

Monument to Be Dedicated for Irish Immigrant Annie Moore

By **CLAUDIA McDONNELL**

Annie Moore, a 17-year-old teenager from County Cork, Ireland, stepped off a ship and into the pages of American history when she became the first person to be processed at the Ellis Island Immigrant Station in New York Harbor. She arrived there on the day the station opened, Jan. 1, 1892.

According to accounts of the event, Annie received a greeting from officials and a \$10 gold piece. She settled on the Lower East Side of Manhattan and

later married a German-American, Joseph Augustus Schayer. They had 10 children, of whom five survived to adulthood.

But Annie Moore's story ended in obscurity. After her death in 1924, she was buried in Calvary Cemetery in Queens in an unmarked grave. Various stories circulated about who had really arrived first at Ellis Island, and many believed that it had been another Annie Moore who had died in Texas.

Two prominent genealogists, working together, began untangling the facts, and in 2006 they announced their findings. Brian Andersson, New York City com-

missioner of records, and Megan Smolenyak Smolenyak discovered that the Annie Moore who landed at Ellis Island had remained in New York. They identified her grave at Calvary Cemetery, where five of her children also are buried.

Annie Moore became the symbol of millions of immigrants who have come to the United States with courage, hope and the will to build a better life. Next month. Almost 117 years after her arrival in New York, she will be honored at a dedication ceremony at Calvary Cemetery at which a monument will be placed on her grave—a Celtic cross made of Irish blue limestone.

Auxiliary Bishop Dennis J. Sullivan, vicar general, will preside at the ceremony on Saturday, Oct. 11, at 3 p.m. The public is invited; the cemetery is located at 49-02 Laurel Hill Blvd. in Queens.

The monument and the dedication are the work of the Annie Moore Memorial Project, which in turn is a project of the Irish Cultural and Learning Foundation in Phoenix, Ariz. The spokeswoman for the Annie Moore Memorial Project is Ms. Moore's great-granddaughter, Julia Devous, who will participate in the ceremony with her sister, Teresa Smith-DeHesus; both live in Phoenix. Other descendants of Annie Moore will attend, along with Brian Andersson, the genealogist; Niall Burgess, consul general of Ireland; government officials; supporters of the project and representatives of the Irish-American community.

Ronan Tynan, internationally known Irish tenor, will sing.

The monument is a Celtic cross with elements that represent Annie Moore's Irish and American heritage and her connection to Ellis Island. It is made of Irish blue limestone from the area that Annie Moore came from, and is being carved in County Clare by Francis McCormack, a master carver with Irish Natural Stone Ltd.

Cardinal Egan granted a special waiver for the use of Irish blue limestone. Ordinarily, Calvary Cemetery requires that monuments be made of granite; limestone is prohibited because it deteriorates more quickly. Irish blue limestone, however, is more durable than local varieties.

Funds for the monument project were raised in an international campaign; contributors include the Irish government; Tommy Ryan, owner of Annie Moore's Pub and Restaurant in Manhattan; The Kelly Gang Inc., a nonprofit organization in New York; philanthropists Norman McClelland, chairman of Shamrock Foods, and Bill O'Brien, president of William Howard O'Brien Companies, both of Arizona; and the Cobh Heritage Center in Cork, Ireland.

The Heritage Center contains a statue of Annie Moore, who left Ireland from Cobh Harbor. She traveled with her two younger brothers, and a statue of all three stands at Ellis Island.

Now a Celtic cross will mark the place where Annie Moore was buried—a symbol of her faith and her culture, a reminder of her journey and her life in her adopted homeland, and, in a way, a tribute to all who followed her first courageous step onto a new shore.

Directions to Calvary Cemetery: Joseph Giulietti, cemetery superintendent, (718) 786-8000.



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