



Northern Arizona Celtic Heritage Society

Moran Taing

Many many thanks to those who made the Highland Tea with Diana Gabaldon the best ever!!!! Kris and Michael Satterwhite who prepped everything, Michele Benedict, Chris Place, Johanna Touchette, Vicki Benedict, Ray Pearson, Mark Benedict, Anna Whorton, Bill and Jan Wilson! You guys made it happen!!!!

Festival Tidbits

Did you know

You will be able to hear Asturias bagpipes at the Arizona Highland Celtic Festival? They are called gaitas and there are only 2 that we know of in the whole state... they will be there!!!

Are you an Outlander fan? Look in the Plant and Geology exhibit building for an example of "Claire's Medical Bag".

The San Patricios - Mexico's Fighting Irish

By Meredith Young

Sadly, the story of the brave San Patricios is rarely told these days, and few people know of their heroic deeds. The San Patricios were Irish-born men who fled from starvation conditions during the Great Hunger of 1845 and immigrated to America, hoping for a better life. However, life in America wasn't much better, as Americans persecuted Irish men and women because they were Catholic outsiders. Irish immigrants had little money or job security, so many Irishmen enlisted in the military because the U.S. army offered to pay three months' wages in advance and gave new recruits acres of public land to live on and farm. Even though many of the Irishmen had no loyalty to their new country, they needed the extra money to send home to their starving families in Ireland. Army units, composed mostly of newly-arrived Irish, Scottish, and German immigrants, were sent to the Southwestern border to deal with skirmishes between Mexican and American forces. By 1836, Texas declared its independence from Mexico and claimed all the land north of the Rio Grande river for America. The Mexican government disputed this claim and stated that any land below the Nueces River (which was

150 miles north of the Rio Grande) was under Mexican jurisdiction. President Polk was outraged by Mexican resistance and sent units of troops, many of which were composed of Irishmen, to defend the area.

While serving in the disputed territory, many Irish army volunteers were shocked by the ways American soldiers treated the Mexicans. The U.S. military destroyed churches and disrupted religious processions, while drunken soldiers burned, raped, and pillaged their way through Mexican towns (their only punishment for such behavior was dismissal from military service). John Riley, an army volunteer from Galway, was appalled by these atrocities, as were many of his fellow recruits. The Mexican government noticed their disgust and realized the two sides shared common ground - most of the immigrant recruits were Catholic. The Mexicans sent out printed propaganda fliers and convinced the immigrants to join the Mexican cause. Riley and up to several hundred Irishmen, Scotsmen, and men from other European countries (accounts vary as to the number of men) deserted the U.S. army and went to defend the Mexican city of Monterrey. They became known as Los Batallion de San Patricio, or St. Patrick's Battalion, and made their own unit flag composed of a green background with a harp and shamrock on one side and an image of St. Patrick on the other.

The San Patricios fought bravely against American forces at Buena Vista and at the Catholic convent of Churubusco. They refused to surrender until American troops took over the convent and arrested the 85 surviving San Patricios. The U.S. government court-martialed the San Patricios and sentenced them to death; however, because Riley and 19 others had left the U.S. army before the war was officially declared, they escaped the worst punishment. They were whipped horribly, branded on their cheeks with the letter "D," and forced to bury their comrades who died at the convent. The rest of the convicted San Patricios were executed in large public spectacles from September 10th-13th of 1847 in what was "the largest hanging affair in North America" up to that time.

After the war, the U.S. freed Riley and the surviving members of the San Patricios, who returned to Mexico to serve in the army. The Mexicans had been horrified by the slaughter of their allies, so they erected monuments across the nation to commemorate the San Patricios. Throughout the 20th century, Ireland and Mexico hosted celebrations honoring the fallen heroes, and these festivities created strong diplomatic connections between the two nations. Musicians and filmmakers created songs and movies to honor and tell the tale of the San Patricios, who are also still paid tribute to in St. Patrick's Day parades around the world. While they are rarely mentioned in history books and their deeds are not common knowledge, the San Patricios refused to commit military injustices against Mexicans, and instead chose to risk their lives to fight for those who believed as they did. The San Patricios aren't as well-known as they should be, but their bravery and determination deserve to be common knowledge.

"May you have the hindsight to know where you've been, the foresight to know where you are going, and the insight to know when you have gone too far."

Peaks Celtic Ensemble

Presents

An Evening of Celtic Music

Featuring the Music of Ireland, Scotland & Wales

Saturday, May 18, 2019

7:00pm

At

First Congregational Church – UCC

740 N. Turquoise Drive, Flagstaff

Tickets are \$15 for Adults and \$10 for Children

Tickets are available from: AZ Music Pro

And at the door

(This is a benefit concert for Tyler Stewart Memorial Charity)

