# Irish Roots

## *Finding the O'Sullivans*

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*PDF Edition*

# Preface

In 1994, I set a task for myself. I was going to understand my Irish roots. The year prior I had fictionalized a story about my Scottish roots on my mother's side of the family, but that was made easier by a fair amount of family information. The next effort would put me pretty much on my own. Basically I had to count on what Dad remembered and had conveyed to me before he died in 1977. Actually he did pretty well. I remember with great affection the day we went to the Fairbury, Illinois, Catholic Cemetery in 1975 and he stood by the Sullivan monument. He told me the relationship of all the people buried there. I carefully wrote all that down on my budding genealogy charts. It was the little information I had to find the Sullivans.

I start all family projects by looking through the humpback trunk in my office which holds the treasure trove of family memorabilia. The trunk comes from furniture owned by my dad's parents, Nora Sullivan and William Ripley, who lived in Illinois. After a house fire in 1977, I had a number of things shipped to to Oregon where I lived. The trunk had been in outer buildings, thus saved from the house fire. I removed the green paint, painted on the trunk by Mom, and then added family treasures inside over the years. As I started this project in 1994, I found a letter in the trunk which was dated August 1975 from my mother which contained pictures and death certificates I had requested. The pictures that tumbled out of the letter were of my parents and I at the Fairbury Catholic Cemetery, probably that summer.

The next six months I was immersed in trying to understand and write about my Irish roots. The culmination was actually going to Ireland in 1995 and finding the land where my great grandfather had emigrated in 1863 and finding Sullivans, no make that an O'Sullivan, still living on the land. The circle was completed from great grandparents to great granddaughter in making the round trip from Ireland to Illinois and back to Ireland via Oregon in my case.

In the research and writing process in the mid 1990's I also reconnected with the Sullivans I grew up with in Illinois in the 1950's and 1960's. For this ebook edition of the story I reconnected with one of the O'Sullivans I met in Ireland in June 1995. At the time of meeting we were uncertain if we were related. Now we know, we are. We are fourth cousins and have much enjoyed understanding our differing Irish stories of family. Connections of today include email and facebook and the Sullivans and O'Sullivans are now better connected and informed about each other because of today's technology, now including an ebook about some of our shared story.

Theresa Ripley, author and publisher

# The Search Begins

What does it mean to have Irish roots? It would have been nice if my father had told me more about our Irish forebears. He could not. So I spent several months searching for them and trying to piece together our Sullivan family history. The search was rewarding and tells a poignant story of Irish immigration.

Honora (Nora) Sullivan Ripley was my paternal grandmother's name. Nora's parents, my great grandparents, were Patrick and Honora Sullivan. They emigrated from Ireland in 1863, according to family oral history and moved to Fairbury, Illinois, in 1865. Patrick and Honora Sullivan are buried in Fairbury. They are my basic connection with Ireland.

My father, William Raymond Ripley, was just 8 1/2 years old when his grandfather, Patrick Sullivan, died in 1917. Patrick's wife, Honora, had preceded him in death in 1901. My father lived about 15 miles from his grandfather and considering the transportation of the day, it seems unlikely my father had much contact with his grandfather and certainly none with his grandmother. What I do know is my father did not relay a lot of history to me about the Sullivans who came from Ireland; a scattered fact here and there, but not much of substance. This is probably not unusual. My father was a second generation Irish American. His mother, Nora, was first generation Irish American. History tells us that children of immigrants break with the old country. By second generation the connection is often broken. I am third generation Irish American and wanted to find those Irish roots.

My grandmother, Nora Sullivan Ripley, died in 1954 when I was 9. Her husband, my grandfather, had preceded her in death by many years, me not knowing him. I remember my grandmother as an overweight, elderly women who had a large house on Water Street in Pontiac, Illinois. She had four apartment units in the house and she lived on the bottom floor in the back. My most vivid memory of her is sitting in a dark, overstuffed chair with little tassels coming out of the end of the arms. There were few toys in the apartment. As her youngest grandchild, I entertained myself for hours with the bobbing duck who dipped its beak into a water glass. My grandmother told me no stories about her youth or her parent's personal history of coming from Ireland. Why should she, since she was the youngest of 8 children with only the first two children born in Ireland. Or perhaps she was just too tired by the time we spent time together.

Neither my father or I had much sense of the old sod. When I was a youth, we were too busy being concerned with the land we had in America. The land took many hours in all seasons. It didn't leave much time to think about the emigrant relatives from Ireland.

Now was different. I wanted to know about the old sod. I wanted to understand why Patrick and Honora left Ireland and came to America. I wanted to understand what they left. I wanted to know who they left and how those family members felt about their loved ones departing forever and probably never seeing them again. I wanted to know if Patrick and Honora ever regretted their decision to come. I wanted to know if they kept contact with family back in

Ireland. I wanted to know just about everything there is to know about the family, the land, and the times.

Clearly, that was not possible. The search for the Sullivans led me to contact the Sullivans I knew as a youth. In the process of trying to find the emigrant Sullivans, I rediscovered the Sullivans who went to church and school with me and shared many holiday dinners. Decades later, just as Patrick and Honora left their home in Ireland, I left my home on the Illinois prairie and went "out west." Even though I had a forwarding address, I lost contact with many Sullivans in Illinois.

Perhaps it is the Sullivans from my youth I was searching for all along. I don't know. If I found the emigrant Sullivans, perhaps I would find the Sullivans I grew up with, my brother grew up with, and obviously were ever so important to my father as a youth and until he died in 1977. Whatever the reason, the search started.

Reconciled to the fact would I never know very much about Patrick and Honora Sullivan, I turned my wish into stories that brought me together with the Sullivans I did grow up with on the Illinois prairie. Our story is not like the Kennedys of Ireland, then Boston, who became mayors, congresspeople, and President; but we did become a part of the fabric of America with Irish roots. Our Sullivan stories had some facts that could be turned into our imagining of what happened to these people who came long ago to Illinois and became our connection to Ireland.

This ebook imagines Patrick and Honora Sullivan wanted us to know more about them and that Patrick left the descendants stories about himself. Patrick's fictionalized stories are imagined to be written in 1915 just two years before his death. The sequence of the stories which follow first describe me at a certain and then Patrick at about the same age, first in Ireland and then in the U.S. The stories go back and forth between my life and Patrick and Honoras' lives, contrasting the great granddaughter in American and the great grandparents from Ireland. When Patrick dies in 1917, his brother and then his daughter, Nora, tell the stories. These stories are all through my eyes, but I have done my best in trying to imagine the times and people. Join in finding the Sullivans and O'Sullivans.

# 1954

What I remember most clearly about the summer of 1954 was the Chenoa Centennial. My community of 1000 residents was celebrating being 100 years old. I was celebrating being almost 10. The excitement in the community was astounding. The community was small, but the spirit was large. The celebration went on for all of 1954 with one highlight being the Centennial parade. Our community is known for its parades and this was no exception. I can't remember the specific date of the parade and whether it coincided with the Fourth of July parade, but I was in it. I wore Nora Sullivan Ripley's wedding blouse in the parade. I remember it distinctly. It was a white long sleeved blouse with a high collar. I wore a long black skirt with the blouse and felt very grown up. I also remember the Illinois midsummer heat and stifling humidity in such an outfit.

My grandmother, Nora Sullivan Ripley, died on June 26, 1954. I have no memory of the visitation and funeral. Visitations and funerals from my youth run together. It seemed to me we were always going to one of the two funeral homes in Pontiac, Illinois, or the one funeral home in Chenoa on a regular basis. At Catholic funerals, I remember the rosaries being said at the funeral homes. It seemed to take forever to get through them. I do not specifically remember my grandmother's death. What I do remember is my brother telling me many years later he was sent and stationed at the hospital for hour upon hour while grandmother was dying. It made such an impression on him he told me he never wanted to put his children through a similar experience. My brother was 19 at the time.

Grandmother's death certificate states she stayed in St. James Hospital in Pontiac for five months before she died. That would mean grandmother was in the hospital from February through June, a difficult time for farmers, because the crops must be planted in the spring. My parents and brother and my father's brother and his wife probably rotated duty at the hospital. Because our family was physically closer to the hospital, my father probably assumed more responsibility. Dad likely felt torn between the duties of farming and family. I saw that drama recreated many years later as my brother was torn between the crops and responsibility to our parents in 1977.

As I compare the dates of grandmother's death and the 1954 summer Centennial festivities, they almost coincide. I recall my father was less enthusiastic about the Centennial than the rest of the neighbors. Specifically, I remember he refused to grow a beard for the event. In order to comply with the rules of the Centennial committee, he had to purchase a badge that read, "Little Shaver." He paid $2 for the badge. The beard growers had to pay only 25 cents.

My dad's lack of community spirit that summer probably had nothing to do with the fun and games in the community and everything to do with losing his last parent. Dad was 45 when his mother died in 1954 and only 31 when his father died 14 years earlier.

My grandmother's death certificate says she was taken to Raleigh J. Harris Funeral Home at 413 N. Main in Pontiac. This is a place I remember well. The death certificate lists her doctor

(Lavin); where she is buried (St. Mary's in Pontiac); direct cause of death (cerebral hemorrhage); her occupation (housewife); her kind of business (own home); her place of birth (Fairbury, Illinois, August 26, 1877); her father (Patrick Sullivan); her mother (Honora Creedon); and the informant for this information (my father). That's about it. Ireland is not mentioned because this particular form, unlike others, did not ask parent's place of birth. I obtained this death certificate in March, 1977, when I began genealogy research. Little did I know in March that both of my parents would die that summer.

But back to the 9-year-old in 1954 who was oblivious of everything: how sick her grandmother was, that her great grandparents were from Ireland, and her own father was having one heck of a year because his mother was so ill. No, I was just enjoying the summer between fourth grade with Mrs. Kennedy and the start of 5th grade with Mrs. Stone. If I knew I was going to have Mrs. Stone as a teacher, I was probably a bit nervous since she enjoyed equal fame as a good teacher, but also one who used effective discipline methods.

Summer, though, was not the time to think of fall. It was for reading and participating in the reading program at the public library. I prided myself on getting as many books as they would let you check out at one time and then reading them as fast as I could. The real reason for the speed of reading was not love of reading, although I did love books, as much as a contest sponsored by the library: Most Books Read During the Summer. The books were important and the Chenoa Centennial just made it an extra special summer as far as I was concerned.

I was equally oblivious in 1954 about why we contacted any Sullivans. I knew they were relatives; I understood they were on Dad's side of the family; but I had not determined the connection. All I knew was The Sullivans were a part of our life. From Dad's point of view they had been important all his life. This becomes clear from the piece of paper I found while researching this project.

In the same envelope in which I saved my grandmother's death certificate, there is a small, yellowed piece of paper about 2 inches by 5 inches. It records the following: William Raymond Ripley was born on December 9, 1908, Wednesday 9:30 P.M. The baby was babtized (sic) on January 3, 1909 Mr and Mrs James Sullivan are Godfather and Godmother. I have no idea how I got the paper or when. Perhaps my father (or more likely my mother) sent it or gave it to me when I obtained my grandmother's death certificate.

James Sullivan, Dad’s godfather, was my grandmother's brother, which makes him my father's uncle. James was the seventh child of Patrick and Honora Sullivan. Nora, my dad's mother, was the eighth and last. It appears from this record that Nora and James were quite close as brother and sister in that Catholics choose godparents very carefully.

James Sullivan and his wife, Margaret, had three children. The second was a son named Francis. He was born the same year as my father in 1908. This made Francis Sullivan and my father, Raymond Ripley (he went by his middle name), first cousins. These two first cousins, I can see as I try to reconstruct their lives, were very close in family ties, age, geography, religion, and occupation.

Francis Sullivan, Dad's first cousin, married and had four daughters: Jane, Ellen Jo, Kathleen, and Pat. My family relationship to these people is second cousin, but we were closer than most second cousins. These are the Sullivans of my youth. We share common history, both family and place of birth. We also share our Irish born great grandparents, Patrick and Honora Sullivan.

Jane, Ellen Jo, Kathleen and Pat Sullivan, my second cousins, also grew up in Chenoa. In the summer of 1954 they ranged in age from 6-18. They, too, in all probability, remember the Chenoa Centennial, except, perhaps Pat who was too young. It would not even surprise me if one of them remembers my grandmother's funeral, a memory lost to me.

So the Ripleys and Sullivans of the summer of 1954 looked like this.

The Ripleys, consisting of my parents, my brother, and myself, lived midway between Chenoa and Pontiac on old Route 66. We were tenant farmers of 200 acres. My brother was 19 and had dropped out of college after one semester in order to help my father farm after his heart attack. As I view this now, I see it might have been the stress of several events that caused his heart attack. My mother was a farm wife and helper. My mother's parents lived only a half mile away doing joint farming with my father.

The Sullivans, consisting of Francis and Josephine and their four daughters, were farming nearer to Chenoa. Their four girls were all attending Chenoa schools. Jane, the oldest, had just graduated from high school in 1954 and was about to start employment with State Farm Insurance in Bloomington, a large area employer.

The land both families farmed was flat and rich, black chernozemic soil. Our crops were corn and soybeans, primarily, and our fathers were proud of their equipment and the life they led.

I normally saw one or more Sullivans seven days a week. This might seem like a lot considering we lived on a farm and away from the overwhelming hustle and bustle of a town of 1000 residents. But we were tied to the Sullivans in a number of ways. First was school. Kathleen, the third Sullivan, was just a year ahead of me in school; and the likelihood of seeing her any one day at either recess or lunch was high.

Saturdays came and catechism brought us together. Grade level made no difference in catechism. Kathleen and I were on even par trying to impress either the sisters from Pontiac who came to give us tutelage on the ways of the church, or our priest who scared the bejesus out of us on the days the sisters could not make it. We always wished the sisters could make it. I would have gladly shoveled any snow in their way to avoid having Father as stand in teller of Catholic dogma.

By definition, we saw the Sullivans every Sunday at church. We usually made the later mass and so did they. They sat in front of us one seat and to the left. Pews were not assigned, but the seating arrangement was precisely predictable. The best part of the experience was after church and talking with everyone gathered out in front. Dad rarely missed a chance to talk with Francis Sullivan, whom he affectionately called Sully.

Also in 1954, I was confirmed in the Catholic Church. This is one of the seven sacraments and a very important time for a Catholic child. Because our parish was so small, the bishop only came every 10 years to bestow confirmation. I was the only person who was age 10 in our parish. My mother decided to have me ready to be confirmed in 1954 because the alternative would be a very long wait. I felt sure, because I was the youngest, the bishop would ask me a question when he came to perform the sacrament.

The dreaded fear of any person going through confirmation is you will not be able to answer a question the bishop asks. So you study. And study. And study. I did, and now I cannot recall if I was asked a question. If I was, I must have answered correctly because I am sure I would remember such a failure. Every person going through confirmation must have a sponsor. The person chosen by my family for this honor was Jane Sullivan, the eldest child of Francis and Josephine, and my second cousin.

So, as you can see, the Sullivans and Ripleys were interwoven in 1954. We lived and worked much the same. Our small community, including the activities of the church and school, dominated our life. The bulk of life was devoted to farming. The life not dominated by the community and farming was highlighted with the importance of family. This is how life is in a small community where many people are related, and those not related, are neighbors.

The Sullivans and Ripleys described above seem a long way from Ireland. I don't remember once talking about Ireland with the Sullivans. I remember visiting other Sullivan relatives in Fairbury where my grandmother was born. I did not know how grandmother was related to these people. But even then, as I listened to the conversations of these older Sullivans who were not paying attention to this young listener, I never heard them talk about Ireland or Patrick or Honora Sullivan, the emigrants. Were they too far away from it? Had Patrick and Honora been gone too long? Were they no longer interested in where their parents came from? Did they know any of their Irish relatives?

Just what would it have been like in Ireland when Patrick Sullivan was 10? What follows are stories written in my imagination by Patrick Sullivan when he was 76 years of age in 1915. The first story has Patrick reflecting when he was 10 in 1849.

# 1849

My name is Patrick Sullivan. The years around my 10th birthday were probably the worst I ever experienced. As I reflect on them now in 1915, they still seem horrible. Imagine the worst of how people can live without dying, and you might have a picture of the Limerick area during and after the potato famine. Now it surprises me any of us survived.

But before I tell you of that, let me tell you a bit about my father, Jerry, and my mother, born Mary Calbert. Father was born in the parish of Monagay in County Limerick. Father lived with his father and mother and two brothers and three sisters on a farm. The farm was big enough to support all of the family. One third of acres was put into oats. The grain from that acre was sold. The second third was in pasture and kept the cow which in turn gave them milk, cream, and butter. The last third grew potatoes which fed the family for the entire year. They also kept a pig and poultry and the manure from both fertilized the farm. My grandfather gave the farm, as was the tradition, to his oldest son, Tim, brother of my father.

This meant my father, Jerry, and his brother Dan had to go elsewhere. Elsewhere turned out to be Glenshesk where Uncle Dan built a house in 1825 and rented land. Eventually Uncle Dan and Aunt Margaret had 8 children. As I understand it, my mother and father joined them in the Glenshesk about 1835, right after they were married and before my brother Jerry was born. We eventually had 16 family members living in this small house.

My father, Jerry, married Mother when they were very young, as was the custom of the day. My uncle and father devoted much of the land to raising potatoes because they knew this was the only crop that could feed the family for the entire year, and we raised crops on part of the land to pay the rent. The extended family was getting larger, usually one new child every year. Not all of my brothers and sisters lived, but four of us grew to adulthood. The one you are most familiar with is my brother, Jerry, because he, too, came to America.

I know my father was very concerned about the future. He could see a time ahead when his brother Dan would give the land to his oldest son and we would be on our own. His other major concern before the famine years was helping his brother pay the rent. Some years father travelled to work in England for a few months in order to earn rent money.

We lived in a house that had been built by Uncle Dan with help from the family I am sure. The walls of the house were stone for the bottom three feet, but turf the rest of the height because there was no mortar. The rafters were branches from trees. The rest of the roof was filled in with turf and thatched. We had no window or chimney, but we did have open hearth fireplace with underfloor ventilation. Except in the worst of weather, Mother and Aunt Margaret cooked outside. They cooked potatoes which were our only staple food. The potatoes were always boiled in their jackets. I remember fondly the food being served out of a basket or kish. The basket would be on top of a 3-legged pot of boiling water and it kept the potatoes from cooling.

The family would gather around the basket on low stools and we could feel the steaming warmth of the pot. We would peel the potatoes with our fingernails and dip the potato in hot salted milk.

Lumpers was the variety of potatoes people raised. They were large ugly potatoes with little flavor, but they kept well for a full 12 months. That was very important because it was the only food we had until the next year's crop of potatoes.

Even though the description of our house and food might sound dismal to you, it did not feel that way before the famine. In the extended family we had each other and a sense of daily purpose and ritual. My brother and I and first cousins attended school and all of the family worked together. I remember our small cabin quite well. There was a picture of the Holy Family on the wall. There was a cupboard in the kitchen and we had blue willow pattern dishes. I remember teacups that were special to Mother. I also remember that we ended each day by Father leading us in the rosary. It seemed to bring each day to a perfect ending. I remember being quite happy until 1846.

A potato crop failure occurred in 1845, but it was not a total loss. We, and our neighbors, had enough to eat. The next year was different. The potato blight of 1846 took almost 100% of everyone's crop within a month and was a total disaster. We soon depleted our meager supply of potatoes and then we gathered nettles in the fields, chopped them and put them with porridge and cabbage. This filled our bellies for a time. My brother and I and cousins picked wild fruits and collected shellfish. Since everyone was doing the same thing, all sources of food were exhausted within a short time.

Starvation came first. In a way, looking back on it now, it was the people who first succumbed to starvation who were best off. Even though starvation was awful, it was the diseases which followed that were most horrible. Famine victims got typhus, relapsing fever, dysentery, or scurvy. Most people in Limerick who became ill had relapsing fever. Mother was one of its many victims.

The first onset of mother's illness was severe vomiting lasting 5 days, followed by profuse sweating and exhaustion. We thought Mother was better, but in our hearts we knew differently because of seeing the illness take others. A week later the fever reoccurred and then occurred again, and again, until Mother died. One of my sisters, Mary, also died of fever.

I might sound unfeeling as I describe this to you now, but it was such a profound experience that we just had to go on. The entire community structure was destroyed by this experience. A friend became the person who would give you a morsel to eat. We no longer took in strangers who came along the road because of fear of "road fever." Neighbors from houses where fever was prevalent were also shunned. We were forever different people after being victims of the famine. At the time I hid every feeling and reaction I had. I did not cry. I did not seek comfort from others. I just tried to make it through each day. This is what most of us did.

As I relate this story to you now in 1915, part of the world is in the midst of a Great War. I read about the soldiers in the trenches and the awful experiences they are having. I feel their suffering, know their pain, and comprehend their families' grief. Understanding suffering came early to me.

I'm sorry to give you such an awful account of my early years, but the truth is what I am telling you. This is the sod I came from and that place is forever in my bones. I loved my mother and sister dearly. It was impossible to mourn them as they died. There were too many. About half of the people I knew died in the four years of the famine. The wakes and funerals were abbreviated. Coffins had hinges on the bottom panel. Coffins were lowered into the graves, the hinges unlocked, and coffins raised be used again, probably several more times in the same day. Even worse, I can remember cabins being pulled down over the bodies inside and then burned. The worst memory I have is of my friend John, wheeling his dead parents in a wheelbarrow to the large burying pit.

There was no time for mourning. You just survived. The time for mourning, I found, has come years later.

The mourning is also unfinished as I try to understand why this occurred to my Irish people, the lovely Irish people. The rest of the British Isles did not suffer so. As I became a student of history in my later years, I was angry at the English and the way they treated the Irish before and during the famine years. They were very bad landlords of our lands, and after the Union of 1801, they were equally bad to us in the political and education domains. School was less than two miles from Glenshesk and just across from the Catholic Church. We walked to school. It is hard for me to believe that when I was 10, and in a school established by the English government, I daily recited this verse:

I thank the goodness and the grace

That on my birth have smiled,

And made me in these Christian days

A happy English child.

At 10 I was not happy. I wondered if all life held was suffering and more suffering.

# 1963

I turned 19 in the fall of 1963 and had just finished a second summer of working at the ASCS at the USDA. Translated, that means the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service at the United States Department of Agriculture in Pontiac, Illinois. I was also restless at being home for the entire summer after finishing my freshmen year at Illinois State Normal University. The freedom of college had made me a bit restless with life on the farm on Route 66. I wanted to be someplace more "exciting," even if I could not define what or where that was. Traveling was becoming a passion, but it's reality had been confined to trips with my parents out west and to Wisconsin and Minnesota and other surrounding states and purchasing a full set of American Tourister luggage in red.

I wanted to go further. I even secured an application to join the Peace Corps after Sargent Shriver came to campus, calling us to arms to help with the problems of the world. I wanted to be involved. I wanted to help. I wanted to leave Illinois and the farm. My parents were less than enthusiastic about the Peace Corps idea and stifled my even filling out the long application.

Instead I came home that first summer after college and drove my grandfather's 1953 white Chevy every day to and from work. The one-way trip was a total of five miles. The scene was same every day. I went down the gravel driveway of the farm, looked to my left at the oncoming cars going south on Route 66 and crossed over into the median strip when it was safe to do so. Straight across from me was the Ocoya Co-op Grain elevator looming up what seemed like a lofty 100 feet into the air. Then I looked right and watched for the traffic going north on Route 66 and slide into the mighty highway to start the five-mile trek to work. As I drove to work that summer, the days were much the same, hot, often humid, and hazy only as it can be in Illinois as the summer heat builds up day after day, only to be changed by the onslaught on lightening and thunderstorms that never ceased to scare the living daylights out of me, especially at night.

About half way into town I passed the Illinois State Police Headquarters on my left. The pinkish, grey building with the thick rounded glass bricks seemed elegant to me. The state police cars were poised and ready to rush to any crisis on the road. Nearing town, the state correctional facility (we called it the pen) was on my right. The facility was large and a major employer in town, but because it was not a place to go or see, it was just there like the corn and bean fields surrounding it.

The summer passed, measuring corn and bean compliance for the federal government off of aerial maps. The tasks of this job were quite precise and certainly important to the farmer trying to stay in compliance with the government regulations. The task had two parts. Part one was someone going out in the field and actually measuring how much crop was planted and putting that information on an aerial map. Part two, where I came in, was figuring the acreage off the aerial maps that had been plotted. The task required a lot of math. It was not a job for a math

phobic, which I was not. The highpoint of the summer was seeing Jane everyday at work. She, too, was going to Illinois State; and she drove into work from Odell, five miles north of Pontiac.

The other highpoint at work was being taken out by the office boss to have a soda during one work day. This was not really as nice as it seems since our boss, who was about 45 years my senior and quite strict, only did this when he had been angry with you. The soda routine was his way of making up. I had seen him do it with other coworkers. I can't remember why he was mad at me, but I clearly remember the soda experience. He came into our work pen, wiggled his finger at me to join him, and we went in his car the several blocks downtown to the drugstore and enjoyed our two sodas.

Mom and Dad during the summer of 1963 were probably much like they had been most summers before and after. The crops had been planted in spring and now they were growing. My brother, Ray, and his wife, Janice, lived on a nearby farm as tenants and the two families farmed together. Ray's two sons were 6 and 3 and Janice was pregnant again.

I was ready for the summer to be over. I was no longer taken with our small community and the rhythm between farming, school, and church. I don't even remember seeing or talking with any Sullivans during the summer. I must have, but I don't remember. Probably now as I look back on it, the three oldest Sullivan "girls" had already left our community. They were all flying the coop. And I wanted to do the same.

I wanted to return to college as a sophomore. My first year had been enjoyable and I worked hard at getting good grades. I would again be roommates with Janet and we would live on the fourth floor at the end of the hallway in the ten-story high rise dorm named Atkin-Colby. Janet and I had purposely chosen the fourth floor room. Rules allowed residents on the fourth floor to take the elevator. Floors 2 and 3 could not. We figured fourth floor had it coming and going; we could use the elevator, but if there was a long lineup for the elevator, we could use the stairs without being entirely worn out. The end of the hall naturally meant we had neighbors on only one side and less noise. Our plans worked and we got the room we wanted.

Fall semester started and I worked as a typist for a faculty member in the political science department. I began to realize how much I loved the social sciences. Business was my major, and it seemed practical, but my heart was with courses in history, political science, and economics.

For all in my generation, you know what you were doing on November 22, 1963. I was in my dorm room doing some last minute cramming for an accounting exam that was to be at 2 p.m. My roommate was not there. I must have heard something in the hall from someone and turned on the radio. It was true. President Kennedy was shot. Then I heard he was dead. I knelt down by the bed and said whatever I did in prayer to try to take comfort, any comfort. President Kennedy and the First Lady had meant so much to me. They represented style, grace, dignity, humor, wit, intelligence, elegance, and hope. Most importantly hope. There was the vision as a young person that you could be involved and make a difference. Even more important for me was that they were Catholic. He had made it to the White House being a Catholic. This meant a great deal to me.

It was only later that Kennedy being Catholic AND Irish began to have significance to me.

# 1858

I turned 19 in the fall of 1858. Life was better. The remaining years of the famine, and those immediately after, tried the soul of Ireland and its people. But we survived. The relief effort orchestrated by the English Government was appalling for our citizens; but our family, and most other families, banded together and made a life for ourselves once again. Let me tell you about happier times.

Honora Creedon and I were married on February 14, 1858. Our marriage was arranged by our parents, that being the custom of the day. My father visited the Creedons between Christmas and Epiphany to discuss the pros and cons of the proposed marriage. Father arranged for the dowry from the Creedons of money, furniture, and utensils. It was the responsibility of the groom's family to furnish housing. The Creedons, I recall, continued to bargain one or two times with my father. Father thought a matchmaker might be needed, but it was done without any such intervention. After the contract was negotiated, my father and Honora's parents walked the land and the contract was sealed. Honora and I were then made aware of our families' agreement. This was how it was done. I had not really known Honora before the arrangement, so love, in the traditional sense, was not a part of our early marriage. This was no different than most other marriages of the time.

The marriage was to take place during Shrovetide, the three days before Ash Wednesday and the official start of Lent. No marriages took place during Lent.

Our wedding day was blessed because we had sun, a good omen, and as you might guess, a rare one in Ireland in February. Honora told me she heard a cuckoo on our wedding morning which was also a promise of luck for a marrying couple. The day before the marriage most of my relatives and the fiddlers for the wedding spent the night at our house. The next morning our small entourage mounted our horses and rode to the Creedon's house. The women rode on pillions behind us. When we got to the Creedons, Honora and I were presented with a plate of oatmeal and salt. Both of us took three mouthfuls to protect us against the power of the evil eye. We all ate a meal prepared by the Creedons. After the meal the priest began the ceremony and ended it by telling me to give Honora the kiss of peace. The wedding cake was brought in and blessed by the priest and everyone ate a piece. It was then the fiddlers' turn and they played and eventually everyone danced with the bride. At the end of the ceremony my brother Jerry gave this toast:

Health and long life to you,

Land without rent to you,

A child every year to you,

And death in old Ireland.

For the first week of our marriage, as was the custom, Honora's mother did not have any contact with us. On the first Sunday after our wedding, which is known as Bride's Sunday, all our friends accompanied us to the chapel. We then felt our full participation in the community. Marriage was the signal by our community that all the rights and responsibility of adulthood were upon us.

I recall these events with a great deal of fondness. The Creedons thought they had made a satisfactory match for their daughter. We Sullivans felt the same. Neither of our families were rich, but we were not the poorest either. Our entire country was poor, though, and we were dwindling away on the increasingly small pieces of land to raise our large families. By all rights, because he was the oldest living son, my brother Jerry should have my share of whatever was to come. He had other plans.

Shortly after the May Day milestone of our marriage, my brother Jerry left for America. I could not have been any sadder, even though I began to suspect it was clearly the right thing for him to do. My father was devastated at the prospect of his oldest son going to America. The rest of the family felt much the same way. Leaving for America, of course, had been common for years, and even more so after the famine for many members of our community. But Jerry's emigration was the first in our immediate family and was strongly felt by all.

Honora and I had a live wake for him.

What is a life wake, you say? It is a farewell party for those leaving to go to America. From the community's point of view, they would never see the person again, and this called for a ceremony, like a funeral wake, to recognize the departure. The only thing missing is a corpse. We played Horse Fair, Hunt the Slipper, Fronsey Fronsey, and Hot Hands. We kept it up for two days straight with fun and games and drinking. We even laid Jerry out on our kitchen table and covered him in the proper garments of a wake, which for him included white linen and ribbons to signify his being single. We made clay pipes available to all the men and put snuff on Jerry's chest. Every man took a pipe, took some snuff, and took a few puffs. We sang songs of lament over him and I handed out crepes or black bands for the men to wear on their hat. Beneath it all, like a real wake, was the sadness of Jerry leaving. Perhaps if he had married in Ireland he would have stayed longer. Jerry thought his chances for a better life were in America.

I loved my brother dearly and this was a very difficult time for me. I was torn between wanting to follow him right then and there and staying with Honora and the rest of the family on our land in Ireland. I had to think of Honora and what was best for us as a new couple. I was beginning to feel my responsibilities to the community. At nineteen I was an adult.

# 1968

I was 23 in the summer of 1968 and had just finished finals at Indiana University. All the requirements were met for my masters degree in education. The summer was to be filled working at Indiana University for faculty at the business school as I had done the summer before. I came home after classes and final exams to spend a couple of weeks before going back to Bloomington, Indiana, for the summer's work. I had negotiated to live with a young women off campus who had a 7-year-old child. The woman was getting a master's degree in comparative literature. Her daughter was an unknown to me. The family also included a Persian cat.

I was filled with pleasant anticipation on the day I was to go back to Bloomington for the summer's work and then the news came. Robert F. Kennedy had been killed the night before in Los Angeles. I couldn't believe it. When would this stop?

Just a few months earlier I had been in Chicago at a professional convention when Martin Luther King had been killed. I looked out the window of my hotel room and I could see the fires in the city. The next day I traveled to Detroit to attend another professional convention, an important ritual for near graduates searching for placement contacts. Detroit was like an armed camp. The riots of the summer of 1967 had placed the city on alert and King's death had brought forth yet another explosion in racial tensions. People could not get out of the city as planned. Its effect on me was that the room I had reserved for the convention was not available. By a turn of fate, the only solution was to stay in my advisor's suite for the duration of the convention. This turned out to be pure luck since my academic advisor was president of our professional association that year and she was hosting all the big whigs in our field in her presidential suite. There I was, a near graduate, getting to meet the people whose articles I had been reading in professional magazines the past two years. To say the least I was disappointed. They mainly drank and were obnoxious in any number of ways. They were also almost exclusively white and male. Didn't they realize that our nation was being turned black against white? Wasn't this the time to act and be passionate about this cause? Where was their idealism?

I thought about King and Robert Kennedy as I took the 3 plus hour drive back to Bloomington that weekend. I was sad, horribly sad, and disgusted at the turn of events in our country. On Monday I started work. This was also graduation day. I did not participate. I didn't see the need for ceremony.

My new roommate was quite an activist and within a week or so she had me circulating petitions for gun control, a result of the second Kennedy assassination. I felt it was the right thing to do. The summer passed and I enjoyed my faculty "bosses" a great deal and thoroughly enjoyed my roommate and her seven-year-old daughter. We took quite a shine to one another and became close friends by summer's end.

The two years at Indiana University had been much different than my experience at Illinois State University (they got rid of the "Normal" title in my sophomore year). Not only was Indiana

University a much more cosmopolitan institution, but the times were radically different in the country. Times were tame when I was graduated from undergraduate school in 1966. I had a friend whose boyfriend was in the Marines. He was stationed someplace called Vietnam in 1964. I didn't know where that was. By the time I started at Indiana there was no doubt I knew where it was. The days of "gentile" student body presidents was gone. The student body president during my last year of Indiana University was a died in the wool activist. He had students marching against Dow Chemical, the war, and against other injustices as perceived by students.

I was in an in between position. Clearly, I was a student, a graduate student, but I was also employed by the Student Affairs Service as an Assistant Director of a student dorm. We called them residence halls. Students called them dorms. Our job was to keep an eye on students, not only their morals, but on any and all actions that might be "subversive." By the two year's end it was clear we as graduate students were more inclined to agree with the students than the administration. Our hearts were with Eugene McCarthy as he campaigned in that tumultuous year of 1968 against the Vietnam War. I was not stridently for or against anything, but it was clear where my leanings were. They were with Clean Gene.

At the end of the summer of 1968, I was ready to leave the Midwest. The summer had been momentous personally and for the country as we all sat through the Democratic Convention in Chicago. My personal agenda was to go West. I had interviewed at those conventions in Chicago and Detroit earlier in the year and received an opportunity to interview at the University of Portland. Ah, Oregon, I thought, how much I liked it when we visited there on a family vacation when I was 15. I took my first plane ride in the spring of 1968 to interview in person at this Catholic institution on the bluff of the Willamette River overlooking Mt. Hood. The site was incredible. Most of my student colleagues were getting starting positions running residence halls. I thought I would likely end up with that as well, but I wanted more.

The interview at Portland turned out to be more than I hoped. The Dean of Students was an activist himself in a Catholic sort of way. We clicked and by the end of my four days there we had agreed to create a new position at the university, coordinator of student activities. I was sure he and I agreed on the type of activities that should be coordinated. He even encouraged me to be a part of the Upward Bound program that was coming to campus the following year. Yes, of course, I would.

I anticipated all this as the summer ended and I finished what I was sure was my last nonprofessional job. I went home and packed my new, to me, white Chevy 1965 Super Sport with red interior that Dad and brother Ray had picked out for me at Wolf Jacobson in Pontiac for $1500, and was ready to leave for Oregon. A friend from Indiana was going to drive out with me for the journey across the country. I was filled with anticipation. This was it. I was leaving Illinois and the Midwest.

I shall never forget the despondent look on my mother's face as I drove out the driveway and entered Route 66 one last time. She and Dad were standing together on the gravel driveway representing the stability of my past farm life. As I looked back in the rear view mirror, I knew she knew this was it. I was gone.

# 1863

In the spring on 1863 I was 23 and about to cross the Atlantic Ocean with my wife and two small children. It was the turning point of my life. I was sacred to death wondering if I was doing the right thing. I had gone over and over the decision in my mind. Honora and I had discussed it endlessly, and in the end I decided our future was in America, not Ireland.

We had been married five years and the future in Ireland looked dim to this young man viewing his current and future responsibilities. Our daughter was born on December 10, 1859, and we named her Johanna. Then less than a year later our first son was born and we named him Jerry. By naming him Jerry I knew I was honoring not only my father, Jerry, but my brother, Jerry, who had gone to America five years earlier. I honored my father, but I missed my brother terribly.

For those five years my brother Jerry lived in New York. His letters encouraged us to come and be with him. He sent money for the voyage, and in the end it was his encouragement that convinced me to move across the ocean. My father was inconsolable with our decision to leave, but I knew my sisters would care for him well. I needed to think first of my family. It was a horrible, wrenching decision; but after it was made in early 1863, I never deviated from my course. We were to going to a new life and I prepared for it in every detail possible.

We lacked enough money to travel by steamship, so our crossing was by sail. We were told to have provisions ready for a 70-day journey. Everyone hoped, naturally, that it would be shorter but you had to plan for the worst. First you needed a strong chest to carry your provisions. It was better if it was a sailor's box that was broader at the bottom than at the top so it would be steadier on board ship. In order to care for ourselves we took a water can, wash basin, baking dish, tin pot, can for drinking, pot to hang on the stove for heating, tin plates, small dishes for tea, spoons, knives, and forks. Everything was marked carefully because security was an issue. We took minimal clothing. The men had short jackets and coarse trousers and the women had a long bed gowns and dark shawls. Bedding for the family was carried. We took fishing tackle for when we got closer to the coasts. Everyone had brandy to use as bribes, and if you didn't use it, you sold it at the end of the trip.

Food and water preparation was most important. We took 30 stone potatoes, 1 1\2 cwt. of oatmeal or flour, 1/4 cwt. biscuits, 10 lbs. butter, 10 lbs. bacon, 25 lbs. herring, brandy, 1/2 gallon molasses, and a little vinegar. We were also advised, and we did, to take castor oil, colocynth and rhubarb pills, epsom salts, and senna. The water needed amounted to one gallon per person per day. We also brought oatcake we made the last week before departure. The oatcake was baked three times until it was hard as slate.

Last, and most important, we took a piece of sod. We wanted to have a piece of the old land in the new land.

Our live wake was the night before we departed. Our small house was filled with family and neighbors. We forced merriment but knew the real feeling of everyone present. It was exactly the same as when we had the live wake for Jerry. I knew I was hugging my sisters and father for the last time. We then made our way from Limerick to Liverpool where we had to wait for another week for good weather to start our adventure across the sea.

We left Liverpool on May 15, 1863, and arrived in New York 63 days later. Next to my experience during the famine years, this is the most misery I have ever experienced or seen bestowed on a group of people. Honora and I were 23 at the time and Johanna was 3 1/2 and Jerry 2 1/2. If I had known what I was subjecting them to, I probably would never have crossed. About 5% of ship's passengers died enroute because of the combination of sickness, horrible accommodations, unhealthy conditions, and violent storms.

As steerage passengers, we experienced the worst. Imagine, if you can, 63 days mostly holed up in steerage decks. We had little water and keeping clean was difficult. Vermin and filth were our companions on the trip. Many of us became too sick to cook, but the worst of the worst were the storms at sea.

Most of us in steerage had never sailed before and we were shut down in the hold in the dark amongst sickness and misery almost impossible to describe. The journey started out calm enough, but 20 days into the journey the storm came and lasted for eight days. The waves would break upon the deck, and to those of us below, it sounded like the ship was going to break apart. The utter terror when we could hear the sailors being called by the captain's trumpet to upper deck is a fear I have never known before or after. We knew the trumpet sounded only at worst of times; and however bad it was then, it would be getting worse. Our air was foul because we were locked below deck for the duration of the week's storm. We were thrown from one side to the other as the ship rolled and my fear for young Johanna and Jerry being crushed to death was real. It happened to others. Water came through from the deck above and our beds were soaked and the water on the floor was ankle deep. We thought, wrongly, that the ship was sinking. Of course we could not have lanterns lit and we had not cooked in days. Even today in dreams I can hear the shrieking and crying of men, women, and children from those days. Those memories will never fade.

After the big storm passed, we had what resembled a normal time on board. We could get above our deck; we could have wash days; and we could once again cook and gain some strength. We found ways to pass the idle time and each time we saw a ship we waved wildly and enthusiastically. By the end of the voyage our water was entirely useless and we had to use salt water. Then it happened. Someone saw land. Within seconds we were different people. People with hope. I shall never forget that moment. The four of us were alive, by God's grace. I then thought for the first time since the storm started we might make it to America.

Our introduction to America was Ward's Island off of New York City. Passengers who were contagious were sent to Staten Island for quarantine. Because we were relatively healthy, we were sent to Ward's Island to rest from the voyage. Within two days we went to New York City where I

hoped I would find Jerry from our previous arrangements. I knew where he lived and our challenge was finding him in this big city.

I cannot adequately describe to you now what it meant to see my brother Jerry. He represented both my past and my hope for the future. When we saw each other, we could not speak. We cried like babies for what seemed like hours, not the minutes I'm sure it was. Then Honora introduced Jerry to his niece, Johanna, and his namesake, Jerry. I can still vividly picture how my brother Jerry looked when Honora lifted young Jerry from her arms and handed him to Jerry. Jerry was beaming from ear to ear.

Our introduction to America was turbulent. We arrived on July 17, 1863, the day after the four-day Draft Riots of New York were quelled. Little did I know or understand at the time just how strong the feelings were in the country for the tumultuous events of the day which all stemmed from the American Civil War. The Union had passed legislation earlier in 1863 for conscription for all able bodied men between the ages of 20 and 45. There were provisions in the bill for draftees to obtain exemption by paying $300 or supplying a substitute. The Irish immigrants, in particular, were opposed to the bill and what they considered to be this rich man's exemption. The opposition turned into four days of rioting with 1000 people killed, 50 buildings destroyed by fires, and $2 million dollars worth of damage. My brother Jerry had been part of the Draft Riots the days prior to our arrival and was still reeling with its effect on him.

Jerry had arranged for us to live in the 4th Ward of New York City. When we arrived the tenement population was nearly 300,000 inhabitants to the square mile. Squalor is the only word that comes to mind. My hope of the last few days since we had first seen land was now being compromised by our surroundings and the news of the Civil War and its possible effect on us. I had put my family through so much. Now I was faced with appalling living conditions and thousands of miles away from anything that was familiar to us. Had we done the right thing?

I knew Jerry sensed my concern, and he said he had a plan. We were to Go West he said. I wondered what West meant. Whatever it was, we would be a part of it. Jerry also wanted to avoid the draft and conscription. I wondered what all of this meant for me and for my family. Going west and being a draft dodger. Going home was out of the question. This was home and we were here to stay, for better or for worse.

# 1977

In the summer of 1977 I was 32 and living in Eugene, Oregon. I had received a Ph.D. in counseling psychology from the University of Oregon in 1971; and after doing a wide-ranging job search around the country and receiving several offers, I decided to take a position at Oregon as an Assistant Professor doing career counseling in the Career Planning and Placement Service and teaching in the Counseling Psychology department. I loved program development, counseling, and teaching so this seemed like a perfect fit. I had also become quite a fan of Oregon since I moved there in 1968.

In 1977 the move to Oregon seemed like ancient history rather than only nine years. When you are in your early 30's, nine years is one third of your life and that third had been lived in Oregon. The nine years included one year in Portland working for a Catholic university, moving down to Eugene and spending three years studying for a doctorate, and then five years establishing a professional career. I also bought my first home, being the first person in my immediate family to do such a thing. I was glad to be in Oregon.

I loved everything about Oregon. I loved the coast, the mountains, the mild winter, the green, the nonhumid summers, no lightening, the rhododendrons, the vividly different scenery through the state, the attitude of the people (come to visit, but don't stay), and the politics (more liberal than the rest of the country), and let me mention once again, the mild winter. I didn't even mind the rain.

Before 1977 I made it a practice to go back to Illinois twice a year. I went back every summer, and then I tried to outguess the weather and go back sometime in late fall or winter. I can remember 'getting caught' at O'Hare airport in Chicago several times. The worst of those times occurred one Christmas eve. I was to fly back to O'Hare and take a commuter plane down to Bloomington, Illinois, where my parents would pick me up. The snow in Chicago made it impossible to get as far downstate as I wanted and I called home with that news. Mother, always the worrier for the entire family, was beside herself. I told her I could make it to Peoria and could anyone pick me up there. She said she would find someone. I knew 'someone' would turn out to be my brother Ray, since my father was no longer up to emergencies that might happen en route.

I flew into Peoria airport sometime after 10 p.m. on Christmas Eve and there was not another soul in the airport after the few passengers on our flight dispersed. I was stranded on Christmas Eve. Suddenly, I saw my brother's cheery face appear in the abandoned terminal door. He ushered me out to the car where Janice and the three kids were all waiting. We sang Christmas carols all the way back to my parent's farm. It is one of my favorite Christmas memories.

Every visit back to Illinois had surprises from Mom. It was usually a new sweater she had made me, or a quilt, or any of a number of things that had taken her hour upon hour to do. As daughter, I began to expect these things. That's just what my mother does, not only for me, but

for all my friends. When I needed a shower gift, or a wedding gift, or a baby gift, I just called up Mom and saw what she currently had in the gift 'larder.'

While I was home, I tried to visit as many friends and parents of friends as possible and see aunts and uncles and many farming neighbors. At church I would also touch base with other friends and would see those Sullivans who remained at home.

As I settled into my new career at Oregon, I began to take time to pursue other things. I took classes in woodworking and made all the furniture for the house I had purchased in 1973. I enrolled in photography classes and started doing my own developing. I also took a genealogy class, and I was hooked immediately. I had been a history buff since high school although my history teacher seemed to teach more about the Friday night football game than history. Genealogy combined history, treasure hunting, sleuthing, and family stories. I could not lose.

The trips back to Illinois in 1975 and 1976 were not only opportunities to see everyone, but also an opportunity to visit graveyards with my parents, go to the courthouse, and question my parents about relatives. It was in 1975 when my parents and I went to Fairbury Catholic Cemetery. Dad stood by each Sullivan gravestone and told me as much as possible of what he knew about them.

It is good Dad told me those stories then, because the trips back in 1977 were for different reasons. By year's end I had gone back to Illinois four times. Twice because of Dad's health, once for his funeral, and six weeks later for Mom's funeral after a house fire. Memory has a way of dimming even the most vivid of times, like the months after my mother died and trying to both go on and comprehend the enormity of the loss. But I still had my brother Ray and his family, and my work, and my friends, and the security one has from my early background.

Whatever history I was to know about my family from my parents, I had when I was 32. At that age I was a fatherless and motherless child.

# 1871

I was 32 in 1871 and Honora and I had five children: Hannah, 14; Jerry, 11; Mary, 6; John, 3; and Cornelius, almost 2. We lived in Fairbury, Illinois, and I was a coal miner. My brother, Jerry, and his wife, Mary, also lived in Fairbury and they had three children: John, 7; Mary Elizabeth, 5; and Maggie, 3. Brother Jerry worked as a laborer.

As before, I had followed my brother. When we met Jerry in N.Y. in 1863, he had saved enough money to move West. He did that later in the year. He moved to Fairbury in 1863. At that time Fairbury was in the middle of its boom period. From 1860-1870 Fairbury grew from 269 to 3500 people. What brought people? The coal mines. Many English, Irish, and Welsh came to work the mines. My brother was among them and he brought his wife-to-be with him and they married in 1864 shortly after they arrived.

As for us, after we arrived in New York in 1863 I spent the next two years working and saving money so we could follow Jerry. I knew anyplace had to be better than what we had found in the New York squalor. This city was no fit place to raise a family. I was use to open places and green spaces. Jerry assured me that was what Fairbury was like. We were not disappointed.

We arrived in Fairbury in 1865, just a year after it had incorporated as a village. It was laid out in 1857 and the first store came in 1858. It was followed by the first tavern and post office and blacksmith shop, all in 1858. The first flouring mill came in 1859 and the bank arrived in 1864. But what brought us, other than Jerry, was the prospect of work. More specifically, the coal fields.

The first shaft, on the West side, was sunk in 1862 and a vein was struck at 216 feet. It was the first such discovery in central Illinois. A second shaft, this time on the East side, was started in April 1867. The supervisor for the mine was Mr. Gibb who was a native of Scotland. He was a fair boss. He was a man who came to this country in 1852. He understood how to work with men and he understood coal mining. Under him, we were able to mine 75 tons daily year round.

I worked both the West and East side of the mines. First I worked on the East side. After that first shaft was built, an independent village grew up around the mine which was called Marsh Town. I did not come to this mine until after it had been in operation for three years, but it was my first job in Fairbury. Among the many men in the mines, one fellow stood out from the rest. He was tall, determined and not a trouble maker. Neither did he back down when trouble happened. As you can well imagine, the immigrants from different countries did not always get along. My tall and even tempered fellow worker went on from Fairbury to Dodge City where the townsfolk thought he might help to bring law and order to their city. They made him U.S. Marshall. His name was Bat Masterson.

Mentioning Bat Masterson may give you a sense of what Fairbury was like in those days. Like all frontier mining towns in the dime novels you read; it was rough and tumble. The miners

drank and got into brawls. They also brought prosperity to Fairbury. The coal we produced gave settlers a cheap source of fuel and supplied the railroads with fuel so the forests did not have to be cut for energy. And it was 100% better than New York.

Even though the mines were rough and produced men who were tough, many of us clung to different ways. A Roman Catholic church was organized. Two years after we arrived Fr. O'Neill, the first Irish priest west of the Alleghenies, was saying our mass once a month. Officially he was attached to the Pontiac parish, but he said mass and did our baptisms, weddings, and funerals. In 1868 we got our own priest, Fr. John Fanning. We were one of the original 30 families who belonged to the church. So was my brother's family.

Another early memory I have of Fairbury is the bad fires. The fire of 1868 burned down 18 stores. It was started by the spark from a passing locomotive. There were two more fires in 1869. We were hit far worse by fire than any other surrounding small community.

Our children and my brother's children were being raised as Americans. My Hannah and Jerry could not even remember Ireland, but Hannah still had nightmares of our ocean crossing. In 1871 Hannah and Jerry attended the South Side school built in 1868. It was a dingy and weather beaten building but the learning was good. I was hopeful for their future in this new land even though the people were still healing from the conflicts of the Civil War. Civil War veterans were venerated. Brother Jerry and I remained silent as possible on our lack of involvement.

From my point of view, the Negro should have all the rights and responsibilities the rest of us had. I could see no difference by the color of the skin, but others felt differently. Fairbury had more colored than you might think. In the early 1870's there were 100 Negroes in and around Fairbury who had come from Mr. Sullivant's (no relation to us) farm in neighboring Ford Co. As the times changed, Mr. Sullivant got rid of his help, and they wandered toward Fairbury where they lived and worshipped.

Let me tell you about one find day our whole family witnessed in Spring 1870. Richard Quarles was the first Negro to vote and exercise the franchise of the 15th Amendment in Fairbury. We all called him Side Hill Dick because he had one leg several inches shorter than the other. In that spring township election Side Hill Dick voted and the event brought out more people than the circus coming to town. We all knew we were witnessing history. For me, and most all of us, positive history.

As my 30's started, I remember being positive about myself, my family, my work, and my newly adopted country. My one remaining nagging and lingering ache was our families back in Ireland. We heard infrequently from them and as year after year passed, our feelings did not change for the people we left. Of course, our sense of family changed because we did not know what happened on a day-to-basis. This was brought home in late 1871 when I received a letter from my sister telling me Father had died six months earlier. I was in total disbelief for days. How could my own father be dead for over six months without me knowing it. Jerry and I had a service at St. John's Church and mourned the loss the best we could from such a distance. We

vowed we would never forget. We would always be Irish and children of our parents, no matter where we lived.

# 1987

In the summer of 1987 I was 42 and traipsing around Arizona in dry heat of 107 degrees trying to find a place to live with my husband Jack Loughary. Jack was a professor at the University of Oregon also. We had decided it was time to consider moving on. Jack had spent much of his life in Eugene, going to elementary and high school and college there, and then eventually returning after he received a Ph.D. and taught there for almost 30 years. There must be other places he figured. I concurred. We knew there were other places, of course, because we had traveled and lived temporarily in a number of them. In fact one of our shared interests, perhaps passion, was knowing the bigger world.

We had married on January 1, 1987, as the sun set on Poipu Beach in Kauai, Hawaii, next to the Beach House Restaurant. I wore a long deep purple Hawaiian dress and the special lei for such occasions both over my shoulders and surrounding my head. Jack was in grey slacks and a Hawaiian shirt with a lei cascading down his shoulders. Our minister was Marvin Tung Loong and he said the ceremony in Hawaiian. The witnesses for the event were two waitpersons from the Beach House Restaurant. I called niece Ann with the news and said she could be town crier for the Midwest folks. I wrote Uncle Don and Aunt Sally on that day telling them that their 42-year-old niece had gotten married, finally. I married just months after a report in *Newsweek* said a never-married woman over 40 had a greater chance of being killed by a terrorist as ever marrying.

The decade since my parents' deaths had been filled with a number of things new to the farm girl from the Midwest. In the months before my parents died in 1977 I had completed an application for a Fulbright Award. That fact had been forgotten as the events of 1977 came careening one after another. Then December 9, 1977, came. It would have been my father's 69th birthday. I received a letter from the Fulbright Commission that day saying I was a finalist for a Grant. Not to get too excited, though, because the pool was still large. Then January 20, 1978, arrived. It would have been my mother's 70th birthday. The letter I received that day informed me that I was a recipient of a Fulbright Award to Sweden.

Before traveling to Sweden in 1979, I had been on a tour to South America just to see what international travel was like. Actually I had been out of the country before, but that was with my parents to Canada where Dad talked for months afterwards about being asked if he wanted 'hopple' pie. I studied Swedish for six months prior to my departure, but was genuinely appreciative of possessing the language of the century as I traveled through Europe always able to rely on my English to get me through. I traveled alone through much of Western Europe and enjoyed my time in Sweden with little interest shown in me by the academic institution to which I was suppose to be tied. No big deal. I made my own plan of study and enjoyed trying to understand Swedish people from birth to earth, as I wrote to others.

International trips seemed to flow after Sweden. In 1982 Jack and I did a month's educational lecture tour in South Africa, followed by a period of time in Europe. The South Africa trip led to several black South Africans coming to our department at the University of Oregon to receive degrees. We also initiated an effort to sell South African baskets made in Zululand. We called our venture Out of Africa Imports. In 1983 Jack had a sabbatical in London and I met him in Hong Kong on his way around the world, and we traveled on to China and Japan. In 1984 we did a lecture tour of New Zealand and traveled on to Sydney and drove up the coast to Brisbane. As I set foot on Australia, I thought, I've made it to six continents in six years. Will I ever make it to Antarctica and make it seven?

The desire for travel had been lifelong. I had applied to the AFS program in high school. My Rhoda cousins had hosted our first AFS student in 1961, Inger from Norway, and our class had the first chance to send one of our own aboard. Three of us applied, but I did not get the opportunity. At the time my mother was in the hospital and Mildred, my good friend's mother, was acting in lieu of Mom and said to 'be gracious.' I think we were, but really I wanted to do it.

In the summer of 1986 Jack and I travelled abroad again. The trip which combined Germany, Austria, Switzerland, and England was glorious, but I was nursing yet one more loss. My brother Ray suffered a massive stroke on April 12, 1968. I got the news in a backwards way from Uncle Don who had heard it from my Rhoda cousin, Martha. Martha had just attended her father's funeral (my uncle), as had my brother Ray. The news of Ray being suddenly stricken after his uncle's funeral had made its way through the Rhoda family. Martha called Don in Arizona and Don called me in Oregon. I immediately called the Pontiac, Illinois, hospital to find Ray had been moved to Peoria and I caught up with the family there. They had been waiting a bit long to call me to see if they could say which way it was going. My new niece-in-law, a LPN, gave me the news in a compassionate, yet informed manner. My call right after I got off the phone was to the airlines. I was en route the next day, prepared to stay for a funeral.

Ray died the next day. Ray's goodwill in the community was reflected by the outpouring. When I called Jack to tell him the news of Ray's death, he asked if he should come to Illinois. I said, "if you want to understand my background, come." Jack arrived half way through the visitation at the Chenoa Funeral Home.

At the visitation I saw Kathleen Sullivan Tedrick and her husband. I had not seen her in years. There was not time to visit, because there were literally hundreds of people, but I knew she had been there. The next day after the funeral at the dinner put on by the Church, I introduced Jack to Jane Sullivan Monterastelli. Jack pronounced her name immediately; I had struggled with it for years. Another first cousin on my father's side was in attendance and wanted me to introduce her to everyone as she had not been raised in the Chenoa area.

It was then I began to realize again how many family connections I had. My mother's side of the family literally cascaded me with aunts and uncles and cousin after cousin. Dad's side of the family had been less productive, but one thing I did have were the Sullivans. I remember thinking then, I have to keep in better touch with the Sullivans. There is no one else to do it now.

After Ray died, I asked many people to write stories about him which I would pass on in a book to his wife and children. Jane and Ellen Jo Sullivan wrote a number of memories they had of their early years with Ray. Ah, yes, we go back a long ways with the Sullivans. I must remember that I thought as I read their stories in the summer of 1986. That idea was tucked someplace in my head as we loaded the moving van in the surprise snow store, unusual for Eugene, On December 15, 1987, to go to Tucson. We were on the move.

# 1880

In the summer of 1880 I was 41, and my youngest daughter, Nora, would turn 3 on August 26. She was a happy child. Our family was now at 10. Our oldest daughter, Johanna, was already off on her own in Chicago working as a tailor and our other daughter, Mary, was 15. The rest of the family were boys. Jerry, our oldest son, was working in the coal mines with me. John and Cornelius were in school and Daniel and James were at home. The constant companions, though, were Nora and James. Being the youngest and only two years apart, they sometimes acted like the rest of us didn't exist, except to make their life more fun.

In 1880 I had worked in the coal mines for 15 years. I was working in the mine that had been started by Gibb, Knight, Hotchkiss, and Kirkwood out of Streator. They had purchased three acres near the old Marsh land, where the first mine had been struck, for $1000. The owners spent almost $10,000 to get a coal at a depth of 176 feet. My son Jerry and I and and my brother Jerry were a part of finding coal in that mine.

The mine was going day and night, working three shifts. It was a room-and-pillar type mine. By that I mean we would mine 24 feet and leave 12 feet for support. We used props to hold up the rock. We went down into the mine in a cage. It was pitch dark and we would wear carbide lamps attached to our hats. We were sure we were near the coal the day we reached slate. Our efforts redoubled and by the next day we struck the shaft and the thickness and quality of coal was good. The celebration by the miners was loud and boisterous. We shot off guns and made as about much noise as anyone could expect. Having a mine come in was a time none of us would ever forget.

After the mine came in, it was back to the daily grind and work of bringing the coal to the surface. We would remove coal by a combination of pick, machines, and blasting. Steam engine hoisted cars would take the coal to the surface and the coal was dumped above ground. At times mules were used to haul coal in the mines. The life of these mules were about as low as you could ever get. The mules were lowered into the shafts and stayed there only to come up in the summer to graze. As I would finish a shift in the mine after hour upon hour of darkness and foul air, I would think of these animals staying there day after day without relief.

Mine work was difficult, no way around that. First of all, the mines were only five feet high and all work had to be done bent over. The biggest problems were ventilation and roof support. Methane gas is produced in coal mines and fresh air had to be forced down to us. In addition to the gas there was coal dust, which is highly explosive. In our area we sprayed limestone dust, or rock-dusting, to offset the danger of the coal dust. Miners would get Black Lung. Nearly all miners chewed tobacco to keep the dust, they thought, from settling in their throats. Whether it helped or not, I do not know, but we thought it did, and that was important. In addition, water usually drained to the floor of the mine and had to be pumped continuously in order not to overtake us.

More than once when I was in the mine, my thoughts would flash back to the times in the hull of the ship when we were crossing in 1863. It was the same helpless feeling and fear of the dark and unknown. My fellow miners never talked about the danger or whatever fears they had in going down into the mines. Instead we would tend to boast of our dangers and that we could live through them. And live through them we did. Not a single person was ever killed in a Fairbury mine. That's a record to be proud of, and we were. Injury is another thing. Injury was common. In the year we are reminiscing about, my brother Jerry was disabled in the mine for over six months. He was too near when a blast occurred and a large rock was propelled right into his left thigh. He was on crutches for most of a year.

The work was hard and dirty and the wages were low. So, we had idea of turning from mining to farming. At 41 I was beginning to wonder how much longer I could keep on doing this work. My cough was more persistent and my bones ached from the constant bending and the cold, damp, usually wet environment in which I worked. I wanted to be out in the sun and grow things and build up my own land to give to my sons as my father would have liked to be able to do for me. I wanted to have a piece of this land, American land, before I passed on from this world.

My brother Jerry felt the same way. Being seriously hurt in the mines got his attention like nothing else had. He wanted a change. The past year had been very difficult for him and his family. Jerry and Mary still had four children at home who ranged from Margaret at 12 down to Bridget at 7. John at 16 was already on his own, and Mary at 14 had been farmed out as a servant down the road to the Lough family They were a good Irish family who needed Mary's help, but Jerry and Mary were sorry their circumstances made it difficult at such a young age for their own children.

Difficulty in mining, both the work and labor issues, was not limited to our experiences in Fairbury. It was more widespread. Our adopted country had great disparities between rich and poor. There were the very few Morgans and Rockefellers. The rest of us were farmers or working men and women who were basically in poverty because of reoccurring depressions. Labor was extremely slow to organize because we were confronted with the power of the businessmen and banks. Union organizers had difficulties recruiting members because of their different languages and perhaps, more important, we distrusted one another. The Irish hated the Italians. The German the Irish. We all hated the Chinese. And almost all disregarded the Coloreds. Additionally, most of us were more concerned with getting and keeping a job, than safe working conditions and better wages. When strikes did occur, we heard about strikers being killed by hired guards or soldiers. Working in a dark mine, even thought it was a nightmare, was better than dying.

There was one labor incident that did get our attention. A group of Irish coal miners in Pennsylvania had organized in the late 1850's against mine owners who they considered oppressors. The police sided with the mine owners. The Irish miners called themselves the Molly Maguires after a similar organization in Ireland that used force against agents of the landlords. The organization in Pennsylvania was infiltrated by a Pinkerton detective hired by the mine

owner. The detective gathered evidence of their activities and presented it in court and 19 members of the organization were executed in 1877. The news spread like wildfire among the Irish, particularly Irish coal miners. We were being oppressed here as we had been at home. This time it was not by the English, but by our fellow Americans. Both brother Jerry and I had been naturalized for over a decade. Was this the American dream? Could Ireland be better?

Ireland was not better, she was mired in politics. Ireland continued to fight to be Irish, not English. We watched the course of politics as best we could. The important man of the time was the Irish Nationalist leader Charles Parnell. He championed Home Rule. Parnell came to the U.S. in 1878 and took back with him £70,000 to help with the causes of the agrarian agitation and obstruction of English parliamentary tactics. The Sullivans of Fairbury made a contribution to that effort. We did not have much, but whatever we had would be shared with those at home for the cause of Home Rule.

# 1990

It was a Saturday, only 4 days after Jack's 60th birthday on November 6. Jack had not been in a festive mood for this birthday. This was a birthday he thought he could do without. His mood matched the project we were currently working on entitled, unceremoniously, *Becoming Unimportant*. Since we had written several books about other career and life stages, we thought we ought to take advantage of the observations we had experienced the last few years to write about this next stage of career development. I was probably thinking of this and other things, when the phone rang. It was my sister-in-law, Janice, Ray's widow, now remarried.

Janice had called for a particular reason that day. She wanted to tell me Kathleen Sullivan Tedrick's husband, Keith, had died of a heart attack a couple of weeks earlier. He was 47. Janice and I talked about the tragedy and I thanked her for letting me know the news. After I got off the phone, I asked myself, what should I do? The last time I had any substantive contact with Kathleen was high school. She had graduated a year ahead of me in 1961. Almost 30 years had passed, and the number of times I had seen her could be counted on one hand with probably a couple of fingers still remaining up. She and I had not even maintained a thread of Christmas letters, the ultimate bottom line of people who are in your circle.

I went on through that Saturday with Kathleen in the back of my mind. Jack and I went to Lake Oswego and had lunch at a new restaurant called Amadeus. Then we stopped at a favorite country store and stocked up on jar after jar of jellies and jams and other assorted packages of muffin and scone mix. One further stop was the drugstore for wrapping paper and I got into a frenzy early in the season of wrapping Christmas gifts, one of my favorite activities. Kathleen kept gnawing away in the back of my mind. It was so long ago and far away. I was not even sure where she lived and how old her children were or even of their gender. I was really out of touch.

But I was in touch with Kathleen's oldest sister, Jane, and my confirmation sponsor of so many years ago. She was the one Sullivan with whom I exchanged Christmas letters. The next day I called Bloomington, Illinois, information for Jane's telephone number and called her. Jane gave me more information about the family situation and provided Kathleen's address and phone number. The following day I wrote and then phoned Kathleen the next Sunday. Some place in the middle of our conversation Kathleen asked how my store was doing. I've never had a store or worked in a store. I realized then we had been sorely out of touch. She knew little of my adult life, and I little of hers. But we now felt reconnected. I wanted to rekindle our friendship from years ago. I told Kathleen I was writing a newsletter for women friends and I would send her the latest copy. It's called the *Circle of Friends*, I told her.

I started writing the *Circle of Friends* in July 1989 from our high-arched, stucco pink palace on the Tucson Sonoran desert. We had lived there almost two years and even though we made a number of new, and for us, different friends, I realized the number of women friends was about the least I had experienced in my adult life. I did have friends, but few were close to where I lived.

So I gleaned through all my old address books and resurrected 33 names of women friends from the various past lives and wrote a letter to them. I included a self-addressed post card with each letter and encouraged them to write back. I few did, most did not. So I wrote a second letter with another post card included.

The time in Tucson allowed for such things after the first year. We worked diligently the first year to market our human resource services. Jack and I had been mildly successful in our consulting firm in Eugene. We had a business called New Directions and had contracts with many local and regional firms and governmental offices to provide services ranging from counseling to outplacement to various training programs. We thought it would not be especially difficult to transfer the activity to Tucson. We were wrong. After 15 months of unrelenting effort, the most tangible results were the whiz bang marketing packets we had put together and the reams of rejection slips. We had not even been able to get appointments with many of the top 100 firms which we systemically contacted. What was it? The Southwest is tough we were told. Have to be born here we were told.

Whatever it was, we decided not to fight it and try to reduce our expenses. The best way to contain our expenses was to move out of an expensive house. When you start that line of thinking, more change is in the air. The change turned into reality, when we, particularly Jack, began to realize that green is a favorite color. Green is pretty much absent in Arizona. There is a lot of blue, but not green. Jack's comment was you could get in your car, drive 100 miles and get out of your car, and see exactly the same scenery. The smell of Oregon was again in the air. We checked out property in Eugene with a former student turned real estate agent. As we finished a morning's tour, we decided we had been there, done that, and even had the t-shirt, an Oregon Duck t-shirt at that. Then we saw property near Portland that was, from our point of view, pristine. The district was called Carbonneau. We put money down on a lot in July 1989; put our house up for sale in Tucson; sold it in two weeks; and rented it back from the new owner for three months. We were back on the Oregon Trail for our 3rd anniversary which was celebrated in Monterey, California, as we were winding our way back up the coast.

One of the legacies of Arizona was the realization that as life moves on, you gain a certain sort of serenity in being unimportant. We had lived those two years in Arizona with people, usually the male part of the couple, who had been very successful in business. We knew some of the world of commerce from our consulting practice, but we were basically academics. They knew business, but had known few academics. The attraction was mutual and we left Tucson with many new friends.

I also had the opportunity in Arizona to 'practice writing.' Jack and I had written a number of how-to-do-it books, but I had never really tried my hand at solo writing except for a few articles and those usually described programs that had been successful or other how-to-do-techniques for career planning. I wanted to try some different things. Write what you know is always the best advice.

I wrote about my father, my mother, our landlords, our community, our neighbors, our relatives, and my brother. It was a pleasure to do.

I came back to Oregon with more friends, both from Tucson and a reconnection with friends from the past. I had practiced writing, and I began to realize that this getting older business was a challenging as any career stage prior to it. When I returned to Oregon, I was 45, the old age of youth.

# 1900

Where does an adult life go? In 1900 I was 60 and one year away from being a widower. We were living in Weston, Illinois, just a few miles from my brother who remained in Fairbury. My brother and I were both farmers.

I was living with my wife who was very ill. My youngest, Nora, was taking care of her mother and four of her brothers (Jerry, Con, John, and James) and myself. As I look on that time now, it was difficult for all of us. At 23 Nora had the responsibility for the entire household of seven. She had accepted that responsibility years before when her mother's health failed. It was not only her physical health that failed, but her mental health as well.

My wife had not been herself for years. None of us knew exactly what was wrong, but it was clear Honora could not function as she had in the past. The burden of the household had fallen to my youngest daughter, Nora, because her older sisters, Hannah and Mary, had moved to Chicago years before. For most of those years Nora had six men in the house, her five brothers and myself. In addition to my wife's health, we all had to deal with John's blindness. John had been blinded about 10 years earlier when a horse kicked him in the head when he had been doing itinerant selling in Iowa with his brothers. My three sons (John, Dan, and Jerry) had tried to make a living selling tools to farmers. The accident occurred on one of these trips. They had just arrived in a small town in Iowa by train and rented a horse and buggy to start their rounds. John was harnessing the horse and it bucked and hit him square in the head. The blindness was instant. After that, most of the concern I had for my children went to John. I knew the rest could care for themselves.

For happier times, it was the work we were doing. We got out of the mines and into farming. It was still a tough existence, but one that was better than what we left. My brother Jerry already owned his own farm in 1900. I was a tenant in 1900, but my aspirations were to own land.

We moved from the mines into farming in the 1890's, when, by all counts, we should have prospered. I learned early on farming was more than being concerned about weather and crop diseases. The U.S. population was booming when we started farming. Farm mechanization, and thus efficiency, was coming into its own. Conditions working against becoming prosperous were the same forces we had seen before, the greed of the few over the many. Eastern banks controlled credit; manufacturing monopolies controlled the price of machinery; eastern railroad trusts set freight prices; and depression after depression lowered the land values and sent crop prices downward. We farmers responded the best we could by organizing into granges and pressing for reform. We formed the Populist Party whose main purpose was to press against the excesses of business who were in league with the government. We had little success on that account except at the local and state level. McKinley's election in 1896 seemed to trumpet to all the sound of eastern money interests over the concerns of western farmers.

I was little impressed in 1900 with the U.S. politics I observed in the 35 plus years I had been in the country. I had not been stirred by a president since Lincoln. I was appalled with the corruption of business and its triumph over labor. To me it seemed like the Vanderbilts and Stanfords and Carnegies and Mellons were like the English landlords I had left. We in the rural Midwest and West were like the Irish. It seemed I was destined for a life of struggles, but perhaps, just perhaps, I could die owning land. That was my hope.

Even though I was immersed in America and things American, I never forgot my other roots. By 1900 neither I nor my brother Jerry had any real family connections left in Ireland. All of our siblings were older and had died. I was not in contact with my first cousins back in Ireland, some had stayed and others had come to America. Even though we were detached physically, we never detached psychologically. I followed all Irish news with great interest.

The last twenty years of the 19th century was the time for proliferation of revolutionary societies in Ireland. I followed all their politics with great interest. There were the Invincibles, the Irish Agricultural Organization Society, and the Gaelic League. The group who received attention from all of us was the Fenians, which turned into Sinn Fein. The Fenians were established to gain freedom for Ireland from Great Britain and establish an independent Irish republic. They were named for professional native soldiers of the 3rd century who were supposedly led by the druid leader Finn Maccool. The Fenians were organized both in Ireland and the U.S. In Ireland they were called the Irish Republican Brotherhood and in the U.S. the Fenian Brotherhood. The American Fenians promised to supply their Irish brothers with money and arms and supply soldiers if necessary. The Fenians ceased to exist about 1885, but the aims of the Fenians were taken up again around 1900 by Arthur Griffith, a man I consider a great leader.

Arthur Griffith established the Sinn Fein (in Irish meaning we ourselves) to secure the political independence of Ireland from Great Britain. The organization also wanted Ireland to be completely economically self-sufficient and it also promoted Irish culture and the use of the Irish language. The Sinn Finn was more strident than Charles Parnell. They wanted more than Home Rule. They wanted total national independence. From my distant perch, I could see no alternative. English rule was strangling Ireland, as it always had. Much like I saw big business strangling America.

In 1900 I was 60, about to turn 61. I had viewed much these 60 years and I could feel change in the air. The world had turned into a new century, and my personal world was changing. I knew it. My wife was ebbing away daily, and I sensed it would not be long before my children would leave our home. I could not expect Nora to live like this forever. I wanted her to have her own life. She was already seeing a lot of Willie Ripley who lived down the road from us with his brother Onna. I liked Willie, like I liked Mary Hagan and Margaret Harnett, the girls Con and James were seeing. We all seemed to be holding on to the time when Honora would no longer be with us. What would I do then?

At 60 I had a family with many difficulties, and many blessings. My mother country continued to struggle. My adopted nation had as many injustices as justices. I viewed these things

at 60 with some equanimity. It was soon to be the struggle of my children and their children to go on with challenges of life. I was ready to begin turning things over. I was just beginning to believe I understood things, just a little, both here and abroad. And maybe I was beginning to understand myself as well, as least a little. I found some comfort in that thought at 60.

# 1993

On March 17, 1993, I phoned Jane Sullivan Monterastelli. I had not talked with Jane since 1990 when I obtained her sister Kathleen's address and phone number. In the intervening 2 1/2 years Kathleen and I spoke at least once a month, and we had reestablished the friendship of our youth. Kathleen was doing as well as anyone could for a woman widowed in her 40's.

Circumstances provided the opportunity to contact my Irish relative on St. Patrick's Day. My motivation for contacting Jane was related to her former employer, State Farm Insurance, headquartered in Bloomington, Illinois. Jane worked there for 30 years and just retired within the last year or so. I knew these things from my frequent contact with her sister Kathleen. Jane knew all the ins and outs of State Farm and on this particular St. Patrick's Day that was what I was looking for.

Several months prior to St. Patrick's Day I had been in frequent contact with another cousin, not related to my Sullivan cousins and wanted to understand the job prospects at State Farm. I had received the cousin's resume on March 17 and decided to call Jane and see if she could give me a referral for State Farm and provide any inside information. I was also eager to wish her Happy St. Pat's Day. Her first response after hearing my voice was, "you've heard."

"Heard what?" I said. Jane then told me her dad, Francis "Sully" Sullivan, died earlier that day. I was flabbergasted. I had only called Jane once before, and the second call brought this news. My dad and Francis had been born the same year, 1908. Kathleen told me often in the 2 1/2 years that she relayed every conversation she and I had to her dad. He listened to every morsel of family information his daughter described and told her often how pleased he was we were in contact.

After the phone call on that St. Pat's Day, we joined neighbors to have green beer at a local pub. I toasted the first cousins, Sully and Skinny (my dad's nickname), first cousins par excellence.

The draw of ancestors was felt in another corner in 1993. A couple of months after St. Patrick's Day, friends in Tucson called and wondered if we wanted to come and stay in their ancestral castle in northern Scotland. Hey, you don't get these offers every day. We accepted. As I got into my full anticipation mode for the trip, I began thinking about the Scottish relatives my mother often mentioned. I got out all my old genealogy records and began studying more about the Munros of Arboath.

The time to research trips and ancestors came just as I began to settle into becoming unimportant. We had maintained some importance and income by teaching at the University in Eugene and continuing to supervise doctoral students at Walden University. The two terms of teaching in Eugene necessitated weekly overnight stays. It turned out to be an enjoyable opportunity to organize classes and to visit all our old friends. Walden students provided contacts

around the U.S. and abroad, income, and the total absence of faculty meetings. After years of faculty duty, it seemed about right.

In September 1993 we traveled to England and stayed in fine digs in Mayfair in London and then went by BritRail up to Edinburgh on The Flying Scotsman. The coastal scenery along the way was spectacular. We rented a car in Edinburgh and angled on up and over to Arbroath. In a sun break kind of day in September, just days before my 49th birthday, I found the church where my great, great, great grandparents had been married. Then we found the Abbey Burial Ground where a great, great, great, great grandfather had been buried. The grave maker was made of iron, the only one of its kind in the burial ground. My ancestors had owned and operated a local iron foundry and I imagined my relative saying to himself, "Yea, I can make an iron marker that will last the ages, better than those stones." He was wrong. The marker was rusting away. Jack picked up pieces on the ground beside the marker, and I put them in a plastic bag and brought them home.

At trip's end in October I knew what I must do. "I will write a story about these ancestors, a historical fiction story," I said. As the rains and inclement weather began, I was reading book after book about Scotland from 1700-1900. I was tracing the highland story of the Munros and seeking our highland plaid. Could I write such a story? Would anybody want to read it if I did? I was very unsure of the answer to either of these questions.

Life in Charbonneau was beginning to take shape after a couple of years of living here. Our garden was beautiful, nurtured carefully by Jack. I began facilitating Great Decision groups in the local library and conducted a book group for 'older' woman. The group was to end after 8 weeks. A year later they were still meeting and I found the roles reversed. I was the one learning from these 'older' women. At the beginning of my 50th year I could not imagine a better group to have around me.

# 1916

I think this is the last time I will be writing to you. I have this day, September 16, signed a codicil to my will that made my daughter Nora a co-executor. It seemed right to do because Daniel is gone so often out of the area on business, and Nora is good at such matters.

I made my last will and testament in October 1914. My health dictated I begin doing this. I have few personal goods, but I do own 160 acres in Iowa. All of my children agreed the best arrangement was to leave the property to my son John. John's blindness has made it impossible for him to work and the proceeds from the property can maintain him for as long as he lives. After he dies, and I think he will die young, the property can be sold and distributed among my other children. It seems fair to all. The only other important item was to make sure masses be said for me and mine. I know this will happen as long as my children are alive. After they are gone, well, I thought it best to start a fund at the Fairbury bank. This is the way the lawyers put it: "a fund for saying masses for the repose of the deceased's soul and that of his wife and his father and mother." None of my children remember my mother and father and this way my parents always will be a part of Fairbury. I feel better having it this way.

All of my children are now married, except John. I have many grandchildren and I am fortunate that most of them live near me. My two oldest daughters live near one another in Berwyn, outside Chicago. I don't see them as much because their lives have been different since moving to the city. My sons are all farmers, except for John. Three sons live near Weston with their families, and my oldest son, Jerry, lives in Iowa. My youngest children, James and Nora, are both married and live near each other outside Chenoa, just a few miles from me. We all got out of the mines and for that I am extremely grateful.

Nora has been my right arm since her mother died in 1901. She has cared for me since Honora died. Nora married in 1903, just before Lent, just like Honora and I back in Ireland so long ago. It was a fine wedding and made even more so because it was celebrated in the new St. John's Church in Fairbury which we had all worked so hard to build. Nora and her husband, Will, were the second couple married in the new church. I am very proud of Nora and her two sons. Nora and Will and my grandsons, Johnny and Ray, currently live on the place owned by Ann Raddick in Eppards Point township. They are renting a quarter section, but maybe they can own their own land some day. My youngest son, James, is also married. He lives and farms 240 acres owned by his mother in law, Mrs. Hartnett, in Pike township.

As I think of my family, I see they will carry on with or without me. That is how it should be. I have seen a lot in my years on this earth, and I continue to see and think about the things that go on around me. I seemed destined to die at a time that is tumultuous for the land of my birth and my adopted nation.

Here in America, which I now think of as home, we are divided on how we view the war in Europe. Some of us want to stay out of the war, others want to fight with the allies, and the

others, mostly German Americans, want to fight with the Germans. President Wilson has managed to keep us out of the war, but he is also building a standing army and reserves. Our election is in a few weeks, and if Wilson wins, we will probably not go to war, at least that is what he says now. I do not trust him, though, and I think he wants to fight with the allies. I do not want a son or grandson of mine to fight with the allies. I cannot imagine any Sullivan man fighting beside an Englishman as comrades. Let me tell you why.

Since the outbreak of The Great War in 1914 the British government suspended the Home Rule Bill which guaranteed some political autonomy to Ireland. The uproar at home (I sometimes call Erin home) was immediate and a citizen army grew. An armed rebellion took place earlier this year in Dublin on Easter Monday, April 24. Some say the Germans assisted the Irish so the English would be diverted from fighting the European War. I don't think that was true. It was an irish Rebellion through and through. On the first day of the Rebellion the leaders proclaimed independence for Ireland. The British staged a counteroffensive and our leaders had to surrender five days later. The leaders were brought to trial and executed by a firing squad. As the word got out about these English deeds, all Americans, not just Irish Americans, were appalled over the atrocity committed by the English. Under these conditions, I can't ever imagine Wilson being able to get Americans to join the Allies in the war. It could never happen.

But as in family matters, it is probably not for me to say. My time for influencing things is nearly over. I have enjoyed writing to you. It has brought back memories, and I realize it also brings hope for what you will experience in your lives. I do not know when you will be reading this, but whenever it is I hope you will remember your Irish forebears with affection and with feelings of connection. I cannot imagine what your life is like, but I have taken pleasure in telling you about mine. It has stirred memories and thoughts and feelings that have not surfaced for a long time.

There were many memories I did not want to think about, but because I wanted you to know, I did. My childhood, as you can tell, had more than its share of difficulties. Thinking back to the years of the famine and afterwards, I wonder how we lived through it. By writing to you I came to appreciate even more what my father and family endured during those years. For those of us who did not die, we learned to endure and go on.

I also acknowledge to you, and I must do it to my brother as well, how important and influential he has been in my life. If it were not for him, I would not be here. He is my older brother and has always been one of the persons I have admired most in this world. He and I have shared all these years and trials together and nothing pleases me more than having him live close to me now. His family and my family have grown up together in America. He, more than anyone, even Honora, knows what this life has brought me.

Writing this has also helped me remember better years with Honora. As her life turned out, I had been left with sad memories of her later years. Writing has helped me remember the bride and the young woman who so courageously left Ireland with two young children, having lost one already in infancy, and moving to an unknown land leaving her family behind. In those early years in America, Honora tried the best she could in a land and language that were strange, and

children who were becoming Americans and losing their Irish ways. Maybe all of this was too much for her. I do not know. I know she tried the best she could.

I have not told you as much about my children as I would have liked. Eight children and the stories of being with eight people as they grow up is the most miraculous thing I have observed in my life. Because of my early experience of my mother dying when I was young, I was robbed of having the experiences I saw my children have with each other. My children had two parents for all of their young lives, and although we had struggles, we had nothing as difficult as I experienced in Ireland. I am pleased my children have bonded together as they have. My two oldest daughters live within blocks of one another now and share as two sisters can. Three of my sons worked together for years selling their wares and now they farm with each other. My youngest two have always had a special relationship. And all have taken responsibility for their brother who is blind.

Life has been hard. Work has been hard. I have tried to do what is right. As this life ebbs away, I feel closer to those in the past and see how these connections have made me who I am. And, I suppose, who I am has been passed on in some way to my children and to their children and probably will be to their children's children. This is the web of which we are all a part.

Please examine my life. Understand my roots, as they are your roots. Take from me what you can and learn from it. I am Irish. I am American. I am a coal miner. I am a farmer. I am a family man: son, brother, father, grandfather, uncle, and many other relationships that connect us to all those living and dead.

When you think of me, think of my life and times and what I had to endure and what I got to cherish. Use my experience to examine your own experience and your connections to others. Start wherever you want. We always get to the same place, no matter where you start. I hope you can think fondly of me.

Erin Go Bragh!

# 1994

In January 1994 I was engaged in two new activities. First, after three months of researching Scotland and my Scottish family, I knew it was time to start writing. I had put it off long enough. I had also read 10 books about writing fiction, and more particularly, historical fiction. The fact that stuck in my head was that you only use 10% of what you read. I felt some comfort in that because I knew more about 18th century Scottish farming practices than anyone had a right to know. But how was I to translate this historical and family knowledge into a story? I finally decided just to start. I did.

A second effort was starting a new group. After establishing a video discussion group regarding the mind and its effect on healing, I asked if anyone wanted to study further together. Five women said yes. Two had cancer and one had open heart surgery within the last couple of years. The other two just liked to talk 'philosophy' whether it be about health or other issues. So we started to meet weekly with the intention of meeting eight weeks.

Progress on the writing was slow and discouraging. I wrote and read and it seemed to make little sense, and worse, it was boring, even to me. So I rewrote and rewrote. It went like that for a couple of months. Spring brought news that my Uncle Don's cancer had reoccurred. Not only was that personally disturbing news, but it affected the writing project since my main motivation for doing it was for family members, particularly this family member.

As Don redoubled his efforts on dealing with his challenge, I redoubled my efforts in trying to finish a product. My efforts and his converged in June as he was in treatment and I sent off the last section to him. On July 1 he sent me a letter with an enclosed sealed envelope that said, "Do not open until September 24." On that day I would turn 50. Don's note coincided with the day he was to start a 30-day radiation treatment. The message was clear. He might not make it to September 24, but he wanted his letter to be read then. I kept the envelope, unopened, in a place where I would note its presence. I knew I would not open it early, no matter what.

Birthdays should be celebrated, especially the decade variety. I started early. I called 10 of my Midwest friends, most of them turning 50 as well, and suggested we get together on June 10 at Baby Bulls in Pontiac, Illinois, as Jack and I were coming to the Midwest. I got a 100% response and enthusiastic yes from all. Kathleen Sullivan Tedrick was one of the head nodders. June 11 came, and we all gathered and had one heck of a party. All arrived except Kathleen. She left a message at Baby Bulls saying she had waited until the last moment thinking she would be better, but pneumonia can't be ignored.

My birthday came and I opened Don's sealed envelope to find a wonderful poem. I finished reading it and just then the phone rang. It was Don. We did celebrate the birthday together and his health prospects were remarkably better.

While I was in Illinois in June, I took photographs in all the cemeteries of my family and ancestors. Among those was St. John's Catholic Cemetery in Fairbury. I had not been there since I visited with my dad in 1975. I had the pictures developed and put them in a new picture album. At the same time I thought I should start another family writing project, but who should I do. I had just finished a story on Mom's side of the family, so Dad's side seemed appropriate. But should I go Ripley or Sullivan? I knew more about the Sullivans so that was the way to go. I contacted Kathleen and told her of my intention. She was very enthusiastic, which provided even more motivation.

I started to read books about Ireland. I felt the challenge ahead of me and knew from last year's experience that there was a lot of uphill work before I would ever feel the downhill side of the project. This time I felt I could do it. I started and felt more confident of my ability in researching and organizing, even if I knew my writing was less than stellar.

In the late summer and fall I wrote to many places for more information on the Sullivans. The contacts were wide ranging. I wrote the current parish priest in Fairbury, Illinois, thinking he might just love to look through the records and pull out tidbits about my ancestors. I was wrong. I requested several birth and death certificates, received a few, and learned legal documentation was not required until after 1916 in our home county. I wrote to obtain Patrick Sullivan's will. Yes, they had a will and would I like it? Why of course I would. I wrote back immediately, but it was a month before it arrived. The will led me to the land Patrick owned in Iowa and I sent for all the transaction records on that property. Next I wrote the Genealogical Office in Dublin to trace further back in Ireland and also sent a copy of the same letter to Limerick.

Limerick responded immediately with the lure of further information, if I would only send money. I did. I wrote the Fairbury Public Library and attempted to get historical information on the city. They sent a form letter indicating they do not do research, but sent me the name of a local woman who did. A week or so later I received a hand written letter on yellow tablet paper from the woman. She could research for me at $5 an hour. She was sure she had seen the Sullivan name in prior searches and was on good terms with the local parish priest. I did not respond to her. I cast a few more lines, such as writing to an Illinois State University professor who specialized in Irish immigration in the Midwest. No response. In between all the writing for information, I was gathering census record after census record as I tracked both Patrick and his brother from 1870-1920. I finally heard from the Genealogical Office in Dublin on December 27 two months after my request. It was not very helpful, and essentially said to contact offices in Limerick. I mailed what they had sent me that day to Limerick and asked them to send me information as soon as possible.

At Christmas I sent off what meager information I had to my niece and nephews. I sent the same information to cousin Kathleen.

On other fronts, the mind/body study group continued to meet. The initial eight weeks ended in early March when one member's husband died and another member had major surgery. We had bonded and wanted to continue as a group. September brought another member's husband's death, and by year's end I was spending the week between Christmas and

New Years reading a fiction book about dying to our member who was bedridden in her home with her children rotating care taking. Her days seemed numbered.

# 1922

My name is Jerry Sullivan. My brother Patrick died on March 6, 1917, of jaundice in St. Joseph's Hospital in Bloomington, Illinois. In looking through his papers I found what he has written to you. It touched me deeply, and I wanted to add more. At 85 I have experienced a lot of loss in my life, but none compares to what I have experienced since Patrick died five years ago.

My wife, Mary, died in 1910. My brother and I were widowers together for over seven years before he died. We did not live together, but we both knew the isolation of outliving a spouse. I cannot say I am lonely, physically, because I live with one of my sons and two of my daughters and one grandchild. We are a family of middle age children, a child of 11, and a very old father and grandfather. Considering I am so old, I am in pretty good health. We live on the same 100 acres we have farmed for quite some time in Fairbury, Illinois, Indian Grove township.

I can tell you the terms of my brother's will have been carried out. The land in Iowa is valued at $32,000 and my nephew John benefits from the profits of the land. My niece, Nora, acted well in her capacity as executrix and paid all notes and funeral expenses and had a marker put up in the Fairbury cemetery where my wife is also buried. I often go over to the cemetery and just stay for a while. My wife and my brother are buried within a few feet of one another, and that gives me comfort.

I don't mean to dwell on death, but at my time of life that is reality. Forgive me. I do want to tell you of other things. Things my brother would have wanted you to understand.

The events in my dear Ireland have been hard to comprehend from a distance, but the outcome is clear. After the Easter Rebellion, the Sinn Fein continued their agitation which led us to the Irish Revolution. In 1919 the Sinn Fein proclaimed independence from Great Britain and formed a government with a new president. Attacks back and forth between the Irish and British forces were heinous to read about in the paper. Two years ago the British Parliament provided for separate parliaments, one for Northern Ireland, another for the rest of Ireland. In reality Britain still retained control of Irish affairs. Northern Ireland complied with the legislation and elected their own parliament. Sinn Feiners refused to comply and continued to war until last July when a truce was arranged. By the terms of the treaty all of Ireland, except Northern Ireland, would receive dominion status, just like Canada. The treaty was ratified this year on January 15. We now have an Irish Free State with Arthur Griffith as president. As far as I can tell, hardly anyone is pleased with the agreement. I fear there will be more deaths and more agitation. It will not settle anything soon. This I can assure you.

I miss not being able to discuss these things with Patrick. He and I would follow events in Ireland and discuss them at great length. We are American citizens by naturalization, but Irish by birth. Our feet were in America, but most often our hearts were in Ireland.

I do not know what else to tell you. I can speak of the love and concern I had for my brother. He was my younger brother, and because we were so much younger than our siblings, it seemed we were destined to be together. It is true I was the one to go first to America, save money, and send it back to Patrick. I knew we could all have a better life in America. Of this I was certain. Yes, I ventured out and made a start here, but the truth of it is that it would have not have meant nearly as much if I did not know I was going not only for myself, but for my brother and later for my own family.

It is hard to imagine this life I have led without my brother. I could not be more pleased that our grown families are so close. It is the closest ties we have. Nora visits us often, as do the rest of Patrick's sons. This will continue. I know it.

Four of us came from Ireland. Patrick and Honora came after they were married, and Mary and I married after we arrived. Now I am the only one of the original four left. I am the one who remembers Ireland, and our families back home. When I am gone, the connection will be broken. I say this not out of sadness but recognition of how things change and life goes on.

Let me end by saying I am as pleased with my American heritage as my Irish roots. Both made me. Both made my brother. Some of both will be passed on to you.

# 1927

My name is Nora Sullivan Ripley. I am 50 and I want to add some pieces to this family story. At this half century marker I can see ahead and I can see behind. It is from this perch I would like to talk with you. I feel inhibited writing, but stronger than my inhibition, is my need to talk with you.

I was 40 when my father, Patrick, died in 1917, and 24 when my mother died in 1901. What my father has written brings two thoughts to my mind. First, was his love for Ireland, even though the land and times were harsh for him. All experiences have a way of dimming and I would imagine that in his later years he only remembered the good about Ireland. Second, I was impressed with how he described his affection for his brother. I knew their relationship was special, different, and whatever other words you might use to describe two brothers going through life together. I do not mean to say he did not love my mother. He did, but the life path he followed with his brother was as important as the paths he followed with my mother and his children. I think my father thought no one but his brother Jerry really understood him. Maybe he was right. I know they spent long, countless hours together discussing all matter of things. Mostly they discussed Ireland and the old days in their last years together. There seemed to be feelings and words that need not be shared. They just understood that each other knew.

I saw the sadness my uncle Jerry bore the years he lived without my father as a confident. My uncle Jerry died in 1924 within months of my brother John. My uncle was 88 and my brother was 58. Both are buried in St. John's Cemetery in Fairbury, Illinois. As Father requested, we sold the land that had provided funds to my brother as soon as possible and divided it among the rest of us.

What does one learn from parents and the older generation? I am just beginning to understand, or if I don't understand it, I at least am beginning to appreciate it. I know my father always wanted roots. I think he felt without roots because his mother died so early in his life and he left Ireland as such a young man. He wanted more than anything else to have land and be able to pass it on to his family, unlike his father was able to do. To him, owning land was a symbol that you have a right to be here.

He wanted all of us to know about Ireland. I have heard the stories and I can appreciate the difficulties, but I do not really know. Ireland is different from the Illinois prairie that is in my bones, but I do not know how much different. What I do know is I will never see where my parents were born and lived their early lives. There is no reason for me to go. My life is here.

I am concerned about these times. From all outward signs things seem good. The stock market is booming and people are optimistic. We are living under Prohibition, and I approve hardily of that. Prohibition really came about because of another major change that occurred on my 43rd birthday. On August 26, 1920, women got the right to vote. The liquor lobby had been against this vote because they knew women would use their vote for Prohibition. They were right.

This young generation of women will take it for granted they can vote, but the sacrifices of many have made this possible. I have voted Democratic and intend to continue the same.

Life on other fronts seem to be changing very rapidly, and unlike Prohibition, I do not approve of most of it. People in the cities are transforming. We hear of jazz, new dances, and bootlegging. Even the young women around here are dressing different and bobbing their hair. I don't approve. Even my boys do the new dances, like the Charleston. I wonder where it will all lead. Earlier this year Charles Lindbergh flew across the Atlantic. I cannot imagine the world getting that small. My father took 63 days to cross the Atlantic in 1863 and Lucky Lindy took 33 hours just 57 years later. Can that be real?

Let me tell you a little about myself. I am a farm wife. Will and I have been married for almost 25 years and rent land from Stokes family in Eppards Point Township. Our oldest son, Johnny, is 24. He is a big man, over 6'4" and handsome. Ray is our second son. Everyone calls him Skinny. Skinny is just as handsome, but he does not have his brother's height and thus has always felt a bit cheated. Ray, I never call him Skinny, is 19 and lives and works at home with us. He has farmed full time since 9th grade. What I have seen between my sons is some of what I can imagine between my father Patrick and his brother Jerry.

I have moved very little. I live within 15 miles of where I was born in Fairbury, Illinois. We live across from the Ocoya Elevator. Even here we are experiencing some change. Last year we got a hard road which is slab all the way into Pontiac. They named it Route 66 after a lot of fussing about what numbers to use. We just call it the hard road. The new road makes me think we will have more travelers. Up to this time, I would have told you that cars were just a nuisance. Cars always heated up, tires were not good, and the roads were awful and unmarked. When it rained, the axles would fill up with mud and you had to count on a neighbor with horses to pull you out. I can see the hard road is changing that. There has been an awful lot of fuss about this road. They say it is going to go from Chicago to Los Angeles. I cannot believe it. Illinois is the first state to have the road paved all the way. We used the same road before it was paved to take the grain to market, but this will definitely make it more dependable. It makes it easier to get to Fairbury and see my relatives, so it is an advantage to me.

After my father died, I spent as much time as I could with Uncle Jerry. He was my only living connection to my parents. As Uncle Jerry wrote you, he was not alone. In his later years he lived with his son John and daughters Elizabeth and Margaret. They still all live together as a family. In many ways I am closer to them than some of my own brothers, and certainly my sisters. My cousins are closer in age, and because of father's relationship to Uncle Jerry, we spent a lot of time together after my brothers had grown and left to live their lives. The exception is my brother James. We have remained close and so have our children.

Family, roots, connections...what does it all mean? If someone would ask me what my parents gave me, I would probably stammer and not come up with a very good, or even an accurate, answer. It sometimes takes years to sift and sort through the experiences that left their imprint on you and to understand what they mean. Perhaps, more important, is what passes through you to to others. I would imagine that if you read this anytime in your 'later' years you will be trying to

answer the same queries. I think we all experience that sorting and sifting if we are fortunate to live long enough.

I hope you get to live that long. Maybe some of what I have been has been filtered and sifted down to you. I wonder.

# 1995, April

I felt closer to the Sullivans than I did six months ago. I came to know these people and appreciate the challenges they had in life. As I compiled facts, I made out notecards for each known fact of both Patrick and brother Jerry and then put them in chronological order. I had green notecards for Jerry and yellow notecards for Patrick. My frustration grew as I would learn new facts and they would contradict earlier facts I had gleaned. For example, I had five different years verified by different records as to the year of Patrick's birth. As I started to write I had to pick a year of his birth. I picked 1839 because in the 1900 census each person is asked what year they were born. Patrick said 1839 and I figured he knew. I could be wrong.

I was elated in early March when I received a lengthy report from Limerick giving me information about not only where Patrick was baptized, but where his wife Honora and the children of Patrick and Honora were baptized, a gold mine. But the report said Patrick was born on October 29, 1834, in Monagay Parish. I was already far into my writing using 1839 as his birth date. I figured I would not change what I had written. My reasoning went something like this. If Patrick in 1900 thought he was born in 1839, then that's when he thought he was born. Reader, you should realize some of his experiences, as far as his age, might be five years off. That's just the way it is, genealogists get use to this.

I waited for the Limerick report for over two months. The explanation for the delay in sending was illness of the administrator. I did note the report was generated on February 28, 1995, which would have been my brother Ray's 60th birthday, fine gift for Ray and me.

In March, after a few months of debating about where we would like to live, we found a lot in Eugene, Oregon, we liked, 100 miles down the road and back to where we had lived and worked before. We put the house up for sale on March 14. While waiting for a sale, we planned a trip to England, and hopefully a side trip to Ireland which would include a trip to Limerick and the parishes of the early Sullivans.

My grandmother, Nora Sullivan Ripley, died when I was 9 1/2. My father, being a very dutiful son, usually did what his mother wanted. One of those things was take his mother to Fairbury nearly every Saturday night when I was young. I recall this quite clearly, but until this project I was uncertain who we were visiting. I knew it was Grandma's relatives, but I was uncertain who. I now can make a good guess, it was her first cousins, the children of her Uncle Jerry. As I am now piecing it together, Grandma was the last of her family still alive in the early 1950's. All of her 7 siblings had died. Her first cousins were her remaining tie to the Sullivans. This brother and two sisters were still alive and remained on the farm until they died. My grandmother was visiting her closest relatives.

This project made me realize that I, and my father, and my grandmother share another fact. We are the last to survive in each of our nuclear families. My grandmother outlived her last

sibling by 14 years, my father outlived his brother by 13 years, and I have outlived my parents and brother. Perhaps it is the last survivors who cling the most to what was.

I tend to view it another way. Those who remain perhaps see the necessity for sharing and passing on what is known and what can only be guessed. We are the conduit between the past, the present, and the future. I gained from trying to understand my Irish past. The land, the people, and the times are fascinating to understand. When one has a personal foothold in the history and how it has affected people, it brings it all alive. The best was yet to come. I was to find the O'Sullivans in just another two months.

# 1995, June

It is often said the most accurate record is the one written at the time it is happening. This is the email I sent to my Illinois Sullivan cousins on June 19, 1995, in Limerick, Ireland, on our trusty laptop when on the adventure of finding the O'Sullivans.

Greetings from O'Sullivan land!

What a last couple of days I have had. I have thought of you all often and Jack can tell you I have talked of you more. I will write you a longer version when I return but I wanted to give you a flavor on the day when I actually met some O'Sullivans from the old country, and perhaps, even the old homestead.

Our trek started yesterday when I had the materials in hand generated by the family research center in Limerick. I knew I wanted to find five places. They were:

Mahoonagh, the parish village where Patrick Sullivan and Honora Creedon were married February 14, 1857

Killeedy, the parish village where Patrick and Honora Sullivan baptized three children in 1857, 1860, and 1862

Cloonsherick, the townland area where Honora Creedon Sullivan was born on April 27, 1833

Monagay, the parish village where Patrick Sullivan was baptized on October 29, 1834

Glenshaska, the townland area where Patrick Sullivan (and his brother Jerry) were born according to the baptismal records from Monagay

In my scenario I figured Patrick Sullivan was born in Glenshaska, although I did not understand the definition of a townland, and went to the church in Monagay. He met Honora Creedon (how I don't know) who was born in Cloonsherick, another townland, and she went to church in Mahoonagh where they married. As a couple, they moved to Killeedy before coming to America. I knew these places were all very small and were all within 15 miles of one another.

With the most detailed map we could find of Limerick County, we tried first to find Mahoonagh where Patrick Sullivan and Honora Creedon were married. We later learned Mahoonagh is also called Castlemahon, which made finding a very small place even more confusing. Mahoonagh is about 40 minutes south of Limerick. After some faulty starts on several small roads, we stopped at a nice looking house on a Sunday afternoon and a Mrs. O'C had us right in. She deferred to her husband, a thing I would say often happens. Within a half an hour we had explicit instructions for all of our five stops and been urged several times by Mr. O'C to stay for tea and Irish whiskey, and not particularly in that order. We countered with the

importance of our task and he told us we were in Ireland now, "what doesn't get done today, will get done tomorrow." He shared tons of opinions about Ireland and how Americans expected to come over and find them in cottages with a pig in the corner. He also shared a number of opinions about current Irish life, such as schools declining as soon as corporal punishment went out the door. He has very well behaved sons, though, and one wonders how he has done it. These teenage sons not only turned off the TV (which was on a sports event), but went out of the room. Then one came back with pen and paper his father might need to give us instructions without being told to do so. I was impressed.

As Mr. O'C was sharing opinions with us nonstop, his wife was out in another room looking up past Mahoonagh parish records and came across the name of Creedon several times and brought that in for us to view. We left feeling we had not only directions but a sense of the current community where Honora Creedon Sullivan had been raised. I also feel we could have stayed not only through tea, but supper as well.

Mr. O'C told us the actual church building where Honora and Patrick were married no longer existed but described where the old ground of the church was. We found that place and it is the location of the current school. A church graveyard of former pastors still existed on the school grounds. About a 1/4 mile down the road was the new church which was built much later. Mahoonagh consisted of a small store and a few other buildings. It was about double the size of the mighty town of Ocoya!

The next trek was to find the parish where our Patrick and Honora Sullivan baptized the three children born in Ireland before coming to America in 1863. As was the custom of the day, they married in the parish of the bride (Mahoonagh), but moved to the groom's parish, called Killeedy. Killeedy is about five miles from Mahoonagh. Again we found a new church built in 1942 with the burials of a number of past pastors in the front yard. About 200 yards from the church was a burial ground which was on the same site as a very old Abbey. The burial grounds were covered with O'Sullivans stones and I took a picture of the old, crumbling, grass-and moss-covered Abbey with a stark, black O'Sullivan gravemarker in front. I can only speculate what Honora and Patrick did in Killeedy. We might assume many O'Sullivans lived in the area and Patrick found his way from his birth parish of Monagay and townland of Glenshaska to Killeedy before setting off for America.

As the first day of searching for the O'Sullivans ended, I felt quite successful in finding their marriage parish and the parish they lived in for three years after their marriage and before coming to America. We made an aborted attempt to find Cloonsherick, but at the time we did not understand townlands were not signposted. A Creedon still resides in Cloonsherick today and Mr. O'C had given us instructions how to find him.

On June 19 we set out with the intention of going back yet one more generation and finding the townland and parish where Patrick Sullivan was born and where his parents Jerry O'Sullivan and Mary Calvert lived. First we tried to find the parish where Patrick and his brother Jerry were baptized in the 1830's. Its name is Monagay. It is only five miles from Mahoonagh and Killeedy, but five miles would have been a long way in that day and over this sometimes hilly terrain. We

stopped in the nearby market town of Newcastle West (population approximately 20,000) to get instructions. In the Sullivans day this was the nearest "large" town. A local bank teller told us she currently lived in Monagay parish. She was not born there, she stated, but "had married into the place." I thought that an interesting phrase, like the land became a part of you as soon as you married into it.

We ventured the three or so miles to Monagay from Newcastle West. Monagay consisted of a school, the church, a couple of buildings, and the graveyard. It was a Monday. As we approached the treelined gravel road up to the church, there were four cars there. It was about 9:30 and Jack and I wondered who might be there and then speculated it was a mass. We were right. We went into the back of the church and could hear the booming voice of the priest as he said mass to five women and one elderly man in attendance. Jack and I wound our way up the small choir loft stairs and listened from the loft as he ended the gospel and led his small flock through the rest of the mass. The priest exited and then those remaining started the rosary. We wandered outside in the mist and discovered this church was built in 1842. Minutes later the priest was tooling down the gravel road. We stopped him and he said come back later in the day to his house to view the baptismal records. Smiling from ear to ear I said yes. We then went back into the church and looked more carefully. In one corner we noted a marker for a former priest named John Donovan who in all likelihood would have been the priest who baptized Patrick Sullivan and his brother Jerry back in the 1830's.

We went back to Newcastle West and to the local library and gathered a few materials about each of the parish villages we had visited. We again tried to get instructions to the townland, Glenshaska, where the O'Sullivans had lived in the 1830s. We learned the day before from Mr. O'C that there was still an O'Sullivan living on the land today. The townland area was known through the parish records of the baptism for Patrick recorded at Monagay parish in 1834. We knew, through these records, the townland area was called Glenshaska and it was the baptismal records that placed the O'Sullivans on the land. Townlands, I learned the next day from the family researcher in Limerick, are basic rural subdivisions and vary in size. Some contain one or two farms, others more. Glenshaska, I gather, contained a number of farms. The problem was....where was Glenshaska since it was not indicated on any map. Local residents in Newcastle West tried to give us instructions of going out of town 7 miles and then stopping at the Devon Inn for lunch and asking further instructions. That sounded like a plan.

We had lunch and got instructions from a young woman in her 20's. She told me to go "over the bad bridge and turn left." She made it quite clear that if we went to the top of the hill we had gone the wrong way. I asked how I would know it was Glenshaska. She said there was no sign, shrugged her shoulders, and said, "you just knew." It was only suppose to be three miles or so from the Devon Inn but the roads were getting smaller and smaller and the rain was beginning to come down steady.

After going up to the top of the hill, we knew we had gone the wrong way. We backtracked and started again. The rain was coming down more steady. On this very secondary, narrow road, I spied a very old woman coming out her farm house door. We stopped and I went up to the door

and asked how to find the O'Sullivan farm. She seemed very confused and unsure of her ability to give instructions. Finally, she gained some confidence, held my hand, and said, "take the next gap and it is the first house on the left." Back into the car and a few hundred more yards and we took the "first gap" to the left and found a very small old house and old outer buildings. There were two dogs in a pen and I told Jack perhaps he should come up to the door with me. The keys were in the door lock and I knocked. A man dressed in work clothes and high rubber boats came to the door. I asked if he was Mr. O'Sullivan and he said "just Con."

Con is a bachelor, probably in his late 50's. He was somewhat shy. As we tried to decipher the story it was clear his parents and grandparents and probably great grandparents had lived on this place. His mother had died within the year. When I asked to see a picture of his dad, he got me the mass card from his funeral and said it was the only picture he had of him. We took a picture of the oldest piece of furniture which he said had always been in the house. It was hard for me to understand his speech but Jack caught more of it. As Jack understood it, he had 60+ acres, but he sold off all but 17 acres of it just two weeks ago. He would remain living in the house. As it was clear I was interested in family stories, Con said a first cousin lived up the road and could say more. He tried to tell us his cousin was a veterinarian. He did use the word veterinarian but said something like, "he heals animals."

One story that struck me was Con saying his father was from a family of 14. Twelve had emigrated to the U.S. and the other one had died. That is why Con's father had the land. Con has two siblings but neither are attached to the land. We left Con and I was ready to stop the hunt feeling quite successful in finding an O'Sullivan in Glenshaska. Jack said, "Let's try to find the vet." Off we went down the increasingly narrow road. We again lost our way and a old man was out in the road trying to see what we were doing. It was clear we were not local. This older gentlemen was nearly impossible to understand and he was going back and forth between English and Gaelic. When I asked specifically how to find John O'Sullivan he clearly said, "go down to the bottom of the hill, turn right, and it is the very nice house on your right." The very was really emphasized.

We got to John's place and it was very nice. It is part way up the hill with the views of green rolling pastures divided by green hedges. Quite idyllic. He, his wife, and three children were in the middle of lunch when we called. They quickly ate their meal and then got out all family records and we had a delightful hour plus with them. John O'Sullivan had about a 12 inch pile of material regarding his family. He interspersed genealogy information with bits of homespun philosophy he got out of his very fat wallet. Evidently, whenever he finds something inspiring, he clips it and puts it in this wallet. For us, he was trying to find something written when his father had died over two decades ago. The papers were very worn and smooth in his wallet, but he successfully found the right piece and read it to us. We talked of family history and Irish history. When we discussed the 1846 famine, John told us potato blight reports are still aired on the radio. He gave us a clear description of the spore-born disease that comes in on the ocean winds and settles on the crops and how they deal with it today.

As we were sharing stories, John's wife, Joan, and her daughter were making sandwiches, sweet tray, and tea and brought it in the drawing room and served. It is possible we come from the same O'Sullivan families. Ironically, they had one gap in their records which indicated a relative of theirs was Jerry O'Sullivan. It is probably, or at least quite likely, Patrick's father, or his first cousin. This is further verified by the great similarity in Christian names between our two families. Their Christian names again and again were Jerry, Con, Daniel, John...the same names Patrick used for his male children. I had a little of feeling of Alex Haley in *Roots* as we looked at these names together and realized the similarities and possibly the missing Jerry was the link for both of us. As we left John described perplexity that we had dropped the O' from Sullivan. I tried to describe that's just what happened in the new land, but even I was sorry we dropped the O' by the end of the visit.

Two days later, after seeing a bit more of Ireland, we had a sunny day. I told Jack we owned it to the O'Sullivans to see the land on a "good" day so we once again drove out to Glenshaska. The views were spectacular and we took several pictures of Patrick O'Sullivan's great granddaughter on his birth land.

# 2012

I am now 68, the age my father was when he died. It has now been nearly 40 years since I stood with my father at the cemetery writing down all the information he knew about the Sullivans and nearly 20 years since I began the research and writing on this project. On one level I finished this project in 1996 when I met with my Sullivan cousins at the Fairbury, Illinois, cemetery on June 9, 1996, after the trip to Ireland and then a summer trip with Jack to Illinois. I was ready to go to another project and I did, which was searching for my German relatives. Astounding I found a German cousin online, and in 2002 traveled to German to close the gap in that family relationship, but that is another story.

The epilogue I wrote in 1996 included this.

Since returning I have written John O'Sullivan and sent him a draft copy of In Search of the Sullivans. I included pictures of us taken at their home. I wrote Con as well, and wait, wondering if either will respond.

I also sent pictures and the above description of the Irish visit to some of my Midwest relatives. This project, for now, is coming to an end. I researched, I read, I wrote, I visited, I reported, I rewrote, and now I am beginning to relegate the whole effort into the memory bank part of my brain.

The effort has far exceeded my expectations. I not only feel a connection with the Sullivans I never knew who emigrated in the 1860's, but I had a number of pleasant encounters with the Sullivans of my youth in the development of this project. Meeting O'Sullivans on the original land area of my great great grandparents was not even imagined at the beginning of this effort. Who would have thought such a thing.

Now is the time to thank those who have helped me. Several friends read versions of this story, and as good friends do, they cheered. Their names are Cheryl, Anise, Connie, Bob, Mildred, Angela, Neta Kaye, and Jennifer. And, as always, Uncle Don, even though he is not a Sullivan, cheers relentlessly from his Arizona post. Irene D. Bittner, a volunteer Family Researcher with the Circuit Court in Bloomington, Illinois, went far beyond my expectations in being helpful in securing my great grandfather's will. Mary Pyne, a research assistant at the Limerick Regional Archives, in Limerick, Ireland, wrote a fact-based, clear report that set us up to visit the five locations in Limerick County. Meeting her was a special delight.

Jack's contributions are to continue to make me a better writer, which means he cheers and then he says, "if I crossed out had one more time in your writing, I was going to scream." Then he went ahead and crossed out had, changed that to who, and made numerous marks on every page. It is his edited copy I keep. It is the one that teaches me. Jack was also driver in Ireland as I

navigated us from point to point. His enthusiasm for the search made it twice as rewarding. But, then again, he has always been a great travel partner, and just plain partner.

As I read the epilogue from 1996, seven of the family/friends I mentioned who helped me with this project have died including my husband and uncle. Life has a way of taking those who are so very special and are your constant cheerleaders.

In June 2010 just two months after my husband Jack died, John O'Sullivan from Ireland contacted me as he had found Jack's obituary online and wanted to express his sympathy and also tell me he had been doing much more family research. At the time I could do no more than acknowledge his email. As two more years passed, I was ready to do more. By that time I had started a small ebook publishing effort and was making an effort to save and share the writings important to both Jack and myself.

In October 2012 I reconnected with John O'Sullivan and read all the well documented material he had researched and written since I met him on that chance encounter on June 19, 1995, which I might add would not have happened if Jack had not said, "let's find the vet." So the 'vet' and I have had many email exchanges and now understand where we both fit in our life stories, our shared Irish roots.

At this juncture in my life I am thankful for so many things and all the people who have been in my life and those who came before me, which I can only make an educated guess of what their lives were like. They endured highs and lows as we all do. Cherish the highs and let it keep you through the lows.

The picture is of three generations of Sullivan/O'Sullivan relatives gathering on June 9, 1996. Erin go bragh.


IHS
PATRICK SULLIVAN
OCT. 6, 1840 - MAR. 6, 1917
HONORA
WIFE OF
PATRICK SULLIVAN

# A Daughter's Note

This ebook is in honor of my father, William Raymond Ripley born December 9, 1908, and died July 13, 1977. Thanks, Dad, for everything big and small.