



[Upcoming Events](#)

[Become A Member](#)

[About Us](#)

## July at the Museum!



### **The half-talk code of mysteries And the wink-and-elbow language of delight.**

The Fourth of July is a special day in the history of the United States – and yet another occasion where we can celebrate how the Irish played a key role in the formation and foundation of America. Several of these early Americans are featured in our new permanent exhibition which will open in the fall.

Dublin-born general Richard Montgomery holds a unique place in US history as the first general to be killed during what came to be known as the American Revolutionary War. He was slain at the Battle of Quebec in 1775 during the invasion of Canada.

Three of the fifty six signatories of The Declaration of Independence were born in Ireland, with four more of Irish descent. They include the Ulster-born lawyer James Smith, Antrim ironmaster George Taylor and Matthew Thornton, who practiced medicine in the US, having moved over from Limerick aged 3. The printer of the

Declaration was born in Ireland, as was the secretary to the Continental Congress.

Charles Carroll of Carrollton in Maryland (September 19, 1737 – November 14, 1832) was the sole Catholic to sign the Declaration of Independence, and is today seen as a "forgotten patriot." Carroll's death at aged 95 made him the longest living of all the Founding Fathers.

Thomas Lynch Jr. (August 5, 1749 – 1779) stood in for his father Thomas Lynch Sr. who was unable to represent the South Carolina colony due to illness. His grandfather was Jonas Lynch of County Galway's Lynch family – who were exiled following the defeats of the Jacobites at Aughrim and Boyne in the 1690s.

George Read (September 18, 1733 – September 21, 1798) was born in Maryland to John Read, a wealthy Dubliner who moved to Delaware. Read was one of only two statesmen to sign all three of the great State papers on which US history is based – the original Petition to the King of the Congress of 1774, the Declaration of Independence, and the Constitution of the United States.

Edward Rutledge (November 23, 1749 – January 23, 1800) was the single youngest signatory of the Declaration of Independence. Born in Charleston, South Carolina to Dr. John Rutledge – a physician who left County Tyrone in 1735 – he served as the 39th Governor of South Carolina in later life.

James L. Smith (September 17, 1719 – July 11, 1806), was born in the Irish province of Ulster before his family were forced to immigrate to Chester County, Pennsylvania, by abusive landlords in 1729. Smith emerged as a leading lawyer of his day and wrote legal opinions denying the constitutional power of Britain over the American Colonies. He also argued for an end to the import of British goods as famed writer Jonathan Swift would also do in Ireland.

George Taylor (c. 1716 – February 23, 1781) was born in Antrim and moved to America in 1736 at the age of 20. The professional ironmaster operated a furnace and became a successful iron manufacturer in Pennsylvania. He was a member of the Committee of Correspondence, 1774-1776, and of the Continental Congress, 1776-1777.

Matthew Thornton (March 17, 1713 – June 24, 1803) was born in Limerick and moved to America aged 3 in the passage of five ships – which carried 120 Irish families from the Bann Valley (Coleraine-Ballymoney-Aghadowey-Macosquin). On July 11, 1722 - when Thornton was just 9 - his family were attacked by Native Americans and forced to flee their burning home in Wiscasset, Maine for a new life in Worcester, Massachusetts. He went on to practice medicine and became active in pre-revolutionary agitation before being elected to become a member of the Continental Congress in 1776. Thornton was also Colonel of the New Hampshire Militia, 1775-1783.

Charles Thomson was born in County Derry, Ireland, Thomson was one of the most influential men of the entire American Revolution. He served as Secretary of the Continental Congress for over 15 years (the entire life of that body) and was, in fact, the Chief Executive of the American Government several times between 1776 and 1789. During brief illnesses of the Congress Presidents and after John Hancock's resignation from the post in 1786, Thomson served as President, the highest office in the land. He penned the final draft of the Declaration of Independence and, as its congressional witness, was the first to read it both in Congress and publicly. He oversaw the first Presidential election and was the Congressional Delegate who offered the position to George Washington in 1789.

John Dunlap (1747 – November 27, 1812) was born in Strabane, County Tyrone and moved to work as an apprentice to his uncle William Dunlap – a printer and bookseller in Philadelphia – aged just 10. Dunlap served as an officer in the American Revolutionary War and saw action with George Washington himself at the battles of Trenton and Princeton. He went on to print the very first copies of the Declaration of Independence.

The maritime arm of the US military is often credited as originating with an Irishman. Born in Wexford, John Barry was the first captain to be placed in command of a US warship commissioned for service under the Continental flag, earning the moniker of "The Father of the American Navy" in the process.

British composer John Stafford Smith is often, mistakenly, credited as the composer of the Star Spangled Banner. In reality, the composition actually dates back further. Turlough O'Carolan, a blind harpist from Ireland, is actually the musician behind the song, which first featured in O Carolan's earlier composition Bumper Squire Jones. O'Carolan died 35 years before the American revolution so never heard the song in its more famous form.

As many as 15 different US presidents have some form of Irish heritage. While we are very familiar with Kennedy, Reagan, Obama, and Biden's heritage, Andrew Jackson and James Buchanan both had parents born and raised in Ireland.

And lastly, the White House was designed by Irishman James Hoban and to this day, the White House is officially

And lastly, the White House was designed by Irishman James Hoban and to this day, the White House is officially twinned with Dublin's Leinster House.



July evenings in Ireland are beautiful, as you can see in the images above, or may know if you have visited. Even though the country is never guaranteed good weather, the long, bright nights are fantastic and if the weather is good, there is nowhere better than the Irish coast or bog for a rambling walk. This poem by Patrick Kavanagh sums up an Irish summer evening I think, even though it was first published in 1936! Kavanagh's realism shows that poetry could be written about the local and the ordinary. This is a personal poem which demonstrates Kavanagh's own situation - his plight as poet - making him both insider and outsider.

## **Inniskeen Road: July Evening**

The bicycles go by in twos and threes -  
There's a dance in Billy Brennan's barn tonight,  
And there's the half-talk code of mysteries  
And the wink-and-elbow language of delight.  
Half-past eight and there is not a spot  
Upon a mile of road, no shadow thrown  
That might turn out a man or woman, not

A footfall tapping secreties of stone

A footman tapping secretaries of state.

I have what every poet hates in spite  
Of all the solemn talk of contemplation.  
Oh, Alexander Selkirk knew the plight  
Of being king and government and nation.  
A road, a mile of kingdom. I am king  
Of banks and stones and every blooming thing.

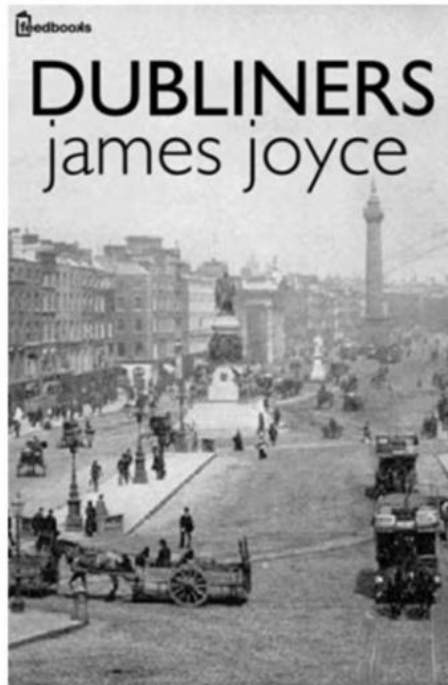
-Patrick Kavanagh

---

## *Delighting in James Joyce's Dubliners*

**John Callaghan**

**Monday July 12th 7pm - Live at the Museum or Zoom or Facebook**



"The book is not a collection of tourist impressions but an attempt to represent certain aspects of the life of one of the European capitals." So wrote James A. Joyce to a publisher in September 1905. The stories comprise a naturalistic depiction of Irish middle class life in and around Dublin in the early years of the 20th century. Written when Irish nationalism was at its peak, and a search for a national identity and purpose was raging; at a crossroads of history and culture, Ireland was jolted by various converging ideas and influences. They center on Joyce's idea

of an epiphany: a moment where a character experiences a life-changing self-understanding or illumination, and the

of an epiphany: a moment where a character experiences a life-changing self-understanding or illumination, and the idea of paralysis where Joyce felt Irish nationalism stagnated cultural progression, placing Dublin at the heart of this regressive movement. Many of the characters in *Dubliners* later appear in minor roles in Joyce's novel *Ulysses*. The initial stories in the collection are narrated by child protagonists, and as the stories continue, they deal with the lives and concerns of progressively older people. This is in line with Joyce's tripartite division of the collection into childhood, adolescence and maturity.

This short presentation regarding the author and the 15 short stories and their significance today is brought to us by John Callaghan. Mr. Callaghan has been teaching Irish Literature at Rochester Institute of Technology for thirteen years.

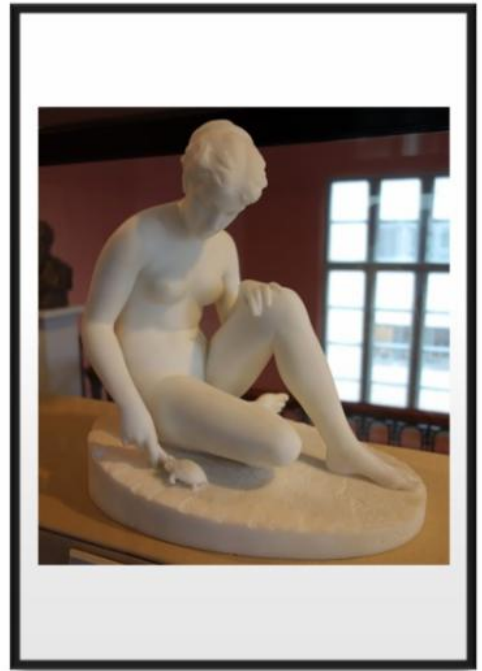
[Register Here for the Virtual Talk](#)

## ***Launt Thompson: Forgotten Master.***

**Michael Burke**

**Wednesday July 14th 7pm. Zoom/LIVE on FACEBOOK**

### Launt Thompson: Forgotten Irish Master



Michael Burke will tell us how one of the most important post-Civil War sculptors died in obscurity and is buried in an unmarked grave. Lancelot (Launt) Thompson was born in Abbeyleix, in 1833, and emigrated to Albany with his widowed mother in the height of the famine, in 1847. Hired as a studio boy by Erastus Dow Palmer, he spent the next nine years apprenticing with Palmer and developing his own unique style in sculpture. He toured Europe and achieved great fame, but in 1890, he was transferred to the State Homeopathic Asylum for the Insane in

Middletown, New York.

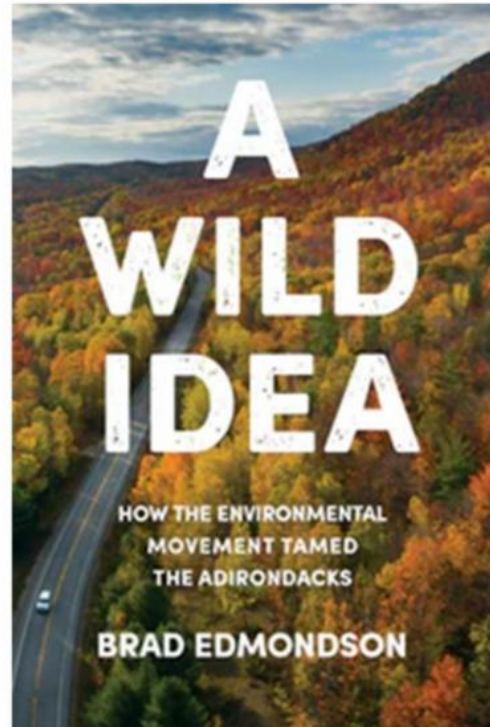
[Register Here for the Zoom Link](#)

---

---

***A Wild Idea: How the Environmental Movement Tamed the Adirondacks***  
**Brad Edmondson**

**Monday July 26th 7pm on Zoom/LIVE on FACEBOOK**



A Wild Idea shares the complete story of the difficult birth of the Adirondack Park Agency (APA). The Adirondack region of New York’s rural North Country forms the nation’s largest State Park, with a territory as large as Vermont. A Wild Idea is based on in-depth interviews with five dozen insiders who are central to the story. Their observations contain many surprising and shocking revelations. This is a rich, exciting narrative about state power and how it was imposed on rural residents. It shows how the Adirondacks were “saved,” and also why that campaign sparked a passionate rebellion.

Brad Edmondson an independent journalist in Ithaca, the author of *Ice Cream Social: The Struggle for the Soul of Ben & Jerrys*, and President of *The Cornell Daily Sun*.

[Register Here for the Zoom Link](#)

---

***War of Independence Centenary Series: July 1921***

**Elizabeth Stack PhD.**

# Wednesday July 28th 7pm Live at the Museum or Zoom/Facebook



War of Independence Centenary Series: July 1921.



The fourteenth lecture in our War of Independence Centenary Series continues with an in-depth look at the events of July 1921. With increased global attention focused on the escalating violence, a ceasefire finally began on 11 July 1921. After the truce was called, violence in Belfast and fighting in border areas of Northern Ireland continued, but de Valera met Lloyd George in London four times in the week starting 14 July. Lloyd George's initial proposals were in line with the treaty that was eventually signed in December, and there was a sense in the Irish government that disappointment would be inevitable.

[Register Here for the Zoom Link](#)

***Genealogy with Lisa Walsh Dougherty***  
**Wednesday July 28th 6pm-8pm in the museum.**



Our resident genealogist, Lisa Walsh Dougherty, will answer any of your questions to help you get started on your family search. She can help outline the records needed to explore Irish ancestry, noting where to find them online and offline, and explore how they can help to trace your ancestors back in time. She can help with church records, civil registration records, census and land records, inheritance records, and passenger lists. If you have lots of information, or barely any, Lisa can help get your family tree started!

## Irish American Heritage Museum

21 Quackenbush Square,  
Albany, NY 12207  
(518) 427-1916

Email Us

