

As April 12 approaches, some remembrances of things seen and heard that have some interesting connections between Roebling and County Mayo, Ireland:

Depending on where you may have been or may have plans to go on your next visit to Ireland, Cong is place that is easily overlooked. The Village of Cong is part of Cong Parish (Cong Abbey) nestled on Ireland's west coast straddling County Galway and County Mayo. The area's family ties, folklore, and rustic setting are steeped in rugged Connacht tradition. Its history is very much like Roebling's own rugged culture, tradition, and history. Interestingly, there are some softer artistic threads and human interests from ties to County Mayo to our very own place here in Roebling.



Cong Parrish is the situate of Ashford Castle. Ashford Castle can be reached by car or bus heading east and then southwest from the Village of Cong; or south and then east through Ireland's western coastal range from Westport toward Galway. Navigating the narrow hilly, curvy, and stonewall bordered roads, while patiently waiting out the next the moves of meandering flocks of sheep vying for the right of way (or "left of way" as it is in Ireland) is part of the fun. Then, when adding in the views of lush Irish pasture lands becoming foothills and then coastal mountains it makes the Westport toward the Connemara region the more interesting route to take.

When arriving, the many choices of walking the grounds and touring Ashford Castle immediately become a balancing act of where to start and what to see that quickly smacks into the reality of not being able to do it all in one visit. Nonetheless, it is quite a place to visit and one day can be an exhilarating fulfillment of much to do and see.

If your tour choice includes a highly recommended inside tour of Ashford Castle, the Inglenook Room is among the many exquisite and superbly appointed sitting, afternoon tea, and dining rooms. It happens to be where a set of silver service ware that once belonged to the family of the Brooklyn Bridge's famous spousal team of bridge builders, Washington A. and Emily Roebling is on display.



Locally, we know that Washington A. Roebling was Charles G. Roebling's brother. We also know that following the death of the family patriarch and the Brooklyn Bridge's designer and chief engineer, John A. Roebling, Washington A. took over the construction's leadership role. However, he became afflicted with the bends from working in the caissons while personally directing the structural integrity of the support bases for the bridge towers. His wife, Emily W.

Roebling, stepped in to take charge as the chief engineer and became a powerful leader and role model in directing the work and carrying out the oversight required for the bridge's completion.

About 20 years after the Brooklyn Bridge opened, it was Charles G. Roebling's vision that launched the ambitious plan for building a large raw material to finished product steel mill in Kinkora. In addition, he envisioned and completed the development of a town designed to provide

the workers and their families with a source of housing, food, household supplies, education, health, social, and public security needs. That town and its avenues, row houses, and religious and community structures are the place we know today as the Village of Roebling. The Village, of course, has outlived the steel mill, but community traditions and pride still flourish.



Early in 2012, the Roebling Museum presented an exhibition commemorating the 100th anniversary of the horrific wreck and sinking of the passenger liner RMS Titanic. Charles G. Roebling's son, Washington A. Roebling II, the namesake of his brother Washington A. Roebling, was among the more than 1,500 souls who were lost when the ship sank. According to a survivor's eyewitness account, Washington Roebling II's calm demeanor and unselfish life-saving actions in the face of the certainly fatal and inescapable outcome awaiting him were nothing short of humanitarian and heroic.

On Main Street in Cong Village, there is a place called Pat Cohan's Bar. While enjoying a pint and conversation on a rainy early Saturday afternoon, a visitor noted that there were several wall posters and other items on display about the Titanic. When the visitor asked about the posters and items, the barkeeper informed him that they commemorated three people from Cong Parish that boarded the Titanic in Cobh (Queenstown Port), County Cork on its fateful journey toward New York on the North Atlantic. The three are listed as "lost at sea".



The barkeep also pointed out that a few kilometers to the north in County Mayo, close to County Sligo, 14 people from Addergoole Parish also boarded the Titanic. They became, and remain, known as the "Addergoole 14". Eleven perished when the Titanic went down. Their records are also noted as "lost at sea". By the grace of God three of them survived. Many of the present inhabitants of Addergoole Parish are related to or have long friendship ties to the families of the Titanic's decedents and survivors. Very much the same as the storied kinships and friendships that many here in Roebling cherish to this very day.

The visitor who was enjoying his rainy Saturday pint at Pat Cohan's Bar happens to have been a passenger on the SS United States' January 1955 route from Bremerhaven, Germany to New York City. Cobh was the SS United States' last port of call before starting its journey out to the cold and stormy North Atlantic toward New York. Eventually, he found a home in Florence Township and became and remains active in the local community organizations, events, and activities.

Hopefully, you find these anecdotal sketches interesting. Especially from the view that in a relatively close area within County Mayo, there is a contrast of romantic, glimmering, and macabre connections to Roebling. They are an interesting read between the lines of the many already well documented stories and thoughtfully researched narratives about the history of Roebling. Just some random "it's a small world" thoughts that come to mind as another April 12 comes around.