

# The Museum of Newport Irish History

## Michael F. Crowley Lectures

5th Program of the 2020-2021 Series ~ Our 19<sup>th</sup> Annual

### *When Harry Met Mary Ann: An Irish Family in an American City*

**Guest Speaker: Janet Nolan, PhD**

Wednesday, April 21, 2021 ~ 6:00 p.m.

**“Virtual” Presentation via Zoom**

In April 1888, teen-ager Mary Ann Donovan stood alone on the quays of Queenstown, outside the city of Cork, waiting to board a ship bound for Boston. Her parents had died a few months before, making Mary Ann and her older brother John the only members of the family remaining in Ireland. Older sister Nellie had already gone to America and lived in Lynn, Massachusetts, and Nellie’s weekly letters home were bright spots in the Donovan household. After their parents’ deaths, Nellie sent the passage money so that her sister could join her. The “S.S. Marathon” was to be her home as she crossed the water, one of thousands of other Irish farm girls seeking a better life in a new land.

Several years later, Mary Ann met Harry Nolan at an Ancient Order of Hibernians dance in West Lynn. Harry married the vivacious red-haired Mary Ann in 1897 and they went on to have nine children, the seventh of whom became my father. What unfolds is both a micro and a macro history of one Irish-American family, the Donovan-Nolans, and one New England industrial city, Lynn, Massachusetts. It is also a representative story of a far larger tale than one family in one city in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. That tale, the story of Irish emigrants to America and the steep slope they climbed into the American middle class, is one that is echoed in millions of Irish-American families throughout the United States. We will look at Harry and Mary Ann, in particular, to see what they have to tell us about themselves and about the larger Irish experience in America.

**JANET NOLAN** is professor emerita of history at Loyola University Chicago where she taught Irish and Irish-American history to both graduates and undergraduates for almost a quarter of a century. She is internationally known as a pioneering scholar of the role of women in Irish emigration history. Two of her books, *Ourselves Alone: Women’s Emigration from Ireland, 1885-1920* (1989) and *Servants of the Poor: Teachers and Mobility in Ireland and Irish America* (2004), remain in print and are considered fundamental to the growing understanding of women in the transatlantic history of the Irish. She has given talks on this subject throughout the U.S. and Europe, including Ireland and Northern Ireland, and has appeared on American and Irish television and radio programs. After her retirement, she spent a blissful decade in Portsmouth. Last September, she moved to the north shore of Boston, the land of her family’s American roots. This is her third talk for the Museum of Newport Irish History.

#### **RESERVATIONS REQUIRED**

Visit [www.NewportIrishHistory.org](http://www.NewportIrishHistory.org), click “Lectures,” then the link to Reserve under the Apr.21 listing. You will receive an e-confirmation. Important: The day before the presentation, you will receive another email containing a link to the virtual event, which begins at 6pm. If you do *not* see this email, check your SPAM. **No fee** will be charged, but we’d ask that members who have not yet paid their renewal fee for the upcoming membership year (4/01/21-3/31/22) renew on the “Membership” page of our website.

**Non-computer/-mobile device Users:** This lecture, including speaker’s slides and Q&A, will be videotaped and a link to view will be available on the ‘Lectures’ page of our website after the event. Please consider enjoying the lecture with a family member or friend who can provide computer access. We look forward to resuming in-person lectures when safe to do so.

**QUESTIONS?** Please contact Ann at (401) 841-5493 or (917) 270-3372 or email her at [tpm1@earthlink.net](mailto:tpm1@earthlink.net).