



Irish American Heritage Museum

January Newsletter

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Dear Members,

2021 was a memorable year and I know that museums and other heritage sites continue to worry about the future as we still grapple with Covid 19 and its variants. We have learned that being "virtual" by holding our talks online will probably be with us for quite some time. While this can sometimes look messy and it is a lot of work trying to cater to an online audience and a physical one, there are advantages. Not only are we now able to have speakers from further afield than ever, but we have members tuning in from across the country - indeed, from across the world. Despite our in-person visitors still being only at 33% of what they had always been, we had an online audience of over 37,000 people this year! So, perhaps this hybrid-online stuff is the way of the future. As we finalize our new, permanent exhibitions, we will also make some version of them available online too, so that we will truly be in the 21st century!

Despite the setbacks of Covid 19, the Museum was incredibly grateful to receive donations and grants from various sources. Locally, Stewarts and Market 32/Price Chopper supported our cultural mission, as did M&T Bank, Celtic Hall, and the Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians, as well as the State AOH. Our golf tournament this year was attended by CSEA, Pearl Insurance, Epic Brokers, Met Life, Merrill Lynch, State Farm, Macaluso Wealth Management, Package One, Mabey's Moving and Storage, Girvin Office Group, Mass Mutual, and Pine Street Capital, to name a few. We were fortunate to have received aid from the Paycheck Protection Program, the Shuttered Venue Grant, and the American Rescue Plan supported by Congressman Paul Tonko, as well as grants from Humanities New York, Institute of Museum & Library Services, and Capitalize Albany. As always, our education and culture mission was the grateful recipient of an Emigrant Support Grant from the Irish government through the Department of Foreign Affairs. Memberships and contributions to our Giving Tuesday, 35 for 35 campaign, and the Annual Appeal are the bread and butter of a museum like ours, so thank you for all your support too.

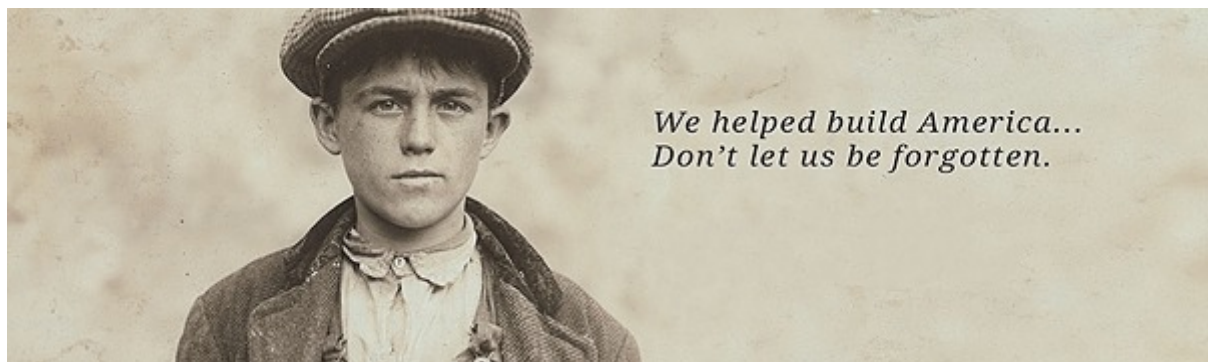
We plan on 2022 being an amazing year for the museum, as we continue to improve our exhibitions and programming. We have an amazing line-up of writers, performers, and artists from America and Ireland already planned for later this year. Our Centenary Series will continue, and we will have a Brexit update in February. Film Club is back in our theater, and we will continue to host lectures, authors, and panel discussions, so make sure you like our Facebook page, check the website, or subscribe to our YouTube channel to keep up to date with all our offerings!

I wish you and your family a happy, healthy, and prosperous New Year! Ath-bhliain faoi mhaise daoibh!

Thank you for your continued support!



Elizabeth Stack, PhD



There's still time to donate!

**The year is drawing to a close, but there is still time left to donate!
Help us end on a high note by contributing to our Annual Fund.**

2021 has been a challenging year, but an exciting one, as we continue to settle in to our new home and expand our online offerings. Our successes were possible because of supporters like yourself and the dedication you show to the Museum: purchasing memberships, supporting our "35 for 35" Campaign, attending events or watching online, volunteering, and more. We look forward to so much more growth in 2022 and beyond. Please consider helping us get started on the right foot with a gift to the Annual Fund. Anything you can give makes a difference.

Donate Today!

This month's poem is "It's a Woman's World" by Eavan Boland, from 1982. Boland's poem explores how women and their contributions had long been sidelined by Irish culture, particularly in art, history, and myth. The poem focuses on the domestic work women have always done, noting how their lives have remained largely unchanged throughout time and

emphasizing that this work has kept them out of the historical record.

I've selected this as January's poem in honor of the Irish holiday of "Little Christmas," also known as *Nollaig na mBan*, or "Women's Christmas." Celebrated on January 6, also the Feast of the Epiphany, women would get the day off and men would do the housework and cooking. The holiday is no longer widely celebrated, but in some towns, particularly in Cork and Kerry, women will mark the day by going for a drink or meal with friends.



Women on the road, Carrowroe, County Galway, National Folklore Collection

It's a Woman's World

by Eavan Boland

Our way of life
has hardly changed
since a wheel first
whetted a knife.

Maybe flame
burns more greedily
and wheels are steadier,
but we're the same:

we milestone
our lives
with oversights,
living by the lights
of the loaf left

by the cash register,
the washing powder
paid for and wrapped,
the wash left wet:

like most historic peoples

When the king's head
gored its basket,
grim harvest,
we were gristing bread

or getting the recipe
for a good soup.
It's still the same:

our windows
moth our children
to the flame
of hearth not history.

And still no page
scores the low music
of our outrage.

Appearances reassure:
that woman there,
craned to
the starry mystery,

we are defined
by what we forget

and what we never will be:
star-gazers,
fire-eaters.
It's our alibi
for all time:

as far as history goes
we were never
on the scene of the crime.

is merely getting a breath
of evening air.
While this one here,
her mouth a burning plume -

she's no fire-eater,
just my frosty neighbour
coming home.

Culture Section



I suppose we all associate January with new beginnings and resolutions - the start of a new year! Throughout history, January has seen many significant events too:

In 1776, During the American Revolution, George Washington unveiled the Grand Union Flag, the first national flag in America.

In 1801, Ireland was added to Great Britain by an Act of Union thus creating the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland.

In 1861, Florida became the third state to secede from the Union in events leading up to the American Civil War.

In 1863, the Emancipation Proclamation by President Abraham Lincoln freed the slaves in the states rebelling against the Union.

In 1878, an Amendment granting women the right to vote was introduced in Congress by Senator A.A. Sargent of California. The amendment didn't pass until 1920, forty-two years later.

In 1892, Ellis Island in New York Harbor opened with Irish immigrant Annie Moore, the first passenger to be processed. Over 20 million new arrivals to America were received there until its closing in 1954.

In 1920, The League of Nations officially came into existence with the goal of resolving international disputes, reducing armaments, and preventing future wars. The first Assembly gathered in Geneva ten months later with 41 nations represented. More than 20 nations later joined; however, the U.S. did not due to a lack of support for the League in Congress.

In 1922, Arthur Griffith was elected president of the newly formed Irish Free State.

There can be no doubt that in Irish history, 1922 was a significant year. The struggle for Irish independence from Britain had unified the entire spectrum of Nationalist sympathies, from those who sought political reform to those who supported armed insurrection; however, the Treaty now destroyed what unity there was. Consequently, the IRA followed the tradition highlighted by the Irish writer and IRA member Brendan Behan (1923–64) who once quipped that the first thing on the agenda at an IRA meeting was ‘the Split’, and turned on itself in an internecine conflict that surpassed the Anglo-Irish War in bitterness and divided the Irish political landscape for the rest of the 20th century.

To some Nationalists the landslide victory of the Irish Republican party Sinn Féin in the 1918 General Election was clear evidence that the Irish electorate supported both armed rebellion and Irish independence. Such a victory was possible only because the old Irish Parliamentary Party (IPP) had collapsed after failing to deliver Home Rule or limited devolution for Ireland in modern terms, whilst Sinn Féin also cut a deal with the Irish Labour Party that involved not contesting seats fielding Sinn Féin candidates. Consequently, it is likely that many voted Sinn Féin for want of an alternative.

When the Treaty was put to the Irish electorate on 16 June 1922, they overwhelmingly supported it. Of the 128 seats in the Dáil – the Irish Parliament created by Sinn Féin after the 1918 General Election – 92 went to pro-Treaty candidates; thus, the anti-Treaty Republicans who took up arms against the first independent Irish state since 1801 had no electoral mandate and consequently lacked the popular support enjoyed by the IRA during the Anglo-Irish War. This vote can be interpreted as either a general ‘war-weariness’ after nine years of hostility and two years of direct conflict or quite simply an indication that the bulk of the Irish electorate was not as wedded to ‘the Republic’ as Éamon de Valera liked to believe.

Some of the Treaty’s supporters, including IRA leaders Michael Collins and Richard Mulcahy, were committed Republicans but accepted the Treaty as the best that they could achieve at the time. Collins famously argued that the Treaty was a stepping-stone, giving Ireland ‘the freedom to achieve freedom’. He understood although the IRA had not been defeated by the British, they had not won either and that a renewal of hostilities would bring no guarantee of victory.

The British ruthlessly exploited this fear and constantly threatened to renew military action if the Treaty was rejected. Winston Churchill even showed Collins a draft call-out notice authorizing that ‘the Army Reserve (including the Militia) be called out on permanent service’ to renew hostilities in Ireland if the negotiations failed. For the British the issue was that Ireland should remain within the orbit of the British Empire under the Crown, as an independent Republic was unacceptable to them. Even de Valera recognized the legitimacy of Britain’s strategic concerns on its Atlantic flank and sought ‘association’ with the Commonwealth rather than membership of it.

According to Professor Michael Hopkinson it is “impossible to come to other than negative and depressing conclusions about the war and its consequences.” Unlike many civil wars, Ireland’s was relatively brief, large areas of the country witnessed little or no fighting and conventional military operations of any significant scale were over by September 1922. Yet in 1948 the Irish judge Kingsmill Moore commented that, ‘Even now Irish politics is largely dominated by the bitterness of the hunters and the hunted of 1922.’

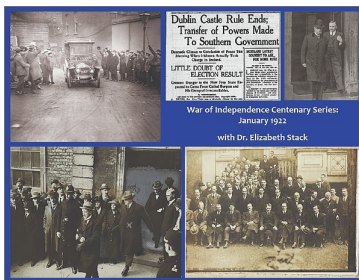
No accurate figures exist regarding casualties, although Saorstát records refer to 800 members of its National Army (NA) dying between January 1922 and April 1924. Historians J.M. Curran and R. Fanning mention 4,000–5,000 combined NA/IRA military deaths but Hopkinson assesses these figures as too high. Although all three agree that more people died during the Irish Civil War than had been killed during the Anglo-Irish War no one knows exactly how many civilians became victims.

What is apparent is that it was a bitter contest. By the time the Republican forces ‘dumped arms’ in the summer of 1923 over 12,000 people had been interned by the Saorstát, 77 Irregulars executed in reprisals and dozens of others murdered whilst the war had cost Ireland from £17m–30m. According to Frank Aiken, who became IRA Chief of Staff in April 1923, “War with the foreigner brings to the fore all that is best and noblest in a nation – civil war all that is mean and base.”

The war also took a heavy toll on those who had led Ireland's revolution. Harry Boland, Cathal Brugha, Erskine Childers, Michael Collins, Liam Lynch and Liam Mellows were but a few of those who died violently whilst Arthur Griffith died of a brain hemorrhage. Mulcahy blamed de Valera for the civil war and was never allowed to forget his own part in the subsequent executions policy, whilst in 1927 the IRA murdered Saorstát Minister of External Affairs Kevin O'Higgins in revenge for his role in the civil war, sparking fears of a renewal of hostilities. For many years the de Valera and O'Higgins families lived within yards of each other in the Dublin suburb of Blackrock yet might as well have been on different planets.

Like all civil wars, Ireland's was a bitter experience for the country. It pitted brother against brother - quite literally in the case of Cork IRA officers Tom and Seán Hales - and did much to define the physical and political geography of modern Ireland. Modern Ireland's major political parties Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael have their roots in the conflict and the British-backed Saorstát's victory ensured de facto and later de jure recognition, by the Irish State, of Northern Ireland's continued membership of the United Kingdom.

January Events



[January 13, 7pm: War of Independence Centenary Series - January 1922 \[Join through Zoom or on YouTube.\]](#)

Dr. Stack continues the centenary series with an in depth look at the response as the country voted to accept the Anglo-Irish Peace Treaty. On January 16th 1922 "the most significant event in Irish history for hundreds of years" took place at Dublin Castle when the last Viceroy of Ireland handed over the machinery of government to the new provisional government. But the North was still an issue and peace was far from guaranteed. [Register here for this event.](#)



[January 19, 7pm: Turtle Bunbury on the Irish Diaspora \[STREAMING ON YOUTUBE AND FACEBOOK ONLY\]](#)

Historian Turtle Bunbury, author of new book *The Irish Diaspora: Tales of Emigration, Exile and Imperialism*, shares stories of Irish emigrants and their descendants. Through the compelling stories of the great Irish pioneers who left their homeland and in the process profoundly influenced their adoptive countries, Bunbury takes some overlooked events and characters and weaves them into an entertaining, and often surprising, history of the Irish abroad. Turtle Bunbury is an award-winning travel writer, historian, and author based in Ireland. He is the author of many books on Irish history, in particular the bestselling *Vanishing Ireland* series, with photographs by James Fennell, as well as *The Irish Pub* and *Ireland's Forgotten Past*. Watch on [YouTube](#) or [Facebook](#).



[January 24th, 7pm: Juliann Campbell: Memory, Trauma & Bloody Sunday](#)

[\[STREAMING ON YOUTUBE AND FACEBOOK ONLY\]](#)

Julieann Campbell, an Irish poet and author, will speak about the Bloody Sunday Massacre in honor of the 50th anniversary. She will discuss historic memory and trauma and the process of memorializing, as well as issues surrounding trials and political division. Campbell has a personal connection to Bloody Sunday—her uncle, Jackie Duddy, was the first to be killed on January 30—and she has spent the last decade documenting and archiving experiences of the day. She has served as the Chair of the Bloody Sunday Trust and

the family press officer for the Bloody Sunday Inquiry in 2010. She is a PhD Researcher at Ulster University's School of Law exploring impact of post-conflict storytelling and is a director of the Pat Finucane Centre for Human Rights. Watch on [YouTube](#) or [Facebook](#).



January 26, 7pm: MacDara Ó Conaola [ZOOM FOR MEMBERS ONLY]

MacDara Ó Conaola, a singer and seanchai from the Aran Islands, will perform in conjunction with our Currach exhibition, bringing the history to life through traditional stories and songs. A native of the island of Inishere, MacDara is interested in nature and incorporates this into his music. For over two decades MacDara has performed across Ireland and internationally, working with many great Irish musicians. [Register here for this event.](#)



January 31, 6:30pm: Film Screening - Bloody Sunday

Join us for the return of Film Club with a screening of Paul Greengrass's film *Bloody Sunday*, from 2002. Starring James Nesbitt, the film tells the story of the 1972 "Bloody Sunday" shootings in Derry. January 30 marks the 50th anniversary of the event. Tickets are \$5 at the door. Space is limited.

Don't forget that you can support the Irish American Heritage Museum when you shop on Amazon Smile by using the link [here](#).



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