



County Roscommon Society of New York, Inc.

Newsletter September, 2018

Organize July 16, 1931. Charter issued October 30, 1931 reading County Roscommon Social & Welfare League, Inc. Name changed to County Roscommon Society, Inc., by charter dated November 4, 1946. Certificate of Amendment of Certificate of Incorporation of County Roscommon Society, Inc., dated December 22, 2014 changed name to County Roscommon Society of New York, Inc.

The next meeting of the County Roscommon Society of New York, Inc., will take place on
Sunday September 30, 2018
2 pm at:
Michael's Roscommon House
531 Joralemon St, Belleville, NJ 07109

Dear Members:

Hope everybody had a nice, happy and safe summer and are all refreshed and ready for another year. Best of luck to all the young people (and not so young) who are starting school and going away to college. Hope everybody does well.

At our next meeting we will have a guest speaker. Maureen Murphy Quinn has agreed to tell about the famine in a short one-act play titled "The Telling of the Hunger" - An old woman tells her story of what it was like to experience and survive the "The Great Hunger". Written and performed by Maureen and directed by James Sheridan (Director of *In the Name of the Father* and *My Left Foot*). Maureen currently lectures on "Women of the 1916 Rising", "Irish Women in History" and "The Famine". She currently serves as the First Vice President of the Irish American Association of Northwest Jersey, is a member of the Women of Irish Heritage, a past chairperson of the Morris County St. Patrick's Day Parade, and a past Committee Co-Chair of the Garden State Arts Center Irish Festival.

Member Jim Abrams is providing us with the history of Dr. Douglas Hyde in four parts. Jim can be reached at jfabrams@atlanticbb.net. Thank you Jim for this wonderful contribution.

This is the second of the four part series.

By the time young Douglas Hyde departed Roscommon for his studies at Trinity College Dublin in 1882, he had already published several Irish-language poems under the pseudonym *An Craibhin Aoibhinn* (Irish for "the delightful little branch"). As mentioned in Part One of this series, his early formal education at home came from his father Arthur, a Church of Ireland rector, and himself the son and grandson of Protestant clerics. During Hyde's formative childhood and adolescence, the family lived near Frenchpark, a location that was home to many country people who spoke Irish as the language of everyday life. But even here the native tongue was fading fast. An avid outdoorsman, Douglas tramped the woods and bogs of the Roscommon countryside and during summers he fished nearby Lough Gara. It was during these outings that Hyde became acquainted with Irish-speaking neighbors like Johnny Lavin, an old Fenian, and Seamus Hart, a local gamekeeper, who would prove to be so influential to the ever-curious and affable young linguist. After arriving at Trinity, one of Hyde's tutors asked the precocious scholar how many languages he knew. Hyde responded that he had mastered English, German, Hebrew, Latin, Greek and French. He could read Italian but the language he knew best, Hyde admitted, was Irish. The incredulous professor exclaimed, "Do you know Irish?" "Yes," Hyde acknowledged, and added, "I dream in Irish."

Douglas Hyde not only dreamed in Irish but also actively pursued a lifelong vision to preserve and revitalize the native



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language of Ireland, not by rescuing dusty manuscripts salvaged from a bygone era for academic analysis, but by devoting his life to Gaelic culture as a living, breathing, and dynamic expression of what it means to be Irish, both for individuals and for the nation as a whole. Having been introduced to Fenian and Nationalist sentiments in Roscommon, having heard the lilt and beauty of the language spoken in cottages by country people he admired, Hyde became keenly aware of the psychological costs of cultural colonialism. Centuries of oppression and domination by the English colonial power seemed to inculcate a sense of inferiority and shame in many Irish speakers for their own language. Schools under the control of the Board of National Education, for example, used a "signum stick" tied around a child's neck to tally the number of times Irish words were used during the course of a day. Beatings were delivered proportionate to the number of notches on the stick. Hyde wanted to remove the signum stick from around the neck of the nation in order to build a New Ireland free from the corrosive psychological and cultural influences of "the behemoth to the east."

When he left home for university in Dublin, Hyde harbored strong Nationalist feelings. Fortunately, his skills as a linguist and his surprising fluency as a speaker of Irish provided him with enough intellectual armor to deflect and redirect the inevitable condescension customarily aimed at people speaking an ancient tongue while in the modernizing metropolis. At Trinity, the young scholar initially read French, German, and Irish, earning first-class honors, though the study of Irish Gaelic as a living language was considered eccentric at best. In his first three years at TCD, Hyde never met another

student who knew Irish. He eventually capitulated to pressure from his father to study theology in the Divinity School, in order to qualify for a career in the Protestant ministry, as had been the family tradition. Hyde came to realize that he was ill-suited to clerical life and decided to abandon theology but not before winning honors in his Divinity examinations. While immersed in Trinity's Divinity curriculum Hyde won several academic and literary prizes for his Irish verse and prose. He enjoyed his social life while living as a student in Dublin and was active in several off-campus clubs such as the Discussion Club, the Pan-Celtic Society, and the Contemporary Club, where members met regularly to discuss and debate literature and language. Hyde also relished developing friendships with leading figures in the emerging Irish Revival, which would gather the creative energies of highly talented artists, dramatists, and writers of all stripes on behalf of an exhilarating new movement for cultural independence in Ireland.

Ultimately, Hyde transferred to the law school at Trinity and in 1888 earned his Doctor of Law degree (the LL.D.) with honors, although he had no intention of actually practicing law. That same year Hyde contributed Irish-language verse to *Poems and Ballads of Young Ireland* and collaborated with the celebrated poet W. B. Yeats on "Fairy and Folk Tales of the Irish Peasantry." The following year Hyde published his own first volume of folktales—*Leabhar Scealaiocht*—collected in part from his rural neighbors in the province of Connacht. By then all doubts were resolved about the direction Dr. Douglas Hyde's life would take. Upon graduating from Trinity, as noted by his biographer Gareth W. Dunleavy,



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"Hyde was a dedicated folklorist and a declared Irish Irelander." In 1890, Douglas Hyde published a collection of Gaelic folk stories in *Beside the Fire*, which translated oral tales written down by Hyde from Irish-speaking storytellers in Roscommon. It was a time in Dr. Hyde's life when he was flush with passion and purpose, having earned his LL.D. degree in law, garnered academic and literary distinction while at university, and having authored a number of favorably reviewed essays and books that more than adequately laid the table for an auspicious academic career. Yet, at that moment, Hyde recognized that he did not have a profession or even a job. So, it was with great delight in September of 1890, then, that he accepted a position as visiting professor of English and the Humanities for two terms at a university in New Brunswick, Canada.

Next month we'll touch upon Dr. Hyde's brief Canadian sojourn and his return to Ireland to deliver the most famous speech of his remarkable career, "The Necessity for De-Anglicising Ireland," presented to the Irish National Literary Society in November of 1892. The following year, 1893, Hyde founded the popular Gaelic League and married Lucy Kurz. This next installment of the story will conclude with a brief description of Dr. Hyde's fundraising trip to the USA in support of the Gaelic League in 1905-1906.

James Francis Abrams
September, 2018

Items of Interest:

We are planning on putting a booklet together for our 90th Anniversary and need some information from you. Please share any memories you have of the society's annual dinner dance, parade, weddings, funerals, etc. Also photographs much appreciated. Please e-mail to me at roscommonsocietyofny@aol.com.

Please keep the following in your prayers:

Nora Christina Dowd Clarke passed away peacefully on July 28, 2018, surrounded by her family. Her husband of 62 years, Tony, passed away less than one week earlier. She was predeceased by her siblings, Peggy Dowd, Raymond Dowd, and Madeline Gilligan in addition to her husband, Tony. Surviving are her devoted children, Marion O'Neill, Brian Clarke, and Debbie Hanrahan, and her husband, John; cherished grandchildren, Michael O'Neill, John Hanrahan, Elizabeth Hanrahan, Briana Garrett, and her husband, Gatlin, Stephen Hanrahan, Jacqueline Clarke, and Ellen O'Neill; and loving siblings, Joseph Dowd, Frank Dowd, and Lawrence Dowd. Those planning an expression of sympathy are asked to consider making a contribution in her memory to Notre Dame Church, North Caldwell, Mt. St. Dominic Academy, Caldwell, or a charity of your choice.

Philomena O'Grady Clarke passed peacefully August 28, 2018. During her brief illness she was comfortable and surrounded by family. Rest In Peace. She was waked on Tuesday, August 28 at Parow Funeral Home in North Arlington NJ. The funeral mass took place on Wednesday, August 29 at 10 am at Queen of Peace church in North Arlington NJ. Mrs. Clarke was aunt of our Past President, Kevin P. O'Connor.



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Upcoming Events:

Saturday, September 15, 2018 - 4 pm

Bayside St. Patrick's Day Parade Committee will hold a Half Way to St. Patrick's Day Fundraiser at Monahan & Fitzgerald, Bayside.

Friday, September 28, 2018 - 7 pm

Aisling Irish Center - 2018 Dinner
Dance Mulino's at Lake Isle · Eastchester, New York.

Sunday, October 28, 2018 – 6 pm

Irish Guide Dogs for the Blind will hold their annual fundraiser at Rory Dolan's, 890 McLean Avenue, Yonkers.

As always, if you have an item of interest for our future newsletters, please let me know.

The following is a list of the Committee for 2018:

Chaplain	Msgr. Kevin Flanagan
President	Mary C. Montgomery
Vice President	Bernie Sharkey
Treasurer	John Kenny
Recording Secretary	Geraldine O'Brien-Massey
Financial Secretary	William F. Montgomery
Corresponding Secretary	Mary Scally O'Brien
Sergeant-At-Arms	Martin Dowd

Best wishes,

Mary