special Collections; Saint Michael's College, Durick Library and Archives, Colchester; Society of St Edmund Archives, Colchester; Probate Court, Chittenden District, Burlington; Roman Catholic Diocese of Burlington Archives, Burlington; City Clerk's Office, Burlington; City Clerk's Office, Winooski; Town Clerk's Office, Colchester; Fletcher Free Library, Burlington; Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, Burlington; Resurrection Park, S. Burlington (record keepers for St Joseph's Cemetery, Burlington) for keeping and making their fine resources available.

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SLIDES ACCOMPANYING PRESENTATION

1. St Michael's College, Founders Hall, 1904 (SMC Archives).
2. St Michael's College faculty and student body, 1905, in Vincent B. Maloney, SSE, and Jeremiah K. Durick, *Saint Michael's through the years* (Winooski Park, Vt.: St Michael's College Press, 1955): 42.
3. Théophile M. Aubin, SSE [1866-1935] (SSE Archives).
4. '[Mont-St-Michel] Saint Michiel de la Mer del Peril', in Henry Adams, *Mont-Saint-Michel and Chartres* (NY: G.P. Putnam, 1980): 10.
5. Pontigny abbey, postcard (SSE Archives).
6. Map of France, adapted from Joseph McLaughlin, SSE, *From Pontigny* (Winooski Park, Vt.: Society of St Edmund, 1978): 6.
7. St Michael's House, rear, c. 1903 (SMC Archives).
8. St Michael's House, front, c. 1903 (SMC Archives).
9. Kelly headstone, St Joseph's Cemetery (J. McLaughlin).
10. Kelly headstone, frontview (J. McLaughlin).
11. Kelly headstone, rearview (J. McLaughlin).
12. Map of Ireland, adapted from Roy F. Foster, *Modern Ireland* (London, 1989): frontispiece.
13. Henry A. DuPont [1838-1926], from Hagley Museum and Library, Wilmington, Delaware, in Thomas A. Lewis, *The Shenandoah in flames: the valley campaign of 1864* (Alexandria, VA, 1987): 47.
14. South Carolinians marching into Shenandoah Valley, August 1864, from Frank and Marie-T. Wood print collection, Alexandria, VA, in Lewis, p. 104.
15. Photograph of General Philip Sheridan [1831-88] (standing, far left) and his top subordinates (Wesley Merritt, George Crook, James W. Forsyth and George A. Custer), Library of Congress, in Lewis, p. 102.
16. Map of Jubal A. Early's surprise attack at Cedar Creek, 19 October 1864, in Lewis, p. 148.
17. 8th Vermont at Cedar Creek, from George N. Carpenter, *History of the Eighth Regiment Vermont Volunteers, 1861-1865* (Boston, 1868), in Lewis, p. 150.
18. 'Sheridan's ride on his black horse Rienzi', in Howard Coffin, *Full duty: Vermonters in the Civil War* (Woodstock, Vt.: Countryman Press, 1993): 314.
19. Julian Scott's mural of Cedar Creek, Vermont State House, Montpelier, in Lewis, pp. 154-55.
20. Fletcher home, 179 N. Prospect St., Burlington (J. McLaughlin).
21. Front door, Fletcher home (J. McLaughlin).
22. Fletcher home (J. McLaughlin).
24. Home of Dr Walter Carpenter, 223 Pearl St., Burlington (J. McLaughlin).
25. Inksketch, Dr Walter Carpenter, in W.S. Rann, ed., *History of Chittenden County Vermont....* (Syracuse, NY, 1886),

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facing p. 240.

26. Inksketch, Mary M. Fletcher, in Rann, facing p. 246.

27. Mary Fletcher Hospital, c. 1879, in David E. Robinson and Mary Ann DiSpirito, *Images of America: Burlington* (Dover, NH: Arcadia, 1997): 96.

28. Fletcher home, N. Prospect St. (J. McLaughlin).

29. Inksketch, Mary M. Fletcher, in Rann, facing p. 246.

30. Fletcher family monument, Green Mount Cemetery, Burlington, Vt. (J. McLaughlin).

31. Fletcher family monument (J. McLaughlin).

32. Fletcher family monument, Mary Martha's inscription (J. McLaughlin).

33. Photo, Michael F. Kelly, c. 1910, in Michael J. Healy, *Walking in the Spirit: Fanny Allen Hospital, 1894 to 1994* (Colchester, Vt.: Fanny Allen Hospital, 1993): 18.

34. Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, Burlington, Vt., c. 1867, in Robinson and DiSpirito, *Images of America: Burlington*, p. 90.

35. Fletcher home, N. Prospect St., Burlington (J. McLaughlin).

36. Map of Winooski Park, from *Atlas of Chittenden Co., Vermont* (NY: F.W. Beers, A.D. Ellis and G.G. Soule, 1869), in Maloney and Durick, *Saint Michael's through the years*, p. 26.

37. Dunbar's Hotel (c. 1880), in Healy, *Walking in the Spirit*, p. 20.

38. Bishop Jean S. Michaud, in Jean Frédéric Audet, *Historie de la congrégation Canadienne de Winooski au Vermont* (Montréal, 1906), facing p. 136.

39. Fanny Allen Hospital, 1940, in Healy, *Walking in the Spirit*, p. 70.

40. Michael and Ann Kelly's living quarters in Fanny Allen Hospital, Healy, p. 22.

41. St Michael's College, Founders Hall after second expansion, 1909 (SMC Archives).

42. Chapel, Fanny Allen Hospital, in Healy, *Walking in the Spirit*, p. 23.

43. Kelly headstone, rear view, St Joseph's Cemetery, Burlington (J. McLaughlin).

44. Kelly headstone, front view (J. McLaughlin).

45. St Michael's College, Founders Hall after addition to front, 1930 (SMC Archives).