

{ review of books }

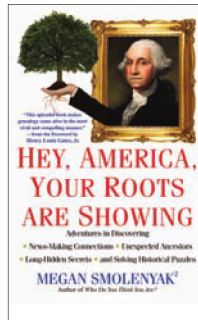
Recently published books of Irish and Irish-American interest.

Non-Fiction:

Hey, America, Your Roots Are Showing

Megan Smolenyak is without a doubt the most interesting and intrepid genealogist working today. In *Hey, America, Your Roots Are Showing*, Smolenyak discusses her many genealogical adventures – from figuring out the identity of the real Annie Moore, Ellis Island’s first immigrant, to her much publicized accomplishment of tracing President Obama’s Irish roots back to Moneygall, Co. Offaly.

Smolenyak takes care to provide the facts and dispel the myths about her field of work. Navigating around the current obsession with which celebrity is an 8th cousin once removed of another famous person (which she points out doesn’t mean much) Smolenyak opens with a chapter on her efforts to identify missing soldiers from WWII and the Korean and Vietnam wars. Though she later delves into some of her most fascinating celebrity cases (figur-



ing out Michelle Obama’s family tree when it had stumped so many others; hurriedly tracing Hoda Kotb’s Egyptian roots before an appearance on *Good Morning America*; determining that Rev. Al Sharpton’s enslaved ancestors were owned by the family of segregationist Senator Strom Thurmond), Smolenyak also emphasizes the stories of

average Americans, which she claims to be the real beauty of genealogical research – remembering those who might otherwise be forgotten. Her work is fascinating, and far from overly technical; her conversational style is a delight throughout, like that of a brilliant and charming genealogical detective.

– Sheila Langan
(256 pages / Kensington Books / \$15.95)