

National Famine Commemoration.

On Sunday, May 20, the Irish American Home Society will participate in commemorating the victims of the famine by having a Mass at 9:00 followed by a breakfast, a non-perishable food collection for the needy and a display of several of the details of the famine.

Those of us who are Irish born or of Irish descent, whether we are aware of it or not, have had one or more of our immediate ancestors suffer and probably die from starvation during the famine years, 1845-1851.



Some Famine Facts:

- ... The Sultan of Turkey sent the equivalent of \$10,000 to help with the famine relief effort. Half of that amount was returned to the Sultan since Queen Victoria (who then ruled Ireland) decreed that no other person would donate more than she donated.
- ... The Native American Choctaw Tribe collected \$170 which they donated to Irish famine relief. In 1992 a group of Irish people returned the Choctaw kindness by walking the "Trail of Tears" and raised \$170,000 which they donated to the Tribe. See reverse side.
- ... Though vehemently denied by authorities, some starving Irish, who spoke only the Irish language, were denied food from the soup kitchens because they wouldn't (couldn't) ask for food in English!
- ... An estimated 5,000 victims of the famine are buried, coffinless, in a single mass grave in Abbeystrawry Cemetary, Skibbereen, Co. Cork.

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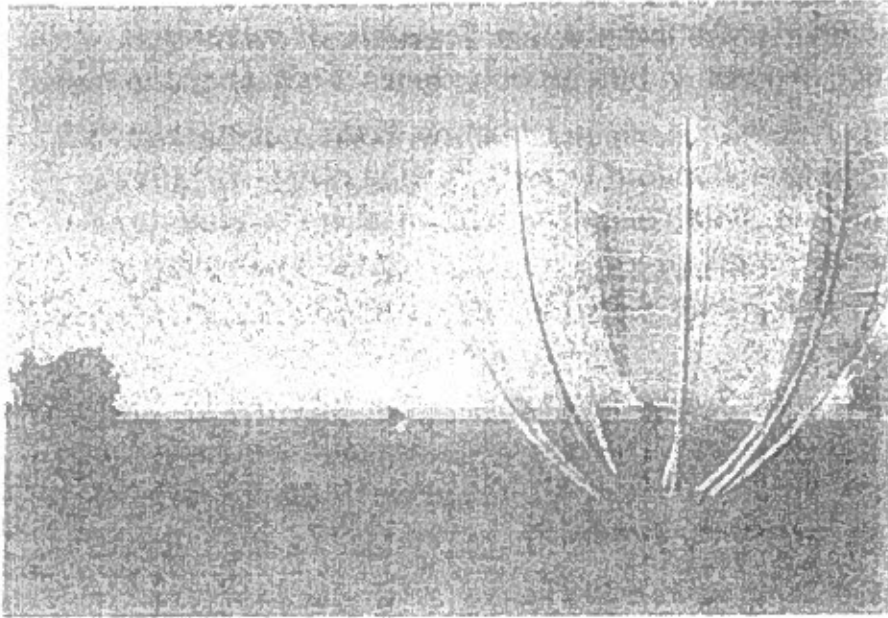
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A sculpture of nine eagle feathers will be installed in Bailie Park, in Midleton, Co. Cork to thank the native American Choctaw Tribe for their kindness and support during the Great Irish Famine, An Gorta Mór.

The sculpture, consisting of nine giant, stainless steel eagle feathers (a significant part of the Choctaw culture) is currently being completed by Cork sculpture Alex Pentak.

The \$111,000 sculpture will be officially unveiled later this year and invitations to attend the unveiling have been sent to Choctaw leaders.



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In 2008 the Irish Parliament, Dáil Eireann, unanimously passed a resolution that the victims of the Irish Famine, An Gorta Mór, of the mid 1800's be commemorated annually.

The National Famine Commemoration Committee was established and was directed to set guidelines for the annual commemoration. Briefly, the following guidelines apply:

1. A town / community that was severely affected by the Famine will be selected as a focal point for each annual commemoration.
2. The location for the annual commemoration will rotate around the 4 provinces of Ireland.
3. The date for the annual commemoration in Ireland will be the weekend of the SECOND Sunday in May.
4. The Irish communities abroad are encouraged to participate in the commemoration on the weekend of the THIRD Sunday in May.



The focal points of the commemorations to date are:
2009 Munster -- Skibbereen, Co. Cork
2010 Connacht -- Murrisk, Co. Mayo
2011 Ulster -- Clones, Co. Monaghan
2012 Leinster -- Drogheda, Co. Louth
2013 Munster -- Kilrush, Co. Clare
2014 Connacht -- Strokestown, Co. Roscommon
2015 Ulster -- Newry, Co. Down
2016 Leinster -- Sculptures at the Dublin Docks, Co. Dublin

... "as an excuse for action, the British government proceeded to convene committees of inquiry whose reports and recommendations for relieving the destitution and poverty in Ireland were not acted upon. In all, 114 Royal Commissions and 61 Special Committees of Enquiry were set up and reported on conditions in Ireland in the period 1800 - 1840". (More than one every 3 months for 40 years!)

(*The Workhouses of Ireland*, John O'Connor.)

... "Eviction in Ireland meant depopulation, as the evicted family had but two alternatives, starvation or emigration. Those who could escape the former chose the latter; and the country was depopulated in either case".

(*The Economic History of Ireland*, George O'Brien)

... "No other issue has provoked so much anger, or has embittered relations, between the two countries as the indisputable fact that huge quantities of food were exported from Ireland to England throughout the period when the people of Ireland were dying of starvation. ... death from starvation was not possible but an immediate fate."

(*The Great Hunger*, Cecil Woodham-Smith.)

... "Many of those who died chose to lie down in the corners of graveyards so that their skeletal remains would rest on consecrated grounds".

(Enda Kenny, Irish Prime Minister, at the Great Hunger Commemoration, Strokestown, May 2014.)

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The grave marker shown below has been placed at the Great Hunger mass grave in Newry, Co. Down (the focal point of the 2015 Great Hunger commemoration).

Similar markers will be placed at all Great Hunger mass grave sites in Ireland.



Epilogue

As an example of the total apathy toward the people of Ireland and disregard for conditions in that part of the realm, according to John O'Connor's book, *The Workhouses of Ireland*, (excerpt above), from 1800 - 1840, 114 Royal Commissions and 61 Special Committees of Enquiry (a total of 175) were established, all addressing the conditions in Ireland. **MORE THAN ONE INQUIRY EVERY 3 MONTHS FOR 40 YEARS!**

The ultimate example of government in-action.

