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July at the Museum!



Getting Ready for Reopening!

Dear members and friends,

These past few months have really been a test in so many ways for all of us. It has been hard, of course, as a business - we have been closed for three months now, and staff and volunteers have been affected. And it has been hard personally; not seeing people regularly, and not having chats with tourists and members. But the light is at the end of the tunnel and we will be re-opening this month. It won't quite be back to normal; we have new safety procedures in place, in accordance with the Governor's regulations, so masks are mandatory in the Museum. We will have to adhere to social distancing, and regular sanitizing, and we can't yet hold large meetings. But we are glad to think we will be emerging from our cocoons and starting to see each other again. And the past few months have not seen us idle! We have been working frantically behind the scenes during the Covid 19 Shutdown to prepare the new space, and are absolutely thrilled with how it looks.

The Irish American Heritage Museum is now housed in a large building at Quackenbush Square and we have

created all new exhibits, incorporated technology to enhance the visitor experience, and built a replica thatched cottage, so there will be a lot to discover when you can come visit us!

As you know, the mission of the Irish American Heritage Museum is to preserve and tell the story of the contributions of the Irish people and their culture in America, inspiring individuals to examine the importance of their own heritage as part of the American cultural mosaic.

Today, those immigrants and their descendants, some 34 million Americans, are spread across every state in the nation. They experienced prejudice, hardship, trials, and sometimes good fortune. In turn, some of them displayed prejudice, wrestling for position in often-ruthless cities. Many served their new country in the military, some became labor leaders, politicians, teachers, and innovators. Some achieved great fame, others infamy. Most would remain nameless, living ordinary lives, proud of their Irish heritage, working hard, and becoming American. In our museum, we tell their stories.

We are so looking forward to you coming here, to the only museum dedicated to the Irish American experience in the country, and learning about those stories. As soon as we can, we will resume our regular program of events too.

We want to thank all of you who donated to the Museum, or renewed your membership, and we especially want to thank Humanities New York and the National Endowment for the Humanities, who gave us a HNY Cares Grant; Stewart's Shops, who gave us a grant; and Berkshire Bank, who also supported us at this time. We truly would not be here without the support of our members and the community. With your help, not only have we survived the catastrophic three-month shut-down, but we have been able to improve and renovate our museum too.

When we do re-open at the end of the month, we will also have on display an exhibition about Frederick Douglass in Ireland, and Black Citizenship in the Era of Jim Crow, which was provided to us by Humanities New York.



NATIONAL
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 BerkshireBank



Resident Genealogist Lisa Walsh Dougherty is back!



Our resident genealogist, Lisa Walsh Dougherty will be back in our library for consultations on Wednesday July 29th. You must contact Lisa at lisagene@nycap.rr.com for an appointment, so that we are complying with recommended numbers and social distancing.

A Moment of Respite.



Sara Berkeley was born in Dublin in 1967 and educated at Trinity College, Dublin, and the University of California, Berkeley.

Sara lived in Ireland till she was 22. Since then, she's lived in London and emigrated to America several times. The last time took, and she's now married and lives in Inverness, California as Sara Anthony.

Her publications include, Penn (poetry), Raven Arts Press (Dublin)/Thistledown Press (Saskatchewan), 1986. Home-Movie Nights (poetry), Raven/Thistledown, 1989. The Swimmer in the Deep Blue Dream (stories), Raven/Thistledown 1992. Facts About Water (poetry), Bloodaxe Books (Newcastle-upon-Tyne)/New Island Books (Dublin)/Thistledown, 1994.

Sara is a technical editor and writer for Autodesk, Inc. In her real life, she's working on a novel and trying to figure out how to stop the Inverness deer from eating her lilies. She is personal slave to two cats and would like to live some time in the canyon country of central Utah.

Famine Cottages

The horses move across the top of the hill
The water's still as stone below.
If I had to take it all in
to the places where I feel at home
I'm certain it would take me down,
I would be undone,
I'd drown.

As it is, there is little purchase
on my surface. Few ways in.
The trees send up their prayer for rain,
the hills color up at the mention of Spring.
This year I have been more than half my life
elsewhere. For so long, I have been other,
insular, foreigner with the buried idiom.

Across the reservoir, there are deer paths lace the hillside.
In my pocket, two stones and a shell
from the beach across from the famine cottages
at Rossohan. We used to row there in a skiff.
Last night, the driving California rain
drove home to me
how far away

those beaches where we played as kids: Dog's Bay,
Inch, Caherciveen, the dry stone walls squaring off
their handkerchiefs of land. New Year's Eve,
Nineteen ninety three I flew across
an ocean and six thousand miles to be
where I am now,
and this is how

I've lived my adult life - away from
my original home in a new place
with new people, an about face
from all I'd known. This is what I chose -
the airport departure halls, the agonized farewells,
and now these hills, my northern moon,
my predawn birds.

Irish American Heritage Museum

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Email Us

