

NEWS &
VIEWS



Annie Moore headstone impounded by U.S. Customs

By Ray O'Hanlon
rohanlon@irishecho.com

October 2 She was given the red carpet treatment by federal authorities in 1892. Now the headstone destined for her final resting place has been impounded by U.S. Customs.

Annie Moore's headstone, hand carved in Ireland and shipped across the Atlantic for a scheduled unveiling in Calvary Cemetery, Queens on Saturday, October 11, is in the hands of Customs officials in the Port of Elizabeth, New Jersey and there is no indication at time of writing as to when the Celtic Cross marker will be released.

It has been taken out of its container to be X-rayed," Robert Spencer of Boston-based Irish Natural Stone told the Echo Thursday.

Spencer expressed concern that the marker could be held for an extended period and not released in time for the unveiling ceremony, the final details for which are now in place.

Spencer said the headstone was considered a work of art and this put it into a special category for import purposes.

All the paperwork had been completed, he said.

As to why it had been removed from its container and taken into custody by U.S. Customs, Spencer could not offer an explanation.

"I've no idea why," he said.

As of Thursday afternoon, emails between the organizers of the Calvary unveiling were being exchanged at a rapid clip with New York City officials, including Commissioner of Records Brian Andersson, attempting to find out more information on the status of the marker.

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, just a short distance from the place where her memorial has been stopped cold on its way to the grave where she rests with five of her children.

This story appeared in the issue of October 8-14, 2008

