



# The Museum of Newport Irish History MNIH

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Fifth and final talk of our 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Lecture Series

☞ *Made possible by a generous gift from* ☞  
*The Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians, Newport*

## ***The Old Stone Bank: A Window Into The Lives of Our 19th Century Ancestors***

*Guest Speaker:*

**Raymond J. McKenna**

Wednesday, March 19, 2025 at 6:00 p.m.

Wyndham Newport Hotel  
240 Aquidneck Avenue, Middletown, R.I. 02842  
and Live-Streamed via Zoom

This talk will focus on the Irish community in northern Rhode Island from 1844 to 1879. Over 22,000 names with Irish birthplaces have been cataloged, along with nearly 300 people whose surnames led back to farms or small patches of land. The rich Old Stone Bank records detail not only those who came to Rhode Island and stayed, but those who chose to return to life in Ireland. One can trace families on the circuitous routes from the Irish countryside to an English (or Scottish) urban address and on to the Ocean State. Relationships with those in other states are revealed.

Personal details, physical descriptions, workplaces and workmates can be discovered. The records offer insight into the lives of domestic servants, including the families for whom they worked and the types of positions they held. If your ancestor commenced work on the factory floor at age eleven, they were not alone, the records show. Then there are the Civil War accounts. And don't forget, most of our early ancestors could neither read nor write. The entries make this clear.

It is surprising how many Irish immigrants to R.I. found work as farmers. Numerous men, as well as some women, went West in search of gold. Some returned and opened accounts with gold nuggets. Finally, for historians, the records reveal the shift in immigration from Ulster in the early years to the Midlands, the West, and the South as the century progressed.

**RAYMOND J. MCKENNA** is a sixth-generation Providence native who earned history degrees from the University of Rhode Island and the University of Connecticut. He taught European, Russian, and American history for eleven years before going into the wine trade. Over the past twenty years, he has renewed his interest in Irish and Rhode Island history, focusing on the Famine generation. He is the author of the soon-to-be-published work, *Embracing Hope: The Famine Irish Experience in Providence, Rhode Island*, and blogs at [FederalHillIrish.com](http://FederalHillIrish.com). We welcome Ray for this, his third presentation to our membership.

***Doors open at 5:30 pm***

***\$5 fee payable at the door, cash or check to "MNIH"***  
***Light hors d'oeuvres & Cash Bar available***

**Reminder**

Winners of our "Luck of the Irish" fundraiser will be drawn at the conclusion of the talk and Q&A. Raffle tickets will be sold between 5:30 p.m. and the start of the lecture at 6:00 p.m.

### **Reservations Required for In-Person and Zoom Participation**

To reserve, visit [www.NewportIrishHistory.org](http://www.NewportIrishHistory.org), click "Lectures," then the appropriate link to reserve under the Mar. 19 listing (In-person or Zoom). You will receive an e-confirmation. If you do *not* see this email, check your SPAM. The talk will be videotaped, and a link will be available on our website's "Lectures" page after the event.

**Questions or Assistance with Registration:** Contact Ann Arnold at (401) 841-5493 or [tpm1@earthlink.net](mailto:tpm1@earthlink.net)

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