

November: Reflection, Service, Thanksgiving.



November is often people's least favorite month; the weather is bad, the trees are bare, and the long, dark nights are tiresome. However, I think November is an excellent month for reflection and a quiet time of preparation for the excitement of Christmas. All Saint's Day kicks off the month, so we think about our dead, and take time out to cherish the memories. This year of course is the 100th anniversary of the Armistice of the First World War. At 11 o' clock, on the 11th day of the 11th month, the guns that had thundered around the fields of Europe fell silent, and the tragic task of quantifying so much death began. The numbers from that war (and the Influenza Epidemic) are still staggering and it is no wonder that those events inspired so much literature, music, and art. Thanksgiving ensures that family gathers together, and spends time with each other. If we ignore all the Black Friday chaos, that holiday is not about consumerism, or consumption, but about coming together in grateful celebration. Many Americans even prefer it to Christmas. So this month at the Museum, we will focus on remembrance, service, and Thanksgiving, with a new exhibition on World War I, and talks on everything from the war, to Irish maids, to grief and mourning.

Below is an essay about a time in our joint history, when a beleaguered community reached out

to another one in their time of year. The Irish people will always be thankful to the Choctaw Nation for their generous help during the Great Hunger.

Choctaw Nation in 1847 Provides Relief to Irish Great Hunger Victims

On March 23, 1847, the Indians of the Choctaw nation took up a collection. Moved by news of starvation in Ireland, a group of Choctaws gathered in Scullyville, Oklahoma, to raise a relief fund. Despite their meager resources, they collected \$170 and forwarded it to a U.S. famine relief organization.

The Choctaw Indians may have seen echoes of their own fate in that of the Irish. Just sixteen years before, in 1831, the Choctaw Indians were forcibly removed from their ancestral lands in Mississippi to what is now known as Oklahoma on a forced march known as the Trail of Tears. Starving, freezing, many died.

Now the Irish were suffering a similar fate. In the fall of 1845, the potato blight in Ireland began. By 1847, there was massive death and famine. The Irish were dependent on the potato - an easy crop to grow, and everything else was sold to pay rent - and when the potatoes perished, so did they. Almost half of the Irish population either starved or immigrated under the worst of circumstances. Many of those who left Ireland never arrived at their destination. Ships were known as "coffin ships."

British colonial policies before and during the crisis exacerbated the effects of the potato blight, leading to mass death by starvation and disease. For example, in March of 1847, at the time of the Choctaw donation, 734,000 starving Irish people were forced to labor in public works projects in order to receive food. Little wonder that survivors referred to the year as "Black '47." The untouched crops and animals were shipped out of Ireland. There is certainly some question about whether these acts were intentionally genocidal, the same questions that apply to the US policy driving the Removal Act which led to the Trail of Tears.

The Choctaw people reached deep into their own pockets and cumulatively came up with \$170 to contribute to the plight of the Irish, who, by the way, never forgot their generosity. It's ironic that President Andrew Jackson (whose parents emigrated from Antrim) seized the fertile lands of the five civilized tribes (Chickasaw, Cherokee, Creek, Seminole, and Cherokee) and forced them to undertake that harrowing 500-mile trek to Oklahoma. Of the 21,000 Choctaws who started the journey, more than half perished from exposure, malnutrition, and disease. This despite the fact that during the War of 1812 the Choctaws had been allies of then General Jackson in his campaign against the British in New Orleans.

Perhaps their sympathy stemmed from their recognition of the similarities between the experiences of the Irish and Choctaw. Certainly contemporary Choctaw see it that way. They note that both groups were victims of conquest that led to loss of property, forced migration and exile, mass starvation, and cultural suppression (most notably language).

Today, there is a memorial to the victims of the Doolough Tragedy in Mayo, which took place on March 30, 1849. To receive relief, hundreds of starving Irish walked to the local Board of Guardians, having lunch at a local estate. They were refused aid, and instructed to travel miles in bad weather, along the lake, back to the main town. Many died on the journey.

Increased attention to the Great Hunger in recent years has led to renewed recognition of the Choctaw donation. In 1990, a delegation of Choctaw officials was invited to participate in an annual walk in County Mayo commemorating a tragic starvation march that occurred during the Famine. In honor of the special guests, the organizers (Action From Ireland, or AFRI) named the march The Trail of Tears. Two years later, two dozen people from Ireland came to the U.S. and retraced the 500-mile Trail of Tears from Oklahoma to Mississippi. That same year the Choctaw tribe made Ireland's president, Mary Robinson, an honorary chief.



Doolough, Great Hunger Memorial, Trail of Tears.

Credit to Native Heritage Project. Roberta Estes, Scientist, author, genetic genealogist. Documenting Native Heritage through contemporaneous records and DNA.

Rambling House at the Museum with Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann November 8th, 7.30 pm. Donations Appreciated.

A world without nightly soap operas, football or a film for enjoyment may seem hard to imagine, but perhaps we are the ones who are lacking the proper home-spun entertainment enjoyed by our Irish ancestors. In days gone by, long nights in Ireland were passed by attending airneán or going "ag bothantíocht", in what was known as a rambling house. These were houses where friends and neighbors congregated for gossip, storytelling and perhaps the odd song and dance, late into the night. These houses served an important function in the days before radio, television and modern transport. We have rambling houses to thank for ensuring much traditional lore, stories and music were passed on from generation to generation. Join us at the museum for our own rambling house and an informal music and song session by Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann.

Bring your party piece or instrument! Audience participation welcome.



Seanchai Evenings at the Museum!

November 9th, 7pm

\$5 Museum Members, \$10 others, \$25 family pack

Join us at the museum for an evening of heart warming and unforgettable stories of memories and gratitude. Tea and soda bread will be served.



Seanachie Evenings

Second Friday of the month

370 Broadway, Albany, NY (518) 427-1916 irish-us.org

Stories of Remembrance and Thanksgiving

with Marni Gillard and Nancy Marie Payne

November 9, 7 pm

"Marni Gillard is a vibrant and captivating storyteller!"

www.marnigillard.com

"Nancy Marie Payne enchants her listeners!"

nancymariepayne.blogspot.com

\$5 Museum Members, \$10 others, \$25 family four pack

**Wreath Laying at World War I Monument
New Scotland Ave and Lake Avenue Corner
Brunch, Exhibit, and Presentation on Albany Memories of WWI
November 11th, 11am.
Donations Appreciated.**

On the 100th anniversary of Armistice Day, the Irish American Heritage Museum will lay a wreath at the World War I monument in Albany. Everyone is then welcome back to the museum for brunch and a short lecture on the Irish- and German-American response to World War I by Dr. Elizabeth Stack, Executive Director of the IAHM, which will complement a new exhibit on the topic. We will complete our commemoration with a spotlight on two Albany veterans and their wartime experience. Debbie Brennan and Margaret Lasch-Carroll, the grand-daughters of two veterans will present extracts from their grandfather's diaries and letters home. John Joseph Brennan served at the Somme, and his diary records many of his experiences there. Phillip Joseph Gallagher was stationed at Lough Foyle Naval Air Station in Ireland, and his letters home give an intriguing insight into the Irish experience of the war, even as many struggled to gain independence from Britain.

Irish American Heritage Museum invites you to:



11 am — wreath laying, WWI Memorial, New Scotland Ave. and Lake Ave.

11:45 — brunch at Irish American Heritage Museum

12:30 — Albany Memories of WWI: Elizabeth Stack, Debbie Brennan, and Meg Carroll



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370 Broadway, Albany

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**The War to End All Wars: Music and Literature of World War I
November 13th, 7pm**

COLUMBIA CALLS

**ENLIST
NOW
FOR
U.S.
ARMY**

NEAREST RECRUITING STATION

Designed by FRANCES ADAMS HALSTED

COLUMBIA CALLS

TO THE PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES

Awake! ye men from dreams of Peace—
Nor sleep when danger's near,
But sing Old Glory to the breeze—
There are no cowards here!

Our fathers fought, like heroes died,
For years their blood they gave,
That home, home and Peace be ours,
Awake! Thy country saves!

Our flag for honor ever stands
To lift the weak, to lead the free,
America, our blessed land,
Is calling, calling thee.

From North to South; from Sea to Sea,
I hear the answering cry:
"Thy sons forever shall be true
For thee will live and die!"

Then sing Old Glory to the main
Beneath her stars and stripes,
For cowards shall never stain
The glory of her folds.

The Stars and Stripes shall lead us on
A mighty host for right—
That Peace shall sleep in sweetest slumber,
And war from Earth take flight.

Frances Adams Halsted

Printed by V. ADERDIE

The Museum will host an ensemble of readers and musicians to perform famous writings and popular songs from World War I. Chris McCarthy, Don Kelly, Steven O' Connor, Kathy McCarthy, Debbie Rhatigan, Bill Murray, Bill Dollard, and Meg Carroll will perform a selection of writing by Letts, Kettle, and MacGill and songs by Eric Bogle, George M. Cohan, and Irving Berlin. Audience participation welcome!

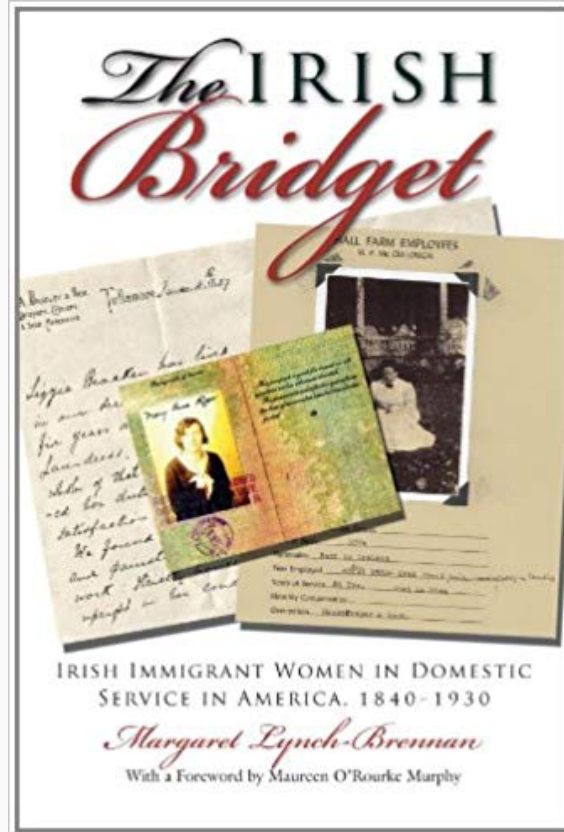
The Irish Maid in America: Was Bridget's Experience Unique?
A presentation by Margaret Lynch-Brennan, Ph.D.
November 15th, 7:00 pm
Donations Appreciated!

Who was Bridget? How did the Irish girl's experience compare with that of German,

Scandinavian and African-American maids and nannies in 19th and early 20th century America? How does it compare with the experience of Japanese, Latina, Chicana, West Indian and Filipino maids and nannies in America? Was Bridget's experience unique? Come to this presentation and find out!

Margaret Lynch-Brennan began her career as a classroom teacher. For many years she served as an administrator with the New York State Education Department working on issues related to civil rights, high school reform, and professional development for teachers. Subsequent to earning a Ph.D. in American History from the University at Albany, State University of New York, she published essays in three books and presented at conferences in Australia, Germany, Ireland and the United States. Her book, *The Irish Bridget: Irish Immigrant Women in Domestic Service in America, 1840-1930*, was first published by Syracuse University Press in 2009, subsequently reprinted in hardcover, and issued as a paperback in 2014. After retiring from the New York State Education Department she taught at Hudson Valley Community College and served a two-year term as a Public Scholar for Humanities New York (The New York Council for the Humanities). She now works as an independent scholar and is a member of the National Coalition of Independent Scholars.





**Screening of *Black '47*
The Celtic Hall on New Karner Rd.
November 18th, 3:00 pm**

The screening of this important film - the first one ever made about the Great Hunger - will be prefaced by a short lecture by Dr. Elizabeth Stack. P J Dillon, one of the writers of the film, is from the same hometown as Elizabeth, and so she will fill us in on the inspiration for the film. There will be a Q & A after the movie. There will be food available. \$10 admission fee.



***The Irish Border Story* by Dr. Peter Moloney
Carroll Lecture Series, College of St. Rose.
November 27th, 7:30 pm**

The fourth lecture in this popular series, Peter will discuss the border in the North. This is sure to be an interesting topic given the current Brexit climate.



The 2018-2019

Carroll Lecture Series

6 lectures, 4 colleges, 1 museum

Contemporary Ireland

Peter Moloney, PhD

EU scholar, writer, and professor



Lecture #4:

“The Irish Border Story”

Tuesday, November 27, 7:30 pm

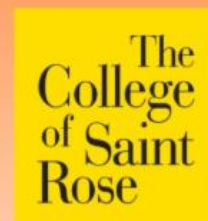
Touhey Forum, Lally School of Education

College of Saint Rose, 1009 Madison Ave, Albany

Presented by

The Irish American
Heritage Museum

in partnership with



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Coming to Terms with Grief and Loss: The Irish Approach to Death and Mourning

November 29th, 2018 7:00pm



One of the realities of modern culture is that we do not talk much about death or how to cope with it when it occurs in our lives. The Irish American Heritage Museum will discuss traditional Irish cultural habits, as well as modern literature to offer a round-table conversation on this important topic. Alden (Joe) Dolittle, a regional storyteller, volunteer chaplain at Albany Medical Center, and and Advanced Care Planning facilitator will join Dr. Jeffrey Berman in conversation. Dr. Berman writes and teaches writing about death and loss in literature and life. His book, *Death in the Classroom*, describes these factors and the course that he designed and taught two years after his wife's death. Join us for a cultural, philosophical, and healing session.

Annual Governor Hugh L. Carey Awards Gala. Friday 30th November, 6pm

Please call the Museum to purchase tickets or congratulatory adverts in the commemorative program for this event.

2018
GOVERNOR HUGH L. CAREY
AWARDS GALA
FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 30, 2018



HONORING
MICHAEL McNULTY
&
KERRY KENNEDY
WITH SPECIAL RECOGNITION OF
THOMAS McNABB

First Irish Christmas Market at the Museum!!
December 1st, 11 a.m.



Join us for family fun, Irish food, artisan crafts, tastings, and Santa Claus! The perfect opportunity to buy a traditional or handmade gift.

Irish American Heritage Museum | 518-427-1916 | info@irish-us.org | www.irish-us.org