



America's Celebrations for St. Patrick Day

St. Patrick's Day has been celebrated in America since 1601. The first celebration was organized in 1601 in St. Augustine Florida by an Irish priest serving the Spanish Colony. In 1737, Irish immigrants living in Boston organized one of the first public celebrations in the American colonies. Irish serving in the British Army marched in New York City in 1762 to celebrate their heritage and is considered the first St. Patrick's Day parade in America. This was the beginning of a long proud tradition that continues today.

There is book titled *The Wearing of the Green* a history of St. Patrick's Day by Mike Cronin and Daryl Adair in the foreword Maria Moynihan the Chief Executive of St. Patrick's Festival Dublin writes that the words pride and parade were somehow derived from each other. She goes on to say that the common denominator between the diverse parades of modern times is the pride they exude, be that a pride in the glorious past or pride in a glorious future. When reading that portion of the forward you immediately think of the many parades that Hibernians from across the Country march in and the pride that the Hibernians have in their Irish Catholic Heritage.

Today in the United States St. Patrick's Day is one of the most recognized cultural celebrations. This is day has evolved into a powerful expression of Irish heritage, faith, and community pride. As members of the Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians, we are proud to participate in the community activities but our main focus is always centered on the religious Feast of St. Patrick.

Irish women have had an important role in preserving the faith and traditions associated with St. Patrick's Day. In Ireland St. Patrick's Day is first and most importantly a religious holiday. In Irish American homes, mothers and grandmothers ensured that the day remained rooted in prayer, family gatherings, and remembrance of Ireland's spiritual heritage. Irish Communities across the United States, Hibernians attend Mass prior to participating in the many Parades.

Irish American women have also played an important role in the public celebrations from participating on Parade Committees to being recognized as Parade Grand Marshals. The United Irish Societies of Cleveland is unique in the honoring an "Irish

Mother” as one of their Parade Honorees. The rationale for honoring an Irish Mother is that St. Patrick’s Day is a very family-oriented day and an Irish mother holds a special place in the family.

I would like to share the following for all of our mothers which was written by Fr. W.J. Lockington. “An Irish Mother She is foremost among the hidden saints of earth. A follower of Christ, whose cloister is within the four walls of the home, wherein she reigns as a queen. A lover of Christ, whose little kingdom comprises the treasured souls that God has given her to guide. A ruler for Christ, who draws her subject to her by sanctity and love. Her toil worn hands that clasp the old rosary are eloquent of strength to seize and lift to good all souls they meet. Her lips are molded to lines of peace by years of unending prayer and murmured benisons over sleeping babes, upon her bow eternal calm and resignation sit enthroned, her eyes are lit by the light of serene confidence, that tells of a heart secure in the friendship of God”.

As the United States approaches the 250th anniversary of its founding, St. Patrick’s Day takes on renewed historical significance. On this St. Patrick’s Day let us remember all the Irish immigrants and Irish Americans that have played vital roles in every stage of our nation’s development from the struggle for independence to the building of American cities, institutions, and communities.

March with pride this St. Patrick’s Day to honor the many generations of Irish Americans whose faith, and patriotism helped shape America. The story of Irish America is inseparable from the story of America itself. Be proud of this legacy.