



Museum of
Newport Irish History

30 Years
— 1996-2026 —

Third talk of our 25th Annual Lecture Series

Our 2026-2027 Series is made possible by generous gifts from those listed below

Voyage of Mercy:

*The USS Jamestown, the Irish Famine, and
the Remarkable Story of America's First Humanitarian Mission*

Guest Speaker:

Stephen Puleo

Tuesday, November 17, 2026 at 6:00 p.m.

Wyndham Newport Hotel

240 Aquidneck Avenue, Middletown, R.I. 02842

also Live-Streamed on Zoom

Stephen Puleo's book *Voyage of Mercy* tells the incredible story of the Great Famine, the Jamestown voyage, and the commitment of thousands of ordinary Americans to offer relief to Ireland, a groundswell that provided the collaborative blueprint for future relief efforts and established the United States as the leader in international aid.

More than 5,000 ships left Ireland during the great potato famine in the late 1840s, transporting the starving and the destitute away from their stricken homeland. The first vessel to sail in the other direction, to help the millions unable to escape, was the *USS Jamestown*, a converted warship that left Boston in March 1847, loaded with precious food for Ireland. Captain Robert Bennet Forbes and the crew of the *USS Jamestown* began a massive eighteen-month demonstration of soaring goodwill against the backdrop of unfathomable despair—one nation's struggle to survive, and another's effort to provide a lifeline. Forbes' undertaking inspired a nationwide outpouring of relief that was unprecedented in size and scope, the first instance of an entire nation extending a hand to a foreign neighbor for purely humanitarian reasons. It showed the world that national generosity and brotherhood were not signs of weakness but displays of quiet strength and moral certitude. Through July 1848, some sixteen months after the assistance began, Americans donated a massive amount of food, more than 9,900 tons, to sustain Ireland. The humanitarian transatlantic convoy from the United States that began with *Jamestown's* unprecedented voyage did not stop until upwards of 150 ships from U.S. ports delivered food, clothing, and provisions to starving Ireland.

STEPHEN PULEO is an author, historian, teacher, public speaker, and communications professional. He is the author of eight books, including his most recent, *The Great Abolitionist: Charles Sumner and the Fight for a More Perfect Union*, published by St. Martin's Press in 2024, and nominated for the prestigious Mark Lynton History Prize offered by the Columbia School of Journalism and Harvard's Nieman Foundation for Journalism. His ninth book, *The Penicillin Miracle: A Deadly Fire, World War II, and the Dawn of the Antibiotics Age*, will be published in late summer 2027. To learn more about his work, please visit StephenPuleo.com. We are delighted to welcome Steve to this, his first talk for the Museum.

Doors open at 5:30 p.m. Light hors d'oeuvres and a cash bar will be available.

- The \$10 in-person Lecture Fee is payable at the door in cash or by check to "MNIH." Zoom participation is free.
- Copies of *Voyage of Mercy* will be available for sale and signing after the talk, courtesy of Charter Books.

Reservations are required for both in-person and Zoom participation

To reserve, visit www.NewportIrishHistory.org, click "Lectures," then the appropriate link to reserve under the Nov. 17 lecture listing (In-person OR Zoom). You will receive an email confirmation. If you do *not* see it, check your spam folder. The talk will be videotaped, and a link will be available on our website's "Lectures" page afterward.

Questions/Assistance with Registration: Contact Ann Arnold at (401) 841-5493, (917) 270-3372, or tpm1@earthlink.net

With Gratitude to our 25th Annual Lecture Series Sponsors

Larry Bartley

In Memory of Kathleen (Bourne) Bartley

Deanna J. Conheeny

Brian Fitzgerald & Julie Englund

In Memory of Patrick Joseph Fitzgerald

Francis J. Furtado

In Memory of Barbara Carr Furtado

Kathy & Carl Gallagher

In Memory of Vincent & Joan Arnold

Robert & Emily Gallagher

Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians

In Memory of Jeanne Brockway

Brian & Carol Mahoney

Margaret Armstrong Murray

In Memory of Vincent J. Murray

Virginia Pittsley

In Memory of Bill Pittsley & Jay Pittsley