

Notes on the life of Anna Clare Malia Ruddy

Compiled by Rita Garrah, Lackawanna County

Anna Clare Malia was one of ten children born to Matthew J. and Maria F. Malia, natives of Ireland. They fled the poverty of their native land and settled, for a time, in England. There, in 1865, Anna Clare was born. The following year, the Malia family came to America and settled in ward 19, the "Southside section", Scranton, PA. For many years the family lived in the north half of a double block at 932 Prospect Ave.

Anna Clare attended school and eventually received certificates as a public school teacher and as a principal. She taught in the Scranton School system for over forty years. By 1900 she was teaching in P.S. #10, located at 901 Prospect Avenue, very near her home. The building has seen many changes over the years. Miss Malia remained at that school for many years and was its assistant principal in 1913.

By 1919, she was principal of Daniel Webster Elementary and in 1921, held the same post at the Eli Whitney Building. During these years she remained single and provided care and support to her widowed mother, Maria. Miss Malia's father died about 1893. By 1900 Mrs. Malia was left with just two children at home: Anna Clare and "Lizzie". The latter had been born in Scranton in 1873.

Anna's mother appears to have died about 1921. Miss Malia now felt free to marry and became the wife of Michael J. Ruddy, a successful building contractor and financier. The Ruddy's lived at 1608 Cedar Avenue, Scranton, still within the confines of Ward 19. The couple was a member of St. John the Evangelist Church and very active in parish activities. Mr. Ruddy was the prime contractor for the building of the current church and rectory. Michael J. Ruddy died in 1942. Following Michael's death, Anna sold the property at 1608 Cedar Avenue. It was later raised and Biff's Restaurant occupies the site. Anna took residence at 902 Pittston Avenue, Scranton. She remained there until her death on August 3, 1956. She was survived by only one sibling, her brother William H. Malia, Bronxville, NY.

During her lifetime of 91 plus years (she may have been 95). Anna Clare Malia Ruddy was a loving, caring daughter; a devoted teacher and school administrator; an active participant of her church and community; and finally, a loving wife. She was a member of the Democratic Party and served several terms as party committeewoman in the 19th ward.

Although she was born in England and raised in America, Anna exhibited a deep regard for her ancestral heritage. It is apparent from her family name that County Mayo was the source of that heritage. Like Granny Malia, Anna represented the finest traits of character which appear in the Irish woman. Intelligence, energy

and a strong loyalty to God; to family; and to country, both new and old. Her love of Ireland and its traditions were shown by over a half century of membership and active participation in the sisterhood of the Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians.

As one of the first members of the Daughters of Erin, established in 1894, as an Adjunct to the Ancient Order of Hibernians; she helped to establish Division #1, Dunmore, PA , DOE in 1897. The following year, she organized Division #2, in her parish in Scranton's Southside. She was also active in the blossoming National Organization. She was Secretary for the Advisory Board of the Ladies Auxiliary, Ancient Order of Hibernians, when the AOH and the LAAOH met in August 1906 at Saratoga, NY for the 45th AOH Bi- Annual Convention.

During this convention Miss Anna Clare Malia was elected as the LAAOH's first National President, under revised rules enacted by the AOH at that time. She had not expected, nor it seems, sought the office, but following a spirited election requiring two balloting sessions, she was elected by a slim majority. She held the post of National President LAAOH for the next six years. Anna C. Malia Ruddy continued to be active in the LAAOH for the remainder of her life, for another fifty years.

Thank you Rita Garrah, Division 1, Lackawanna County

Postscript:

In April 1998, a memorial marker was placed on the grave of Anna Malia Ruddy in Cathedral Cemetery in Scranton. This marker documents her leadership in the Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians. This was accomplished through grants from the LAOH National Board, the PA State Board and the generous donations of the women of Pennsylvania.