



The Irish in America – The Kellys of East Falls

A program presented by the East Falls Historical Society

During the nineteenth century, no ethnic group populated the Falls of Schuylkill so much as the Irish. Many Irish immigrants, and their daughters and sons, found work at the immense textile mills of John and James Dobson. Some had likely been skilled weavers in Ireland. Other Irish immigrants escaping the famine worked as laborers, or as domestics and stablemen at the country estates along School House Lane. The Irish of the Falls founded St. Bridget Church. Soon, the Irish of growing Philadelphia learned a variety of trades. Several became prominent contractors, such as John B. Kelly, father of Grace.

On March 22, Mary Burke, Professor of English at the University of Connecticut, will discuss Irish identity and the Kellys of East Falls, with a focus on Grace's uncle, the Pulitzer-prize winning playwright George Kelly. She will also tell us about Philip Barry, another Irish-American playwright, whose 1939 play "The Philadelphia Story" was reworked into "High Society," the hit musical whose cast included Grace Kelly. The title of Mary Burke's presentation is "**Grace Kelly, George Kelly and Philip Barry in their Irish-American Contexts**"

Burke is the author of the recently published *Race, Politics, and Irish America – A Gothic Tale*.

The free program will be presented by the East Falls Historical Society via Zoom on March 22, 2023, at 6:30 pm. The Zoom link will be sent to EFHS members and posted on our website, eastfallshistoricalsociety.org on March 21.

The program will be recorded and available subsequently on our website, eastfallshistoricalsociety.org. . **Please email eastfallshistory@gmail.com if you have questions**

