

Students Probe City's Irish Past

October 01, 2009 1:00 PM Brandon Meginley
newwave@tulane.edu

New Orleans has a rich and diverse history. The stately Cabildo speaks to its Spanish past. Streets with French names abound. Creole and Cajun foods show up on menus across the city. And the Irish, well, they have their Channel.

"There's a great debate about where exactly the Irish Channel is," says Laura Kelley, adjunct instructor in the Tulane School of Continuing Studies. A closer look, however, reveals the expansive history of this immigrant population that extends far beyond the ambiguous confines of the Irish Channel neighborhood.

Students research the history of the Irish in New Orleans at a Mid-City cemetery in this video produced by Brandon Meginley, a senior majoring in journalism at Tulane University.

Students study this history as part of the course, "The Irish in New Orleans," which is a Tulane InterDisciplinary Experience Seminar (TIDES). As part of the coursework, they conduct research at St. Patrick Cemetery No. 1 in Mid-City.

"One thing I like about the cemetery is it's a primary document, and one we often don't think of," says Kelley.

At the end of the semester, through their service-learning component, students will design a guidebook for Save Our Cemeteries, an organization that gives historic tours of local cemeteries.

"These students can actually have this tangible item and say, 'Look, we created this.' This is something the general public will use and continue using," says Kelley.