



# The Museum of Newport Irish History MNIH

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Third talk of our 24<sup>th</sup> Annual Lecture Series

☞ *Made possible by a generous gift from Francis J. Furtado,* ☞  
*given in memory of his wife, Barbara Carr Furtado*

## ***The Artistic Legacy of Helen Hooker O'Malley (1905–1993): Capturing Ireland in Camera, Sculpture, Painting, and Cloth***

*Guest Speaker:*

**Cormac K.H. O'Malley, B.A., J.D.**

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

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

Helen Hooker O'Malley was born in Greenwich, Connecticut, and from an early age wanted to become an artist. She was a national junior tennis champion by age 18 but refused to go to college like her sisters. Instead, she persuaded her parents to allow her to study and then pursue art as a career, an unusual course for a young socialite lady in those days. She studied art in New York and Paris but was mostly self-taught. She travelled extensively throughout Europe in the 1920s and early 1930s, including living in St Petersburg and Moscow and dancing in Athens. She carried her camera, drawing pencils, and watercolors, and used them constantly.

Helen met Ernie O'Malley, the Irish militant nationalist and leader in the Irish War of Independence and Civil War, in Connecticut in 1933. She fell in love with him as she sculpted his head in 1934, and they moved to Ireland and married in 1935. She sculpted, painted, photographed, designed clothes, did interior decorating, founded the Irish Players Theatre, designed costumes and stage sets, made over 400 sculptures, mostly heads and figures of actors, dancers, musicians, composers, and athletes. She was a talented artist. A collection of her sculptures is permanently installed at the University of Limerick. Collections of her photographs are held at the National Library of Ireland and the Photo Museum Ireland in Dublin. Her photo archives are preserved at University College Cork

**CORMAC O'MALLEY** is the son of Ernie and Helen Hooker O'Malley. He has been interested in Irish history since his college days. Since his retirement from an international corporate law practice, Cormac has worked to preserve his father's literary and historical legacy as well as his mother's artistic and cultural heritage by facilitating exhibits of her art collection, her own sculpture, photography, and theatre stage sets in Ireland and the USA, and by encouraging institutions to publish extensive catalogs about those exhibits. This year, two major exhibits of her works are at the University of Rochester and the University of Limerick. Cormac has also produced two documentary films about her work, which have been shown on Connecticut Public Television: *A Call to Arts* (2020) and *Camera and Clay* (2023). We welcome Cormac for this, his second talk to our membership.

***Doors open at 5:30 pm. Light hors d'oeuvres & Cash Bar available***

\$5 Lecture Fee is payable at door via cash or check to "MNIH." No fee to Zoom.

### **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 Nov. 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:** Please contact Ann Arnold at (401) 841-5493, (917) 270-3372, or [tpm1@earthlink.net](mailto:tpm1@earthlink.net)

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