

The Windows of St. Michael's

A brief history about those who donated the stained glass windows of St. Michael's, or in whose memory they were given.

Window Symbol: Auspice Maria

The entwined A and M is the monogram for Auspice Maria, the Latin phrase meaning "under the protection of Mary." Always held in high regard as a symbol of the Blessed Mother's protection, this phrase has been in use since early medieval times, if not earlier.

Given in Memory of: John M. Sullivan

There were a number of John Sullivans in the parish at the time. Research leans toward this being the John M. Sullivan on this window. If anyone knows this to be incorrect, please let us know.

John M. Sullivan was born November 26, 1852 in Lowell, Massachusetts, son of John Sullivan and Johanna Fenton, Irish immigrants from County Kerry. Shortly after his birth the family moved to Pawcatuck. In 1861, when John M. was only 9 years old, his mother died.

On February 12, 1877 John M. Sullivan married Johanna "Annie" Murphy in St. Michael parish. Their witnesses were Michael Higgins and Catherine Murphy. John and Annie Sullivan had three children: Catherine who may have married Michael Conley, William J., and John Sullivan. John appears to have died in childhood. The Sullivans lived at 35 Liberty Street. John M. Sullivan was a blacksmith and, like many of the local blacksmiths, may have worked as a smith in the stone quarries.

Annie Murphy, John M. Sullivan's wife, was the daughter of John T. Murphy and Bridget Deady. Her father was an early Irish immigrant, having come here from the parish of Valentia, County Kerry, during The Great Hunger. He was a Civil War veteran, having served in Company K 12th Connecticut Infantry. In the early 1850s, before there was a church in the Stonington-Westerly area, Father Duffy would say Masses in the Murphy home which, at that time, was where North Broad Street is now. The home was close to Babcock's Woods where Masses had been offered in the open air in the earlier days. In St. Michael's parish, Annie's father was known as "Old Man John."

John M. Sullivan died on July 22, 1890 of a cerebral hemorrhage. He was buried next to his parents, John and Johanna Sullivan, in St. Michael Old Cemetery. Annie (Murphy) Sullivan did not die until 1924 and, as a widow, had lived with her father in the Murphy home on Liberty Street.

Descendants

Descendants of this Sullivan family include members of the **Sullivan, Murphy, Chamberlain, Conley, Nagle, Savage** and **Shea** families. This family has some connections to Michael Higgins, who purchased the land for St. Michael School. The family included stonecutters, blacksmiths, a picture agent, and Civil War veterans.

