



Irish Women Rise

LAOH Irish History Newsletter #3

LAOH Leadership

A chara

Our organization was blessed to have three remarkable women who served as National Presidents during the turbulent times from the Easter Rising to the Irish Civil War. Ellen Ryan Jolly Rhode Island 1912-1916, Mary McWhorter Illinois 1916-1921 and Adelia Christy Ohio 1921-1925. All three of these women addressed Congress in 1918 in regards to the recognition of Ireland. Their stories need to be told and preserved for future generations of Irish American Women. It is our responsibility as LAOH Irish Historians and members to share the proud history of our own Order. When researching the role of our Order during the time leading up to, during and after the Easter Rising, there is very little information. If these women addressed Congress we can presume that they were very active in Irish causes. Where is that information? Our goal is to find it. The National Convention was held in Boston in 1916. Mary B. Dolan visited the Burns and the Theology Libraries of Boston Colleges to search our archives and the Boston Pilot, the Catholic newspaper. Unfortunately, Mary was not successful in finding the Proceedings of the 1916 National Convention.

The Gaelic American has mentioned Ellen Ryan Jolly on a few occasions. In the February 27, 1915 edition, there was an ad for the 137th Anniversary Celebration of the Birth of Robert Emmet. The event was held on March 2, 1915 at the Academy of Music in New York City and the ad listed that the Oration was to be given by Mrs. Ellen Ryan Jolly, the National President of the Ladies Auxiliary of the Ancient Order of Hibernians. As stated in the first newsletter, she served as an Honorary Pallbearer, the only woman given that honor at the Staten Island Funeral of O'Donovan Rossa. In another article, her condolence letter to Mrs. O'Donovan Rossa appeared and is as follows:

"My Dear Mrs. O'Donovan Rossa

In the name of seventy thousand daughters of the exiled Gael, members of the Ladies Auxiliary to the Ancient Order of Hibernians of America, I extend our united sympathy to you in this hour of sorrow.

It was my privilege to know the "Unconquerable Rebel and Ireland's royal and loyal son, in the early 70's and the respect and affection which I conceived in those days for the Irish Patriot have strengthened in the passing years. He gave his life for Erin's cause holy and sublime, and not in vain. The name of O'Donovan Rossa shall be revered by future generations. "When Ireland takes her place among the Nations of the Earth," high

upon the roll of honor of Erin's illustrious sons will be the hallowed name of Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa. May he rest in peace and may the sods rest lightly above the heart which loved Ireland with passionate devotion.

With deep respect, sympathy and affection I am dear Mrs. O'Donovan Rossa.
Yours Sincerely Ellen Ryan Jolly President Ladies Auxiliary of the Ancient Order of Hibernians

Following the Easter Rising, the Gaelic American covered meetings that addressed the situation and the America response. In the April 29, 1916 issue, an article stated that Ellen Ryan Jolly, the National President of the Ladies Auxiliary of the Ancient Order of Hibernians spoke at a Rally. She spoke for Irish Mothers and her speech was received with great applause. A quote for her speech " England! I hate here day and night ! Whether it's by revolution or by howitzers of the Germans- I don't care which - I hope to see here defeated. We mothers haven't forgotten Wexford, we haven't forgotten the Boyne, and I for one will never sing God Save the King. I'd choke a son of mine who ever attempted to sing that song." Providence Rhode Island held 2 great meetings were speeches from prominent men addresses their horror at England's savage acts and the condemnation of the murder of the Leaders of the Easter Rising. Ellen Ryan Jolly was the lone female voice at the meetings. As President of the Ladies Auxiliary of the Ancient Order of Hibernians, she addressed the crowds stating "that her organization pledged its sympathy and material support to the families of the victims of the revolt in Dublin. She spoke of Irish patriotism and said that since 1172 Ireland had been fighting for freedom. ' We are not neutral, I hope England gets licked to Paulo. I don't care how she is licked, whether it bevy the desertion of her colonies, by an Uprising in Ireland, or by the German howitzers. We must stand shoulder to shoulder for dear oldIreland.' Following the speech she announced that a collection would be taken up, all the proceeds of which, above the expenses of the meeting, would go into a fund for the aid of the families of the Irish revolutionists."

Ellen Ryan Jolly was a woman who spoke her mind and was dedicated to her Irish Heritage. The next issue will share more information on this great leader. Future issues will tell the story of Mary McWhorter and Adelia Christy.

Marilyn Madigan
LAOH National Irish Historian