



Irish Flag Flies Over Mother Jones Grave For First Time In Nearly A Century

by Dalton Brown, News Reporter
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MOUNT OLIVE - Friday, June 2, 2023, officially marked the first time in ninety three years that an Irish flag flew over the grave of Mother Jones, located at the intersection of Mt. Olive Road and Reservoir Road in Mount Olive.

Mother Jones was a prominent advocate and organizer for workers, particularly miners. The Mother Jones Museum explains why Mother Jones is buried in Mount Olive on their [website](#):

“Mary Harris ‘Mother’ Jones wrote a special request to the miners of Mt. Olive in 1923 asking to be buried in the Union Miners Cemetery in, ‘the same clay that shelters the miners who gave up their lives on the hills of Virden.’ Her request was granted.”

The Union Miners Cemetery Perpetual Care Committee and Friends of Mother Jones Museum in Mt. Olive decided to fly the Irish flag over the gravesite to indicate Jones’ Irish Heritage.

On April 30, the twelve mid-state Irish Consulate General Kevin Byrne visited the gravesite, and his visit sparked the realization that nothing indicated her Irish heritage at her grave. Not only was Jones Irish, but her original eulogy was given by Father John McGuire, an Irishman. During the eulogy, he read a poem that was written by the then-Irish President, Padriac Pearse.

Joe Kennedy, manager of the Maldron Hotel in the Shandon area of Cork, Ireland, presented the flag to James Goltz, activist and Bunker Hill resident, during his recent

stay at the hotel. The hotel hosts the annual Spirit of Mother Jones Festival, which is steps away from her plaque on Shandon St. and Saint Mary's Church, where she was baptized.

The flag had been flying in front of the hotel before being taken down and given to Goltz, who had attended a previous Mother Jones festival where he had presented clay from above her grave to the Lord Mayor.

When he returned to the United States, the tricolored Irish flag flew for 15 minutes before being replaced by the American flag. Mike Katchmar, treasurer of both the UMC and Mother Jones Museum, said he hopes to find help installing another permanent flag pole so both the American and Irish flags may be flown permanently in her honor at her grave.

To learn more about Mother Jones and the Mother Jones Museum, visit motherjonesmuseumtolive.org.