

**Mary Harris** was born in Cork city in 1837. Her mother was Ellen Cotter from Inchigeelagh and her father was Richard Harris. On the 1st August 1837, Mary was baptized in St. Mary's Cathedral, Cork, by Fr. John O'Mahony.

In her autobiography published in 1925, Mother Jones proudly affirms her Cork roots when she declared in the very first sentence, "I was born in city of Cork, Ireland".

Ellen and Richard had married in Inchigeelagh in 1834 and their first son, Richard was born in 1835. Other children, Catherine 1840, Ellen 1845 and William 1846, later completed the Harris family.

The family of seven survived the Great Famine in Cork but by the early 1850s all were living in Toronto, Canada, having experienced the coffin ships and the mass emigration from Ireland.

Mary initially became a teacher, but trained also as a seamstress. She married George Jones, an iron moulder, in 1860 and settled in Memphis, Tennessee. They lived through the American Civil War and went on to have four children, Catherine (1862), Elizabeth (1863), Terence (1865) and Mary (1867). Tragedy struck in late 1867 when Memphis was hit by a yellow fever epidemic and Mary's entire family died within a few days of each other. She later set up a business in Chicago, which was burned in the Great Fire of 1871.

Mary became active in union activities in Chicago at a time when America was witnessing unprecedented industrial change. She was involved with the Knights of Labour, witnessed the huge rail strikes of 1877 and was aware of the Haymarket incident in Chicago in 1886. She took an active part in the march of Coxey's unemployed army in 1894 and became a union organiser for the United Mine Workers Union of America.

She travelled throughout America organising workers in mines, mills and factories. Her sense of outrage at the sight of thousands of young children working long hours in the mills and mines led her to lead the famous march of the Mill Children from Pennsylvania to the summer home of President Roosevelt in 1903.

Her union activities among the miners of West Virginia and Pennsylvania in which she displayed extraordinary courage led to her being called "Mother Jones" by the miners whom she called in turn "her boys". She was by now recognized as one of the most famous women in America.

She was the only woman present at the foundation of the Industrial Workers of the World, (the Wobblies) in Chicago in 1905. Later she became active in the Socialist Party of America. She supported the Mexican revolution and her assistance was acknowledged by Pancho Villa.

She continued her labour organising activities into her 70s and 80s. She was very active in the West Virginia and Colorado "Coal Wars" from 1912 and 1914, which led to the infamous Ludlow Massacre in April 1914. Mother Jones was arrested and imprisoned without charge many times, including being court marshaled in 1913.

Her courage in facing down the private armies of the mine owners made her a national hero among union activists. Her fiery and passionate speeches in defense of working people and against injustice drew thousands while her independent views made her many enemies. No one could ever silence Mother Jones!

She eventually passed away on 30th November 1930, aged 93 and is buried at the Union Miners Cemetery at Mount Olive in Illinois. Tens of thousands attended her funeral and the unveiling of her memorial. Today her grave is a place of pilgrimage for many.

Finally on 1st August 2012, on the 175th Anniversary of her baptism in Cork, Mary Harris/Mother Jones will be recognised for the first time in her native city of Cork.

Mother Jones has come home at last!

Our thanks to: Cork City Council, SIPTU, the Maldron Hotel, the Cathedral Credit Union, Shandon Street Festival, Cork Council of Trade Unions, Arthur Leahy, Rosemary Feurer, Marat Moore, Prof. Elliott Gorn, North Cathedral, St. Anne's Shandon, the Firkin Crane, Andy Irvine, William Hammond, Framework Films, National Sculpture Factory, Shandon Area Renewal Association, the Cork Archives Institute and the people of Cork.

**Cork Mother Jones Commemoration  
Committee 2012.**

[www.motherjones175.wordpress.com](http://www.motherjones175.wordpress.com)  
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# Mother Jones Festival

## 31st JULY - 2nd AUGUST 2012

### SHANDON, CORK

*"Pray for the dead and fight like hell for the living."*



Come and celebrate the 175th Anniversary of the birth of Cork woman, Mary Harris, known as Mother Jones, on Wednesday 1st August 2012 at Shandon, Cork City.

Events include the unveiling of a commemorative plaque, concerts, music, film, exhibitions, Mother Jones lecture and the Bells of Shandon.

Featuring: Andy Irvine, The Butter Exchange Band, Cork Singers Club, Hank Wedel, Prof. Elliott Gorn, Marat Moore, Rosemary Feurer and many others.

Venues include: Firkin Crane, St. Annes Shandon, and the Maldron Hotel

**Cork Mother Jones Commemorative Committee  
and Shandon Street Festival.**

# “The Gathering”

TUESDAY 31st JULY 2012

19.00. Maldron Hotel, Shandon.



Official Irish premiere of *Mother Jones, America's Most Dangerous Woman*. In attendance to present and discuss the film will be Rosemary Feurer, producer and director.

21.30. Music and songs at the Maldron Hotel to celebrate Mother Jones with the Cork Singers Club.



Mother Jones with President Coolidge

*“Her admirers called her labor’s Joan of Arc and the miners’ angel; enemies labeled her a dangerous radical—indeed, the most dangerous woman in America.”*

Professor Elliott J Gorn. *Mother Jones, The Most Dangerous Woman in America.*

# “The Main Event”

WEDNESDAY 1st AUGUST 2012

10.00. Mass at the North Cathedral where Mary Harris was baptised, with Hugh Moynihan, tenor and Norman O’Rourke, bagpipes.

10.45. Guided Tour of the North Cathedral.

11.45. Talk on the history of the Shandon area.

12.15. Official opening of the Mother Jones exhibition at the Firkin Crane. Refreshments.

13.00. Concert at the Firkin Crane, with the Cork Memory Lane Group and the Active Pulse Drama Group.

15.00. Inaugural Mother Jones lectures and discussion with Professor Elliott J Gorn, Professor of History at Brown University, Providence, RI and Marat Moore, former US miner, writer and founding member of the Daughter of Mother Jones. Firkin Crane.

18.37. The Shandon Bells ring out across Cork City to celebrate Mother Jones.

18.45. The Butter Exchange Band recital for Mother Jones at the steps of Shandon.

19.30. Official unveiling of the Mother Jones plaque at John Redmond St. Shandon. (Sculptor, Mick Wilkins)

20.30. Concert, “Freedom Bells” with Andy Irvine at St. Anne’s Shandon. (booking [www.tickets.ie](http://www.tickets.ie))

21.30 Mother Jones music, song and dance at the Maldron Hotel featuring, Hank Wedel, Two Time Polka and a host of musicians, singers and dancers.

# “Afters”

THURSDAY 2nd AUGUST 2012

This will feature a Mother Jones day long bus tour taking in Shandon, Cobh and Inchigeelagh, the locations associated with Mary Harris. Departing 11.30am from the Maldron Hotel. Tickets on sale at the Hotel Reception from 1st July. (Limited spaces)



Grave of Mother Jones, Mount Olive, Illinois.

