



Annie's Day

Tynan to sing at Annie Moore dedication

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October 8, 2008 It was a potential last minute hitch that could have derailed the crowning moment in the Annie Moore story.

U.S. Customs officers impounded the monument to the immigrant heroine at the port of Elizabeth in New Jersey last week.



And for a couple of tense days, organizers of this weekend's Annie Moore gathering at Calvary Cemetery in Queens were worried that the event would not take place at all.

But after a flurry of emails and phone calls that involved the ceremony organizers, the Irish Consulate in New York and New York City's Commissioner of Records Brian Andersson, the stone memorial has been released and will be unveiled as planned.

"It was quite a scare but all the forces were marshaled and got us through. All systems are go for this Saturday," said Julia Devous of the Annie Moore Memorial Project and a great granddaughter of the first immigrant recorded at Ellis Island.

Meanwhile, Ronan Tynan will lend his voice to the unveiling of the new headstone over the final, and for years unmarked, resting place of Annie Moore.

Tynan is but one of the number of prominent guests lined up for the ceremony set for Calvary Cemetery this Saturday, Oct. 11 at 3 p.m. This is a time change from the original starting time of 2 p.m.

In addition to Tynan, other program participants include Irish composer and lyricist Brendan Graham who composed "Isle of Hope, Isle of Tears," a song about Annie Moore and Ellis Island and which will be sung by Tynan.

Auxiliary Bishop Dennis Sullivan will represent the Archdiocese of New York while broadcaster Adrian Flannelly will be master of ceremonies.

Other expected guests include Irish consul General in New York, Niall Burgess, genealogist Megan Smolenyak Smolenyak who will speak about her role in the discovery of the true story of Annie Moore. New York Commissioner of Records, Brian Andersson, whose research uncovered the fact that Annie Moore's grave was unmarked, will also attend.

New York's County Cork Pipe and Drum Band will perform while the County Cork Association will provide logistical support.

Patricia Prior, president of the Irish Cultural and Learning Foundation in Phoenix, Arizona, sponsor of the event, will speak as will descendants of Annie Moore.

"We are planning a special event to properly honor Annie as both a simple, humble woman of Irish heritage from the Lower East Side, and as an Irish-American icon," said Julia Devous.

"We understand that Annie holds a special place in the hearts and minds of Irish-American immigrants and their families here in America and Ireland. There has been such interest in Annie and the discovery of the real story of her life as a New Yorker that we expect this event to be high profile and well attended by the public, especially the New York Irish community," said Devous.

"All are welcome to join the family and project supporters. We hope to honor Annie as well as celebrate her place in history with this special dedication ceremony."

Devous said that a plaque will also be unveiled Friday in Cork City at the site of Annie Moore's home before she sailed for America.

Annie Moore made history on January 1, 1892 when she became the first recorded arrival at Ellis Island in New York Harbor. A statue of the teenage immigrant now records the event at the Ellis Island Museum.

For years it was thought that Annie had moved west from New York but two years ago it was revealed that she had never in fact left the city and was resting in the unmarked grave in Calvary, this despite her fame and the statues depicting her on both sides of the Atlantic.

The monument that so attracted the eye of U.S. Customs is carved from Irish Blue limestone and was crafted in County Clare by master carver Francis McCormack of Irish Natural Stone Products.

Funding for the Annie Moore Memorial Project monument and dedication has been raised through a national and international effort organized by the Phoenix-based Irish Cultural and Learning Foundation.

Calvary Cemetery is at 4902 Laurel Hill Boulevard in Woodside. The Annie Moore plot is located in section 20/Third Calvary; entry is from 52nd Street and Queens Boulevard. More details at www.anniemoore.net.

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