



# **Dublin's Lost Heroines - Mammies and Grannies in a Vanished City: An Oral History of Women in Dublin's Inner City**

*Kevin C. Kearns*

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***Dublin's Lost Heroines* is a masterly work of oral history by the acclaimed author of the bestselling *Dublin Tenement Life*, Kevin C. Kearns.**

In *Dublin's Lost Heroines*, Kearns presents the voices of working-class Dublin women with dignity, emotion and gravity. By combining first-hand accounts with his uniquely engaging commentary, Kearns creates a vivid portrayal of the hardships, suffering and true grace of the women who held society together amidst poverty and disease.

This book is a very moving record of how these women of the Dublin tenements lived and died amidst chronic unemployment, poverty and disease. Based on interviews conducted during annual visits to Dublin extending over thirty years, he has drawn together a unique picture of the suffering and true grace of these Dublin women in the old slums.

The slums of Dublin were among the worst in Europe. Imposing Georgian houses, originally built as elegant homes for the rich in the eighteenth century, fell into the hands of avaricious and pitiless landlords who filled them to bursting point with the desperate and impoverished urban poor, with up to twenty family members to a room in places. Conditions were often unspeakably vile, with massive over-crowding and utterly inadequate sanitation. Yet out of these dreadful tenements families were reared, households kept together and human dignity maintained.

As with most impoverished societies, this was overwhelmingly the work of the women, the mammies and grannies of the Dublin slums whose voices course through this remarkable book. They tell of how they lived, of the difficulties they faced, of the grinding poverty, the unemployment, the fecklessness of their men folk, and always of their heroic struggle to maintain the basic decencies of human life in inhuman conditions.

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