

Annie Moore From Ireland, Who Was All Of 17 Years

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By W.H. Lamb

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Sattue of Annie Moore and her two brothers, (Cobh, Irland) by Irish scuptress, JeAnne

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One of the most divisive issues facing Americans today is the issue of immigration into the U.S. – most especially the truly troubling ILLEGAL variety of immigration! For decades, and probably much longer, we have been faced with the specter of hordes of “undocumented” invaders crossing over our borders, or overstaying their visas, for sundry purposes -- ostensibly to seek a better life for themselves and their children and become “WELFARE LEECHES” but, in some cases, to infiltrate their poisonous hatred of our relatively free American culture into our body politic, as they seek to extend their insane and Satanically-induced Islamic beliefs and violence from their own despotic countries into ours.

It has been claimed, with a high degree of truth, that America is a “land of immigrants”, and that most of us are descended from those who immigrated into the U.S. from elsewhere in the world from the 1620’s through the end of the tidal wave of millions of immigrants, which ebbed starting around the 1920’s. I am one of those who had grandparents who did come legally from somewhere else in the world in the early 1900’s, and I’m truly grateful that they did so. Without the legal immigration of my maternal grandparents, I wouldn’t be here today, so I say “thank you” to them. All of us who had ancestors who came to our shores LEGALLY should say a prayer of thankfulness, because many of them paid a high price to come here and be “Americans”. While some immigrants came to America and became very successful, many of them lived lives of “quiet desperation”, a hand-to-mouth existence in the hustle and bustle of competitive American life in which they found themselves overwhelmed.

I’d like to tell you the story of one of those immigrants from Ireland, a young teen named **ANNIE MOORE**, who was one of the

latter category of new Americans who lived a “hardscrabble” life in New York City from the time she stepped off the boat at Ellis Island on Jan. 1, 1892, until her death from heart failure on Dec. 6, 1924, aged 50 years. She was almost forgotten, and her pauper’s grave in Calvary Cemetery in Queens, N.Y. went unmarked for decades, until Irish author **Brendan Graham** wrote a song about her. That beautiful song, titled, “**Isle of Hope, Isle of Tears**”, (written in 1995), has been recorded many times. My favorite version is by my favorite singing group, **Celtic Woman**, and I’ve seen them perform this song “live” several times. Here are Brendan Graham’s words to this poignant tribute to people’s bravery and determination:

“On the first day on January, eighteen ninety-two, They opened Ellis Island and they let The people through. And the first to cross the threshold Of that isle of hope and tears, Was Annie Moore from Ireland, Who was all of fifteen years.

CHORUS:

“Isle of hope, Isle of tears, Isle of freedom, isle of fears,

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~~But it's not the isle you left behind. That isle of hunger,~~

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~~Isle of pain, Isle you'll never see again, But the isle of~~

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~~home is always on your mind.~~

~~*"In a little bag she carried All her past and history, And her dreams for the future In the land of liberty. And courage is the passport When your old world disappears. But there's no future in the past When you're fifteen years.*~~

CHORUS

~~*"When they closed down Ellis Island In nineteen forty-three, Seventeen million people Had come there for sanctu'ry. And in Springtime when I came here And I stepped onto its piers, I thought of how it must have been When you're fifteen years."*~~

CHORUS

Search for "***Isle of Hope, Isle of Tears***" by ***Celtic Woman*** on UTube, watch and listen to it, and be comforted. You'll be GLAD you did. A couple of corrections are necessary before proceeding: First, *Annie Moore* was NOT 15 years old when she left COBH, in County Cork, Ireland on the S.S. Nevada on Dec. 20, 1891 – she was 17 according to her birth records in Ireland. Also, Ellis Island was NOT closed in 1943, but was officially closed in 1954. However, the processing of immigrants through the facility ceased in 1924. It would seem that Graham's U.S. history was a bit murky.

Annie's parents, Matthew & Julia Moore, had come to the U.S. before she and her two brothers came over. Why they left their children in Ireland for a period of one to four years (the record is confusing) and emigrated without them is lost to history. But on Dec. 20, 1891, Annie and her two brothers, 11 year-old Anthony and 7 year-old Philip, boarded the S.S. Nevada in the harbor of Cobh, County Cork, Ireland. Twelve days later they docked at Ellis Island, in New York Harbor. They actually arrived on Dec. 31, 1891, but had to wait on the ship until Jan. 1, 1892 to enter the brand new Immigration Center on Ellis Island.

According to a newspaper report from that time, Annie Moore was the **first** immigrant to be processed through the brand new Immigration Center at Ellis Island, Port of New York. Now I've read the official copy of the "Passenger's List", prepared by "District of the City of N.Y., Port of N.Y.", signed and dated Jan. 2, 1892. It plainly records the FIRST name of the passengers off of S.S. Nevada as 21-year-old *Ellie (King?)*—(the handwriting is illegible). Annie Moore is listed as #2, and her brothers are listed as numbers 3 & 4.

In any case, Annie Moore was honored as the FIRST immigrant to be processed through Ellis Island, on Jan. 1, 1892. An official presented her with a U.S. \$10 gold coin, the equivalent of close to \$300 in current dollars. The children were reunited with their parents, who were living in a

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presented in Manhattan. In 1895 Annie Moore (1874-1924) married Joseph Schayer (1876-1960), a son of German immigrants, who was a fish salesman at Manhattan's famous Fulton Fish Market. They had 11 children together, at least half of which died before reaching adulthood.
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Annie was described in one record as "an immense woman", and she died of heart failure on Dec. 6, 1924, aged 50. She was buried in an unmarked pauper's grave along with several of her deceased children in Queens, N.Y., and was forgotten by history until Irish author Brendan Graham came across her story and wrote the famous song about her in 1995. Long confused with another Annie Moore who had moved to Texas and had been killed in an accident, a professional genealogist, Megan Smolenyak, discovered the true story of the Irish immigrant, Annie Moore. Her unmarked grave in Calvary Cemetery in Queens, N.Y. was finally identified in August, 2006.

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Annie Moore Schayer's Grave, Queens, NY

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On Oct. 11, 2008, a wonderful dedication ceremony held in the cemetery unveiled Annie's first marker for her gravesite, a lovely Celtic Cross cut from Irish blue limestone. The dedication ceremony is on UTube, and you can watch it yourself. Lots of bagpipe music, and words by Annie's descendants and Brendan Graham. A fitting tribute to a LEGAL immigrant, one of the countless legal immigrants who helped to make, and shape, our young constitutional republic.