

# 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: Pelican

According to legend, in times of famine the mother pelican pierced herself with her beak drawing blood in order to feed her young and save them from death, but in turn lost her own life. Early Christians used this legend to symbolize Jesus Christ, who sheds his blood for our redemption. We are saved from death through the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ with which we are fed in the Holy Eucharist.

**Given In Memory of: Thomas & Ellen (Hughes) Fay**

## Window Symbol: Dove

A traditional symbol of the Holy Spirit, the dove is seen descending upon Jesus at his baptism. "After Jesus was baptized, he came up from the water and behold, the heavens were opened [for him], and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove [and] coming upon him." Matthew 3:16

**Given by: Mary A. Fay**

These two windows were given by Mary Ann Fay in memory of herself and her parents, Thomas Fay and Ellen Hughes. The Fays were one of the very earliest Irish families in Pawcatuck. Thomas Fay was born about 1815 in Knockduff, parish of Granard, County Longford, and Ellen Hughes about 1818 in Ardagh parish, County Longford. They immigrated just before the start of The Great Hunger, arriving in Boston about 1842.

On April 23, 1843, Thomas Fay and Ellen Mary Hughes were married here by Rev. J. Erskine Edwards, Congregational minister, since there was no Catholic parish at the time. Their marriage was probably validated later when Father Fitton, the itinerant priest, visited town. The Fays settled on Robinson Street and had at least three children: John, Mary Ann and James P. Fay. Thomas worked in the textile mills and served in Battery F, 1st Rhode Island Light Artillery during the Civil War.

Thomas and Ellen Fay died in the mid-1880s and are buried in St. Michael Old Cemetery. In fact, members of the Fay family may have been among the very first burials in the Old Cemetery. A nephew, Willie Fay, was buried there in 1855.

### *Descendants*

Descendants of the Fay family include members of the **Fay, Kelly, Mahon** and **Hughes** families. In addition to Thomas, there were four other Fay brothers and their families in the parish, including a number of Civil War veterans. The Fay and Hughes families are among a large cluster of very early St. Michael parishioners from County Longford, including the Coleman, Cunningham, Farrell, Donnelly, Gorman, Halpin, Holliday, Keegan, Keenan, McGlynn, McGowan, Morrison and Smith families.

