

By PETER SMITH

**NORTHAMPTON** — Some 50 years ago, Westhampton resident Tim Daley, then 6, would ride up Route 66 with his grandfather. As the two passed the grassy slope near Hospital Hill, his grandfather pointed to a 6-foot oblong stone and said, "That's where they put the first Daley."

The grandfather would then joke, "If you don't be careful, you'll end up there, too."

The story drew laughter at a meeting held in December to discuss how the community might commemorate this year's 200th anniversary of the hangings of Dominic Daley and James Halligan, who were executed for the killing of a Connecticut man.

Organizing for the anniversary events continues with monthly meetings, including one held Wednesday at the Florence Civic Center. The meetings, open to anyone, are scheduled for the first Wednesday of the month at 7 p.m.

Members of the anniversary organizing committee believe Daley and Halligan were innocent of the crime, and that prejudice against Irish immigrants was the main impetus for their hangings.

Tim Daley is actually no relation to Dominic Daley, but the anecdote shows how the story of Daley and Halligan resonates for people in this area.

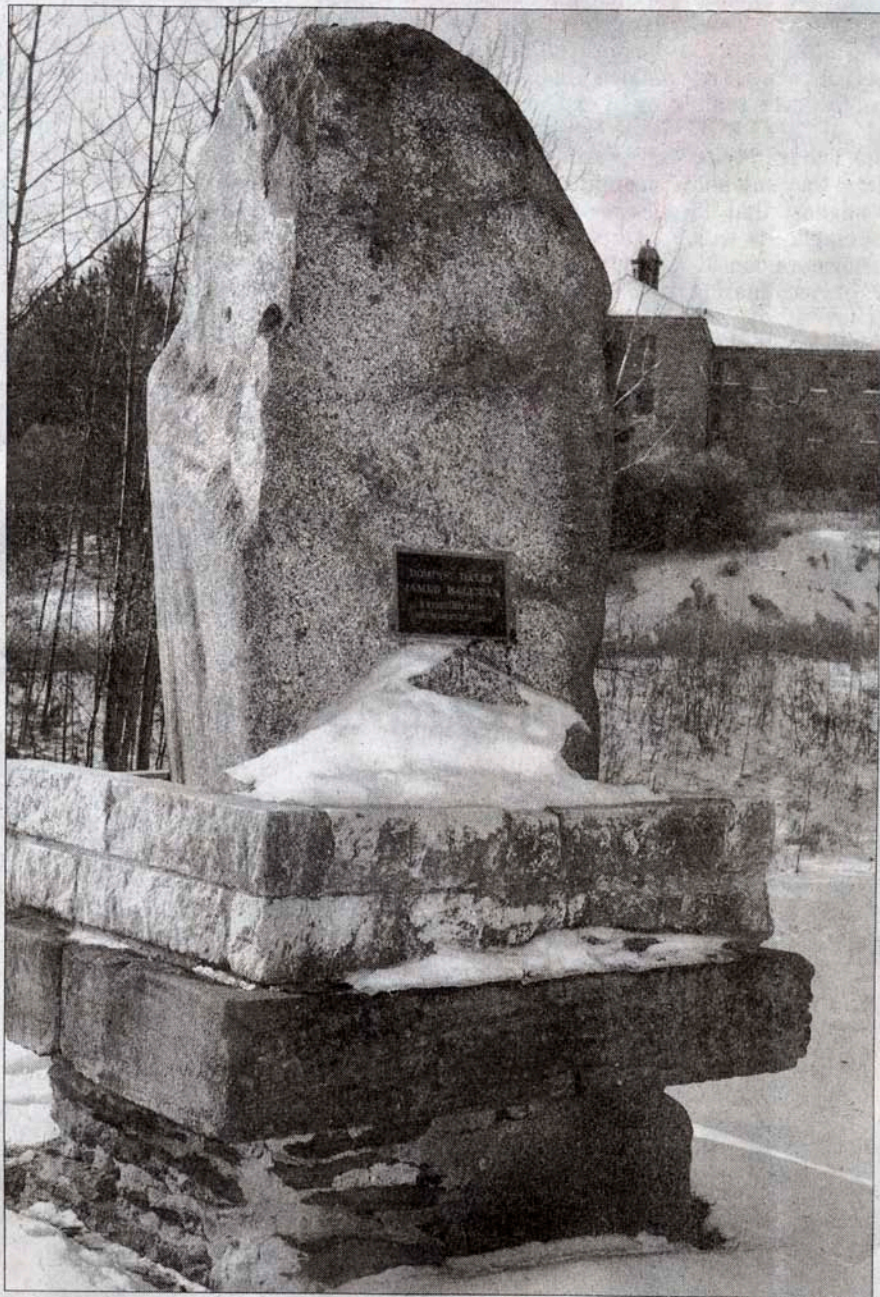
Daley's story was one of many told in an informal introductory go-around that included lots of inside jokes.

The men were hanged after an eyewitness said the young transients put a bullet in Marcus Lyon's chest, kicked his head in, and dumped his body in the Chicopee River. It took 14 hours to convict them.

The following day, June 4, 15,000 Hampshire County residents showed up at the gallows to watch them die.

"It was a hot day," said Northampton District Court Judge W. Michael Ryan, who is co-chairman of the Daley and Halligan Bicentennial Committee. Ryan is an amateur historian who has been researching the events leading up to execution.

Poring over newspaper microfiche, as well as letters, and transcripts, and other documents, Ryan learned that the prisoners were given a half pint of brandy



GORDON DANIELS

**This monument to Dominic Daley and James Halligan, is on the grounds of the former Northampton State Hospital, near the spot where they were hanged. Organizers of the events commemorating the anniversary of their hanging this year hope to determine the exact site where the two men were hanged.**

in jail and that the mob watched them cold water for 10 cents a cup," said Ryan. In 1984, a group successfully peti-

tioned former Gov Michael Dukakis, who formally exonerated Daley and Halligan. The city mounted a brass memorial plaque on the marble stone in their honor.

City resident Kay Sheehan, a member of the Daley and Halligan Bicentennial Committee, notes that Daley and Halligan's case raised questions about intolerance and legal representation of the poor.

"We believe it was wrong," she said. "We're looking at discrimination."

She said there are about 58 people on the organizing committee's mailing list, and so far 20 to 30 people have been turning out for the meetings.

"We want to take advantage of the anniversary," said David E. Sullivan, Northampton register of probate, who is the committee's co-chairman with Ryan.

One of the ideas being developed is to hold a community read, in which everyone would be invited to read the novel "The Garden of Martyrs," based on the Daley and Halligan case.

The author of the book, Michael C. White, is the scheduled speaker for the Chamber of Commerce St. Patrick's Day breakfast March 17. Copies of the books will be for sale, and White will sign them as a kickoff for the community read.

Other ideas in the works to commemorate the Daley/Halligan hangings include the following:

- An education committee plans to incorporate the anniversary as part of the national "Teaching Tolerance" curriculum.

- A commemorative Daley and Halligan float in Holyoke's St. Patrick's parade.

- A 200th anniversary Mass in Northampton, tentatively set for June at 3 p.m. at Blessed Sacrament Church..

- A parking lot and other possible changes to the memorial site.

- A dramatic reading of Daley and Halligan materials in a play written by Ryan April 2 at Smith College.

Committee members said the anniversary events should also raise topical questions about capital punishment, religious tolerance, and immigration.

The next meeting of the group is Feb. 1 at 7 p.m. at the Florence Civic Center.