

**ILLUSION ➡ DISILLUSION ➡ RESOLUTION:
FORENSIC RECONSTRUCTION OF
TWO IMMIGRANTS' LIVES**

by

Phil Wescott

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of the University of Delaware
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in Liberal Studies

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES.....	vii
ABSTRACT.....	xi

Chapter

1	INTRODUCTION	1
1.1	Migratory instincts and pathways.....	1
1.2	Challenges of assimilation.....	5
2	IRISH EMIGRATION OF THE LATE NINETEENTH CENTURY	8
2.1	Importance of the Land	8
2.2	Assessing life options.....	10
2.3	The journey of no return.....	12
3	IRISH IMMIGRANTS IN TURN OF THE CENTURY NEW YORK CITY	16
3.1	Magnetic attraction of that time and place	16
3.2	Opportunities and setbacks.....	21
4	JOHN MCMURRY OF COUNTY LEITRIM.....	24
4.1	Reconstructing the life of John McMurry	24
4.2	The decision to depart in 1890.....	29
5	THERESA A. GARRAHY [GRAY] OF COUNTY CLARE	38
5.1	Young Annie of Knockanoura in Clooney Parish	38
5.2	Joining her older sister in New York City.....	43
5.3	A pregnant teen by John McMurry	52
5.4	Birth and death among the Misericordia Nuns at Rosalie Hall	54
6	SEBASTIAN GRAY	60
6.1	A ward of the New York Archdiocese and Catholic Home Bureau	60
6.2	Difficult early life yields mid-life rewards.....	64
6.3	Adoption revealed in later life	72

7	DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS	75
7.1	The Immigrant Experience Illusion, Disillusion, Potential Resolution.....	75
7.2	Postscript from Dublin via Outer Mongolia.....	79
7.3	Melding genealogy with genomic technology.....	81
	REFERENCES .	.83

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1	Gorse, rampant in rural Ireland.....	8
Figure 2	Irish Nobel Laureate Seamus Heaney.....	10
Figure 3	Rural County Donegal circa 1890 it was poor land, but it was land ...	10
Figure 4	Irish women of the nineteenth century moved from outside labor to indoor work such as spinning flax in this village farm kitchen scene	11
Figure 5	Irish Emigrants Leaving County Kerry for America in 1866 - Library of Congress image	13
Figure 6	Irish immigrants aboard a launch in Queenstown Harbor, about to be ferried to the waiting steam ship for the Atlantic voyage Library of Congress image.....	15
Figure 7	Tammany Hall on East 14 th Street was the seat of political power under Boss Tweed and other Democratic Party leaders into the early 20 th century	20
Figure 8	New York City Immigrant Tracking Graphic from Fordham University Center for Immigration Studies	21
Figure 9	Immigrants were concentrated in East Coast port cities and Chicago in 1910 Library of Congress document.....	22
Figure 10	Irish folk re-enactor scutching flax fibers for the linen mills.....	26
Figure 11	Men scutching flax fibers in nineteenth century Ireland.....	27
Figure 12	Workers scutching flax fibers in preparation for spinning into linen cloth, circa 1880 [image source: U.S. National Archives and Records Administration].....	28
Figure 13	Hatchling flax fibers Flax fibers are used to weave both damask and lace linen fabrics.- U.S. Library of Congress image.....	29

Figure 14	Promotional poster targeted at prospective Irish emigrants in the late nineteenth century. The American Line was owned and operated by the enormously profitable Pennsylvania Rail Road.....	32
Figure 15	Liverpool Wharf Scene circa 1890	32
Figure 16	The SS Lord Gough in 1891 this was the vessel that had carried John McMurry from Liverpool to Philadelphia image courtesy of the White Star Line	33
Figure 17	A 1929 aerial photo of The Lazaretto Quarantine Station in Tinicum Township along the Delaware River. Immigrants arriving on steamships in the late nineteenth century, including John McMurry in 1891, were medically examined before passing upriver to the Port of Philadelphia. The site remains intact today, just West of today s Philadelphia Airport.....	34
Figure 18	An 1887 engraving of the Washington Avenue Steamship Landing and Immigration Station , opened by the Pennsylvania Railroad in 1873 to receive immigrants, likely including John McMurry, arriving from Liverpool, and other ports of embarkation.	35
Figure 19	Bustling port area of Manhattan s West Street, circa 1900 John McMurry might have been familiar with scenes like this after his arrival by rail in Manhattan in 1890 [image courtesy of NYC Municipal Archives]	37
Figure 20	Pastureland in Knockanoura, Clooney Parish of County Clare, from where Annie Garrahy departed to Queenstown and her 1903 voyage to Ellis Island	40
Figure 21	Queenstown Harbor Circa 1902	42
Figure 22	The White Star Line Wharf - Queenstown circa 1900.....	42
Figure 23	The White Star Line s RMS Celtic 2, in 1903, the year that Annie Gray sailed from Queenstown to New York / Ellis Island.....	44
Figure 24	Young Irish emigrants departing Queenstown 1903	45
Figure 25	1903 view of the Ellis Island lawn with New York skyline in distance. Arriving Irish immigrants, including Annie Gray, would have had a similar first glimpse on their future home.	47

Figure 26	Irish women immigrants arriving at Ellis Island in 1900 Wikimedia Commons	48
Figure 27	Immigrants arriving in New York 1903 [Library of Congress image] ...	48
Figure 28	Irish domestic working women circa 1900 Mary Gray and her younger sister Annie Gray may have been employed as domestic servants, similar to these young immigrant women in New York City..	50
Figure 29	Children and adults in the Sheep Meadow of Central Park 1900-1910 [image courtesy of the NYC Municipal Archives].....	51
Figure 30	Interior view of the IRT subway powerhouse at 58 th and 59 th Street in 1904.....	53
Figure 31	Renovated Yorkville neighborhood frame house dating from the mid-1800s. a structure likely similar to others along East 86 th Street near Rosalie Hall - as posted on Yorkvillestoopstonots.blogspot.com	56
Figure 32	New York City Tenement House with immigrant children pictured in 1910 <i>Library of Congress photo</i>	59
Figure 33	Sebastian Gray s December 14, 1904 New York City Birth Certificate, indicating that both parents were born in Ireland	61
Figure 34	Poster for the New York Children s Aid Society circa 1900 from The Adoption History Project www.darkwing.uoregon.edu.....	64
Figure 35	Louis Wescott [Sebastian Gray] with his adoptive parents Earl and Mary Smith Wescott at his boyhood home in North Olean, NY circa 1915 [family photos].....	65
Figure 36	September 23, 1931 Marriage License of Louis Sebastian Wescott and Genevieve Teresa Flynn.....	69
Figure 37	September 1931 wedding of Louis S. Wescott [Sebastian Gray] to Genevieve T. Flynn in Olean. New York.....	70
Figure 38	Shift change at the Oak Ridge, TN Y12 Uranium Enrichment plant in 1943 at the site cleared by Lou Wescott s engineering crew in 1942	72
Figure 39	Lou Wescott in 1957 with his first grandson Bruce and his youngest child Phil Wescott.....	73

Figure 40	First generation Irish-American Lou Wescott awarded honorary doctorate at 1958 Villanova University Commencement	74
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ABSTRACT

Human migration across geographic barriers and tribal or national borders has characterized civilization for millennia. In more recent history, immigration has likewise characterized and defined the American experience, a phenomenon extensively studied by myriad scholars.

This thesis blends extensive secondary research into Irish-American immigrant history with substantial primary research using techniques of forensic genealogy, conducted both in Ireland and in the United States. It is both a generalized and a specific inquiry that addresses both my academic and family interests.

Against the backdrop of turn-of-the-twentieth-century New York City, this thesis reconstructs and recounts the difficult lives of two young Irish-American immigrants and their bastard son whose subsequent life achievements over six decades constituted the deferred hope for immigrant acceptance, assimilation, and economic success.

The decision of John McMurry and of Theresa Ann Garrahy, both impoverished and lightly-educated youth from rural areas of Ireland, to pursue their respective illusions within an industrialized, energized, and prosperous America led to unanticipated consequences, and to the author's very existence.

There are two intended audiences for this research and resulting historical narrative—one is academic and the second is the author's family and close friends who have indicated sustained interest in these topics and the issues addressed herein. I have welcomed the heuristic and story-telling opportunity of this project.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Migratory instincts and pathways

Migration across our planet ranks as one of the most fundamental and enduring of human behaviors. An aspirational trait, incessant migration transcends time and geography. We are all beneficiaries of this phenomenon and of the genetic diversity that it has wrought. Likewise, the development of myriad distinctive cultures and the subsequent cross-pollination of these cultures have enabled quantum human progress over perhaps six millennia. Our intellectual and emotional curiosity about these migratory groups fascinates us; but there is also a corresponding individualized curiosity about the lives of the people who begat us and nurtured us, and about the people who immediately preceded our parents. This curiosity drives both academic inquiry and the pseudo-science of genealogy.

As University of California Berkeley School of Social Welfare researcher Sara Kimberlin reminds us immigration offers an excellent framework for teaching about the interaction between human behavior and the social environment. Immigration can be viewed through multiple social science perspectives and provides an opportunity to see how social science theory can inform social work practice. (Kimberlin) This thesis deals initially with social science in a broad sense, but quickly narrows its focus to the behaviors of two young Irish immigrants in an inhospitable social environment of 1900-era Manhattan.

In the University of Delaware MALS 626 course titled *Asian-American Immigration*, it was posited that immigration patterns and behaviors are rough-hewn, lacking in cultural sensitivity and human compassion, and characterized by bitter conflict and angry rejection of perceived tribal or cultural differences. Eventually, perhaps over two or more generations, limited acceptance and tolerance may replace the initial reluctance to incorporate these new arrivals. This generations-long process of immigrant assimilation is a central theme of this thesis, though the immigrants described here were Irish rather than Asians.

For many years, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, popularly referred to as the Mormon Church, has invested enormous human and financial resource into tracking and recording familial linkages and genealogy databases. Millions of digitized individual and family documents are available via Mormon-developed internet services such as www.Ancestry.com or www.familysearch.org to help us trace our antecedents and living relatives.

Our contemporary understanding of migratory patterns and of our own familial linkages across centuries and nations has been further facilitated by recent genomic technology. The debut of www.23andme.com and similar for-profit DNA-based databases now allow precise analysis of genotypes and even of personalized molecular-level human health susceptibilities.

Several of these research tools and historical databases have been used for this thesis, to deepen the author's understanding of Irish-American immigration since the late 1800s and of my more recent derivative family relationships.

We live in the era of profound and continuing discoveries based on studying the human genome. Increasingly, geneticists identify precisely where in the human

genome various functional attributes and inherited defects may lie, and then suggest how this vital code might be manipulated to the benefit of future generations. Yet, even the most prescient scientists cannot suggest where our human migratory instincts reside along our unique double helix configuration.

Their Anthropologist colleagues use sophisticated dating technologies to trace ancient migratory patterns and motivations, deepening our understanding about how, where, and why people have chosen to move on, and what the cultural consequences may have been. It seems that our chromosomes contain some mystical embedded molecular sequence that inspires and energizes our wanderings in pursuit of passing along improved living standards to our progeny. Why are people of every land and culture so willing to undertake the absurd complexity of the migratory process?

Migration necessarily involves an individualized sequential decision-making process. It is both a psychological and a physical phenomenon, balancing the familiar and the known against the largely unpredictable possible. Further, the decision to emigrate often entails prolonged deferred gratification, perhaps spanning a generation or even longer. For most immigrants, the psychological pathway begins with a compelling illusion of a markedly better life that leads instead to disillusion before finally settling out with some degree of resolution.

The migratory phenomenon often begins early in the person's lifespan with a deep-seated realization that current life circumstances will not lead to achieving higher life aspirations, and that fundamental change will clearly be required. As the emigrant formulates a coherent, personalized set of hopes and expectations, an endogenous **illusion** of a better life elsewhere comes into imprecise focus. It is an imperfect calculus that is usually influenced by the opinions of trusted others.

This empowering, plausible illusion is typically un-tempered by the realities of undertaking fundamental life change. Emigrants willingly suspend anxieties about the deep angst that irreversible change causes, and emigrants willingly overlook the probable unimagined hardships of daily life that will ensue. They conclude that their current life status has become progressively intolerable, and that movement toward a dimly-perceived future state is preferable. The emigrant must begin emigrating, and soon.

Inevitably, these migratory humans encounter profound obstacles along this pathway to the imagined better life. When the obstacles and challenges coalesce to form a formidable daily barrier to attaining the migratory gleam, the now-immigrant person confronts a troubling reality along this pathway to the illusionary state.

Disillusion inevitably follows. This period of agonizing re-assessment of migratory cost versus benefit can either weaken resolve, or perhaps be simply cast aside in hopes that the motivating dream is still within reach. The immigrant's reach may indeed exceed his grasp, but that may be an acceptable outcome for a young and intrepid voyager. Returning to the unsatisfying place of origin remains an option, but not a good option. Pressing forward in the new land may yet yield the hoped-for longer-term gains.

Finally, a mature and reasoned sense of **resolution** settles over the now weary but wiser migratory human. In fact, all that was envisioned was not attained. Yet, the application of wit and sinew has produced some degree of self-satisfaction, and perhaps earned the respect of a few others who understood the emigrant's aspiration. It will have to suffice as the immigrant fashions an acceptable life in the new land.

In actuality, few immigrants traverse such a phased existential pathway, or pause for deep introspection. Certainly the two young Irish emigrants whose lives are described in these pages might have found this preceding sequential analysis irrelevant. They might instead have described their own arduous journeys as simply doing what had to be done in order to not be a burden to their Irish families or their villages, and to sustain a measure of dignity and self-esteem in a difficult world.

For these two young Irish people, emigration was their best life option, even if full assimilation into their new American environment was improbable.

1.2 Challenges of assimilation

Understanding migratory pathways and familial relationships is enlightening. But this understanding falls short of yielding insights into the behavior of recent immigrants who crave acceptance and rapid assimilation into their new social environments. This acculturation process is both formidable and idiosyncratic.

There is no universal overarching narrative of Irish-American immigration to New York City during the early 1900s. As James Madison University Associate Dean and History Professor Margaret Meg Mulrooney reminded her audience at Hagley Museum Soda House on March 27, 2014 there is no monolithic Irish immigration story; every story is different. [*Black Powder, White Lace: The Irish Community at Hagley* - Hagley Museum and Library 27 March 2014]

This thesis narrative is both original and derivative. It is synthesized from the work of multiple Irish-American historians, from organizational resources available in the Republic of Ireland and in New York City, and from some occasional, possibly apocryphal family lore told to me by older relatives over the past fifty years.

My research agenda, on which this thesis is based, has periodically re-formed and narrowed. It began with generalized inquiries into the Irish history and economy of the late nineteenth century, and with the culture and economy of New York City at the turn of the twentieth century. Fortunately, many informative scholarly works were available that constituted the foundation for my learning process.

Subsequently, my research interests focused more specifically on my paternal grandparents, their early lives in rural Ireland and their probable life experiences while attempting assimilation in the bustling Manhattan of 1903 and 1904. These two people were my grandfather, John McMurry, and my grandmother, Theresa Gray. In turn, these life reconstructions enabled me to understand the early life of their son, Sebastian Gray, identified only recently as my father's true birth name.

This thesis also depends heavily on pictorial content, in addition to the textual component. This is necessary in order to depict the sensory experiences of these two immigrants, as well as to convey a more lifelike story to my family members who may choose to read this document in the months and years ahead.

Specific research questions addressed in this thesis include:

1. What specific cultural and economic factors of the late nineteenth century led to the decision of young Irish men and women to emigrate ?
2. What were the compelling attractions of major American East Coast port cities of that era, especially of New York City, for these young Irish men and women ?
3. Who was John McMurry and what may have caused him to depart rural Ireland for Philadelphia and immediately on to New York in 1891?

4. Who was Theresa A. [Annie] Garrahy and what may have caused her to depart rural Ireland for New York City in 1903?
5. What social and cultural networks were available to recent Irish-American immigrants in turn-of-the-twentieth-century Manhattan ?
6. What obstacles to successful assimilation faced Irish-American immigrants to New York City during that era?
7. What generalizable conclusions about the migratory phenomenon and about Irish immigrant assimilation, if any, can be derived from examining the experiences of these two young Irish-American immigrants?

Chapter 2

IRISH EMIGRATION OF THE LATE NINETEENTH CENTURY



Figure 1 Gorse, rampant in rural Ireland

2.1 Importance of the Land

Gorse, of course. It is an invasive, thorny evergreen shrub that spreads rapidly despite inhospitable growing conditions, claiming swaths of rural Irish countryside. It defies eradication. Though its yellow flowers can be beautiful, Irish farmers consider it a botanical nuisance along Ireland's rural roadways and sheep-grazing pasture borders. Left untamed, it threatens the farmer's valuable land. This tenacious northern

European shrub has survived Cromwell, the Great Famine, and even the Troubles and the Black and Tan. In Ireland, conflicts and power have often been about the land.

Gorse can be viewed as an anthropomorphic metaphor for Irish people themselves. For generations, they have proven resilient and adaptable, able to take root and spread across new lands of opportunity, and then persist across many generations. Like gorse, the Catholic Irish were often unwelcome, at home or abroad. I am descended from these Gorse People, a reality I became aware of in late 2011, and decided to investigate in this thesis.

Seamus Heaney, the Nobel laureate who died last August at age 74, wrote beautifully about this linkage of Irish soil with Irish soul. Heaney might even have endorsed this Gorse Analogy as being self-evident.

In his poem *Digging*, Heaney drew the analogy between his Irish grandfather's deft peat bog cutting and his own culturally-driven self-awareness and storytelling prowess:

*"The cold smell of potato mould, the squelch and slap
Of soggy peat, the curt cuts of an edge
Through living roots awaken in my head.
But I've no spade to follow men like them.
Between my finger and my thumb
The squat pen rests.
I'll dig with it."*

- *Digging* from *Death of a Naturalist* 1966

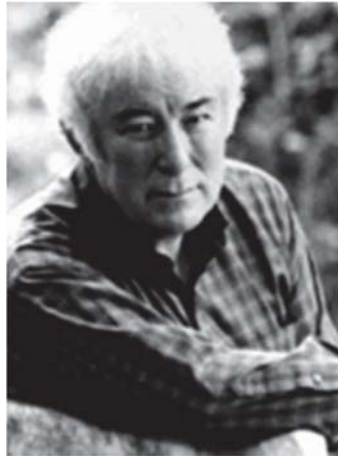


Figure 2 Irish Nobel Laureate Seamus Heaney



Figure 3 Rural County Donegal circa 1890 it was poor land, but it was land

2.2 Assessing life options

Irish emigration pathways to the United States especially to Boston, New York, Baltimore, and Philadelphia were well established by the mid-nineteenth century. The initial waves of Irish-American immigration had taken place. Many nineteenth century Irish immigrants had assimilated successfully and were then well-positioned to engage in serial immigration by paying for other family members to

depart Ireland for the greener pastures of coastal American cities. Immigration was not easy, but it was certainly feasible and increasingly affordable.

Continuing to live in rural Ireland in the mid-nineteenth century remained an option. But it was a reasonable option only for the eldest son and eldest daughter of a rural Irish family that typically had numerous children. The eldest son might expect to inherit the agricultural land, or at least the landowner's permission to work the land. The eldest daughter might reasonably expect to command a modest dowry as the bride of a young Irish neighbor lad. For subsequent children, life options were severely circumscribed. Emigration opened up new vistas and economic possibilities.



Figure 4 Irish women of the nineteenth century moved from outside labor to indoor work such as spinning flax in this village farm kitchen scene

2.3 The journey of no return

The decision to depart was doubtless difficult because it called for a total renunciation of the familiar. Further, for poor families, the decision was essentially irreversible. Why did immigrants accept the risk of migratory failure ? Some scholars believe that both gender and economic factors were involved.

In a study of family and sex-specific emigration from 12 European countries to the U.S. during the 1870 – 1910 period, University of Colorado economist Michael Greenwood postulates that .

”...although both males and females responded to labor-market signals, males were more responsive than females to per-capita GDP differences. Moreover, compared to the rest of Europe, Ireland and Scandinavia were the sources of many young, single male and female migrants, who responded strongly to gaps in economic opportunities.

In fact, much of the European response to such gaps appears to be due to migrants from Ireland and Scandinavia. Females tended to originate in English-speaking countries and countries that were agriculturally oriented....males tended to follow recent migrants more than females, but females responded more to long-term influences as measured by stocks of migrants from their source countries who had previously settled in the U.S.”
[Greenwood]

Arrival in the new homeland did not necessarily translate into steady employment or economic self-sufficiency. Of course, the decision to depart was not always exclusively about the money. The equation included other life-satisfiers as well. Social security for the Irish emigrant included a cluster of factors, including the

assessment of how previous emigrants had fared in their new social environment. This assessment was highly variable and viewed through a less-than-perfect lens.

Nonetheless, assuming the risks and committing to emigrate was a common outcome. After all, it had been undertaken many times before, perhaps by a member of the emigrant's own family.



Figure 5 Irish Emigrants Leaving County Kerry for America in 1866
- Library of Congress image

The editors of the Irish Genealogy Toolkit (www.irish-genealogy-toolkit.com) describe in detail the archetypal journey to Ellis Island, New York after the decision

had been made. The journey to Ellis Island, the New York immigration point from 1892, usually began with receipt of a pre-paid ticket from a family member already settled in America. Those that could afford to buy their fare themselves were small in number. Steerage fares between 1880 and the start of World War I held fairly steady at £4-£5 which was equal to half the annual income of a labourer.

The problem for many of those who wanted to emigrate was that they couldn't find any regular employment in the first place. Without steady income, saving such a fare could be difficult, if not impossible.

The pre-paid ticket was, then, an essential feature of the continuing exodus from Ireland. Without it, much smaller numbers would have made the journey to Ellis Island and America. (Irish Genealogy Toolkit)

There was more to a successful emigration from Ireland to the United States, however; traveling from rural inland communities to either Dublin or to Queenstown [Cork] called for additional planning and coordination. The Dublin-to-Liverpool-to-Queenstown-to Philadelphia or to New York journey was well-established in the late nineteenth century. With the cost of passage secured, the next stage in the journey to Ellis Island was getting to the port of departure, according to the Irish Genealogy Toolkit narrative. Liverpool offered passengers the greater choice of crossings and the lowest fares but very few who arrived in Liverpool could go directly to a waiting ship. Instead these eager Irish immigrants fell prey to an assortment of expensive scams as they awaited the day of departure.

By the end of the 19th century, virtually all immigrants traveled aboard 1900-passenger iron-hulled steam ships. Of these 1900, perhaps 500 were crew members and 1100 were steerage passengers. It was a voyage that took from seven to ten days.

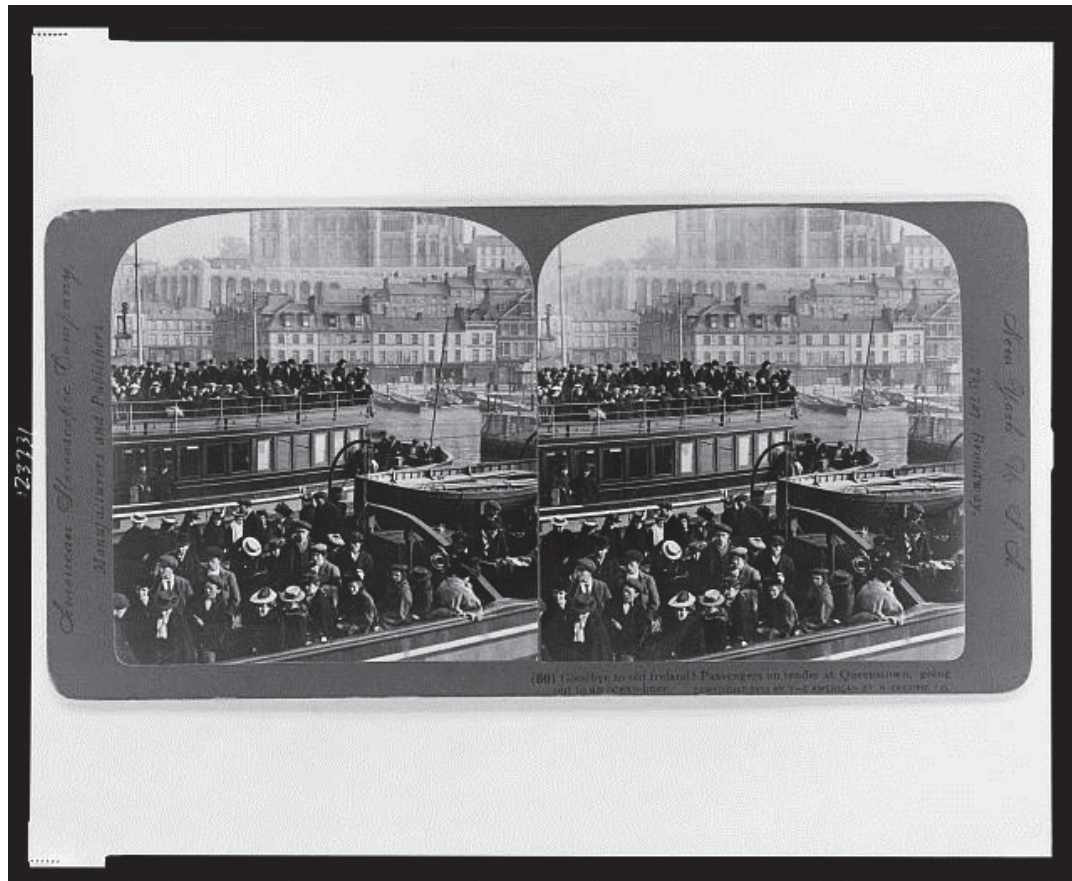


Figure 6 Irish immigrants aboard a launch in Queenstown Harbor, about to be ferried to the waiting steam ship for the Atlantic voyage Library of Congress image

Chapter 3

IRISH IMMIGRANTS IN TURN OF THE CENTURY NEW YORK CITY

3.1 Magnetic attraction of that time and place

Immigration to New York City in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries came in successive and massive waves. The first wave, old immigration, began in the 1840 s and consisted mainly of Irish and German immigrants. By 1855, more than 200,000 immigrants had already arrived from Ireland. During the presidency of Abraham Lincoln, the Irish continued to arrive in large numbers, many remaining in the East Coast port cities of Boston, New York, Baltimore, and Philadelphia. The outbreak of the Civil War provided many young Irish immigrant men with a dangerous job and a paycheck. These Irish immigrants generally left a positive impression due to their honorable service in the War Between The States, primarily serving in Union Army regiments. Unfortunately, then as now, it was difficult to convert honorable service in the military into meaningful and rewarding post-conflict civilian employment. Some Irish war veterans headed to the developing western states and territories in search of adventure and employment.

By the 1880 s immigration from western Europe had declined and given way to the new immigration from Central and Eastern Europe, most notably Russia and Central Europe. These immigrants swarmed into New York City and most were forced to take menial jobs. In the mid-nineteenth century, almost half of all employed immigrants worked in the garment industry or as manual labor, servants, cooks,

waiters, and household help. The number of immigrants in New York City increased steadily throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and by 1910, there was a foreign-born population of nearly two million (Fordham University)^[5]. Clashes among the competing immigrant groups were common, as were derogatory editorials and biased news stories published in New York establishment newspapers.

According to Kerby A. Miller in *Emigrants and Exiles, Ireland and the Irish Exodus to North America*, "Usually, an uncle or aunt in the New World financed the departure of an older son or daughter, who in turn was expected to send prepaid passage tickets and promise further assistance (e.g., a place to live, help in finding employment) to his or her younger brothers and sisters."

Though most Irish immigrants came from rural areas of Ireland, they preferred to settle in large cities like Boston and New York. Sociologists believe this is due to the community patterns of rural life and the accessibility of Catholic Churches in the large East coast cities. Ireland had an extended history of emigration to America with the highest numbers of immigrants arriving during the famine years. Author Joseph Walsh described how he and his siblings and their Langans relatives immigrated to New York City during a relatively slow immigration period. By the time that Joseph Walsh departed Ireland in the 1890s the immigrant ships were vastly improved over the "coffin" ships of the mid-1800s. Some steamship companies even offered concerts, church services, dances and games on board.

Like many Irish newcomers before them the Walshes and Langans were Roman Catholic, relatively poor, and were Gaelic/English speakers with few skills applicable to life in New York City. Upon their arrival in the United States all Irish immigrants were subject to a great deal of prejudice. The Irish immigrant was

frequently depicted with ape like features. Signs, which read "No Irish need apply" were common, even into the early years of the 20th century. Classified employment ads in newspapers still pointedly excluded the Irish: for instance, "*Wanted, a Cook and a Chambermaid. They must be Americans, Scotch, Swiss, or Africans; none others need apply*".

The Irish-American Catholic church had also become a significant force in attracting, orienting, and re-settling Irish immigrants. Irish born Archbishop John Joseph Hughes [1797 – 1864] was a powerful, respected, and autocratic force in New York through the mid-19th century. His successor prelates were equally powerful and controlling in both secular and religious domains. The church exerted enormous influence over the lives of the Irish immigrants, and several dozen Irish Catholic parishes were established throughout the city's boroughs. The priests and other religious attempted to help their immigrant flocks deal with the daily life chaos and challenges, including the propensity for many Irish men to patronize neighborhood Irish saloons to excess. John Murphy Farley was another Irish-born Archbishop of New York who was the prelate during the 1902 – 1918 period when my grandparents met and produced my father, Sebastian Gray.

There was contrarian "don't bother to come here" advice from some Irish immigrants to their curious friends and family members remaining behind in Ireland. One woman writing to her family at about that time urged caution, then subsequent encouragement, pointing out that

"The emigrants have not money enough to take them to the interior of the country, which obliges them to remain in New York and like places, which causes less demand for labor and also the great reduction in wages. For this

reason I would advise no one to come to America that would not have some money after landing here that would enable them to go west in case they would get no work to do here. But any man or woman without a family are fools that would not venture and come to this plentiful country where no man or woman ever hungered or ever will. I *can* assure you there are dangers upon dangers, but my friends, have courage and come all together courageously and bid adieu to that lonely place, the land of our birth (Fordham University)[8]

In fact, while more Irish immigrants were finding jobs and grudging respect from earlier generations of immigrants, the social status of the most recent shanty Irish immigrants was still questionable. According to Fordham University Irish historians,

“the Irish were disproportionately represented in poorhouses, public hospitals, and prisons; in 1859, 55% of all people arrested in New York City were Irish, indicative of their low social status (Fordham University)[14].

“However, by the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the Irish had carved out a place in New York City. The infamous political machine, Tammany Hall, helped immigrants find lodging and jobs, and even helped them become citizens in exchange for votes. By 1860, the Irish dominated the political machine and reaped the patronage rewards. Tammany Hall controlled New York City elections from the second half of the nineteenth century until the election of Fiorello LaGuardia in 1934 (Fordham University) [15].



Tammany Hall

Figure 7 Tammany Hall on East 14th Street was the seat of political power under Boss Tweed and other Democratic Party leaders into the early 20th century

Perhaps New York City was not a good place to be a poor recently-arrived immigrant, even in the 1890s when my grandfather McMurry arrived, but the burden was lighter if you had family or friends of the family to help you out. If you had neither of these for social and financial support, then your next best bet would have been one of the other social anchors available to newcomers. For these underclass Irish males with few skills, the choices might have been the Tammany Hall functionaries with small jobs to dispense, the Irish neighborhood parish and school offering custodial work, joining the police force, or networking at the Irish saloon closest to your rooming house. It seems that John McMurry may have chosen the nearby saloon as his social anchor, with sufficient time left over to inspect the most recent Irish immigrant girls then coming into view. Bartender was John McMurry's declared occupation.

3.2 Opportunities and setbacks

New York immigration patterns changed substantially in the early years of the 20th century, as indicated on the Fordham University Center for Immigration Studies graphic below.

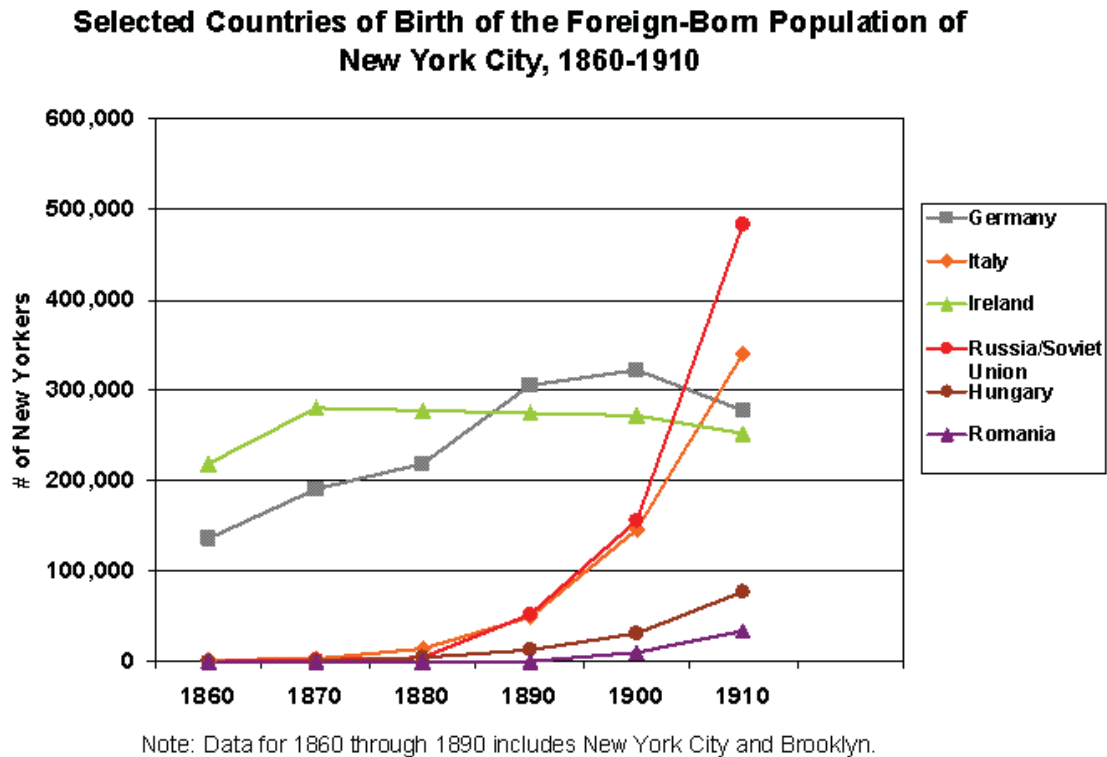


Figure 8 New York City Immigrant Tracking Graphic from Fordham University Center for Immigration Studies

Old immigrant opportunity was obsolete and being re-defined by the newer opportunities. New York City was already on an accelerated pathway to supplant London and Paris as world-class cities that offered economic reward for the entrepreneurial, the competitive, and the savvy. Those unable or unwilling to play in

such a high-intensity forum would be shunted aside. My paternal grandparents were clearly unprepared to compete effectively in the New York City of 1903–1904.

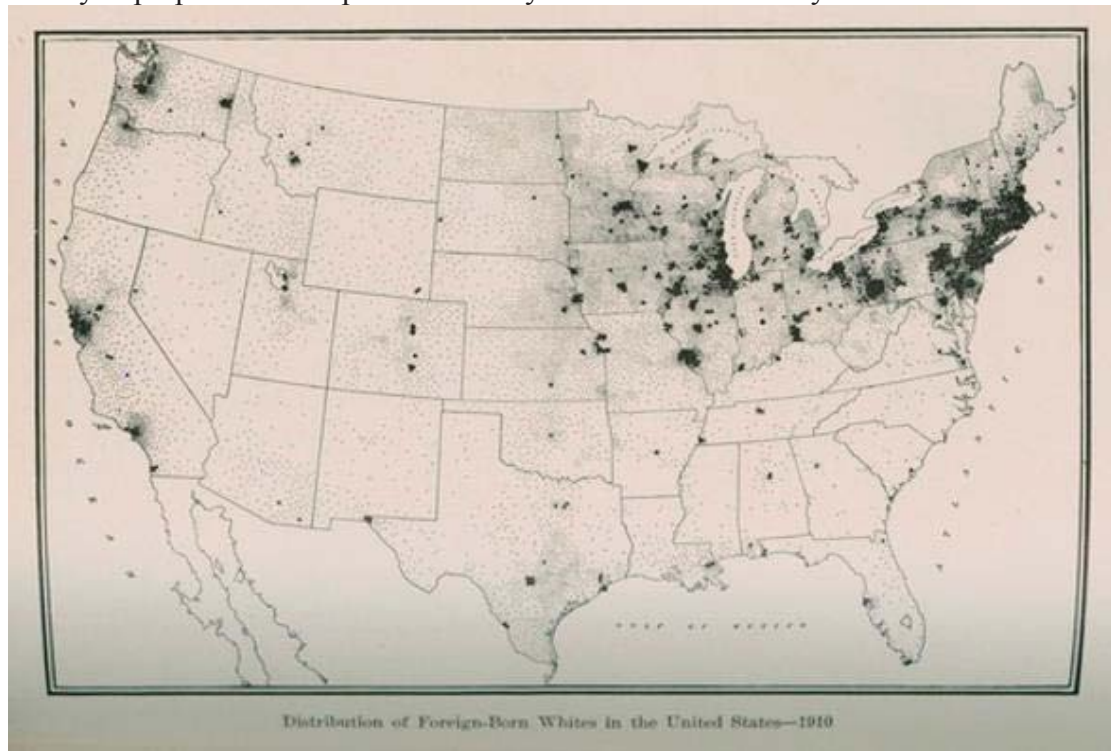


Figure 9 Immigrants were concentrated in East Coast port cities and Chicago in 1910 Library of Congress document

Americans feared that the newer immigrants would be more difficult to assimilate than the earlier immigrants had been; a common theory was that while the Irish and the Germans were used to democratic regimes, the Russian Jews and the Italians arriving at the turn of the century had never experienced democracy. They viewed immigrant communities as ghettoized colonies that were detrimental to assimilation. Thus, during the late nineteenth century, programs targeted at Americanization of immigrants were introduced in public schools. Americanization

was an integral part of the Hudson-Fulton Celebration in New York and New Jersey commemorating both Henry Hudson and Robert Fulton as American role models. (Fordham University) [\[6\]](#).

Chapter 4

JOHN MCMURRY OF COUNTY LEITRIM

4.1 Reconstructing the life of John McMurry

Located in a modest office building in the compact city of Ennis is the Sandfield Centre. It is an official government document repository, and also an Irish Health Service office. Theresa Quinn is a government worker at that office, and a person who periodically helps foreign visitors seeking secular archival information about their possible Irish ancestors and relatives. In June 2013, I arrived at that office seeking documentary information about my presumed paternal grandfather, John McMurry.

An index of surnames published in the *Irish Times* indicated that there were six McMurry households in mid-19th century Ireland, three families living in County Armagh, two families in County Monaghan, and one family living in County Leitrim. [www.irishtimes.com/ancestor/surname/index]

Ms. Quinn then conducted an online search of Irish national birth records and told me that four infant males named John McMurry were born in Ireland in 1864, the birth year shown on John McMurry's Liverpool-to-Philadelphia emigrant passenger manifest. One was born in Kilkeel, County Antrim in Northern Ireland to a laborer named Patrick and his wife Maria; one was born in Bansbridge, County Down to schoolteacher George McMurry and his wife Catherine; one was born in Inishower, County Donegal to farmer Andrew and his wife Sarah; and one was born February 3,

1864 at Carrick-on-Shannon, County Leitrim to flax scutcher James and Mary Conly McMurry. Ms. Quinn suggested that this last John McMurry of Leitrim who emigrated at age 27 by way of Liverpool to Philadelphia and then on to New York was likely the man who was to become my grandfather.

This John McMurry's father, James, earned his living as a flax scutcher, according to John's Irish birth record. John's mother is listed as Maria Kelly on the Ireland Births and Baptisms, 1620-1881 national index. His place of birth was Drumshanbo in County Leitrim on 29 June 1864. In 1864 there were still farmers growing flax in County Leitrim, but the flax and the associated Ulster linen industry were clearly in decline, being replaced by the growing widespread preference for more comfortable cotton fabrics. It was therefore unlikely that young John McMurry would be able to follow in his father's scutcher footsteps, even had he been interested.



Figure 10 Irish folk re-enactor scutching flax fibers for the linen mills

The Irish linen industry had been important to Ireland's nineteenth century economy. But by mid-century the large industrial fabric spinners of Belfast, the largest linen producing city in the world, had invested heavily in power looms even as demand began to slacken. The advent of British industrialization in Belfast and in the cotton fabric capital of Manchester put many Irish cottage-industry workers out of business, so soon after the tragic devastation of the mid-century Potato Famine. Now, more than ever, it was a good time for many Irish, especially Catholic Irish, to consider other options elsewhere.



Figure 11 Men scutching flax fibers in nineteenth century Ireland

Records of John McMurry's education and early work experience were not discovered. Under-educated rural young Irish men like John McMurry essentially had no options. The river town of Carrick-on-Shannon might have offered other modest employment and eventual marriage options for McMurry, but leaving County Leitrim and even Ireland itself had to be viewed as a reasonable life-rebooting option.

Another employability factor would have been educational attainment levels. Literacy rates in County Leitrim in the mid-1800s were estimated by Irish government historians to have been about 24%, suggesting that young men like John McMurry had few other economic prospects in the local Irish economy. Emigration was the accepted pathway, especially for sons who stood to inherit nothing. The typical Irish male lifespan could also have entered into his emigration equation. At age 27,

McMurry might be considered nearly middle-aged in a community and nation when a man might reasonably expect to live to age 55 in the later nineteenth century.

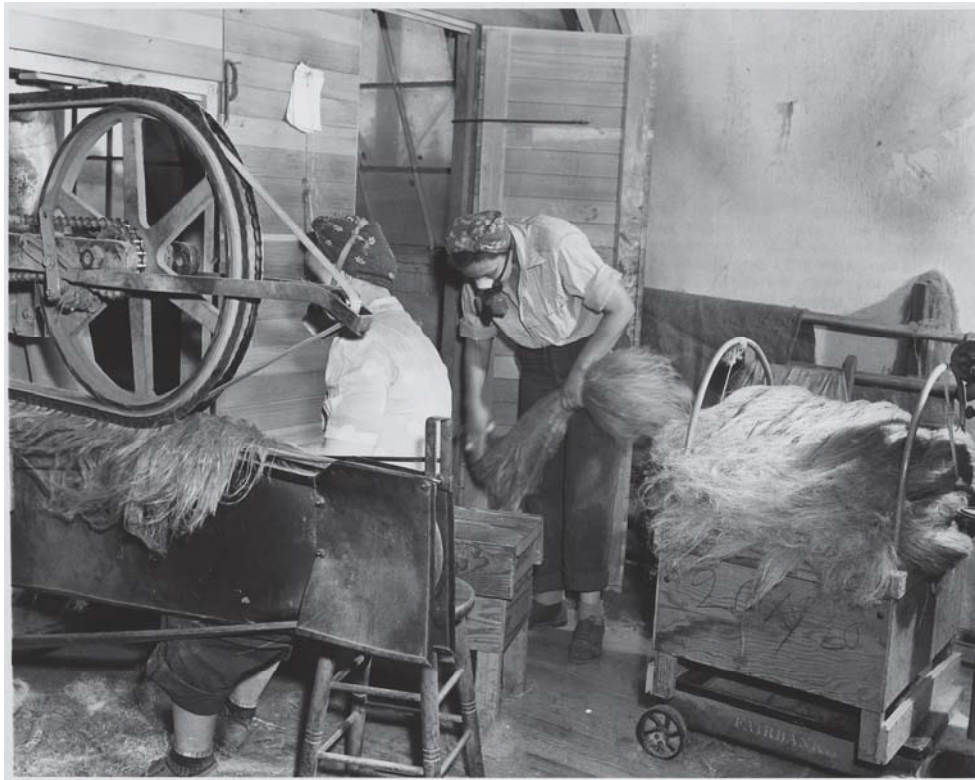


Figure 12 Workers scutching flax fibers in preparation for spinning into linen cloth, circa 1880 [image source: U.S. National Archives and Records Administration]



Figure 13 Hatchling flax fibers Flax fibers are used to weave both damask and lace linen fabrics.- U.S. Library of Congress image

4.2 The decision to depart in 1890

By age 27, John would likely have concluded that his prospects for marriage and for a living wage and tolerable standard-of-living would probably be brighter in the booming New York City of the 1890s than in his native agrarian County Leitrim. At some point in 1889 or 1890, John doubtless told his family and friends that he had decided to emigrate to America.

Because the trip was long, arduous, and still relatively expensive for most rural Irish families, there was a generalized acceptance of the probable finality of the decision to emigrate. A return to Ireland, either within a few years or over a longer time frame, was highly unlikely. The family member leaving permanently for the distant United States was truly exiting, and the Irish custom of holding a wake prior to

the departure date was already well established by the late nineteenth century, especially in the communities of Western Ireland.

The American Wake phenomenon is recounted in Dorothy and Thomas Hoobler's book *The Irish American Family Album*. At an American wake, people sang and danced to fiddles all night. Some prayed the rosary while others drank Irish whiskey and told old stories that brought memories of happier times. In the morning, the emigrants boarded a cart with their few possessions, taking a chunk of turf as a memory of the 'ould sod and a Cross of Saint Brigid made from reeds. (Hoobler)

Young men like John McMurry might have spent the days leading up to actual departure visiting nearby friends and neighbors, perhaps sharing a drink and securing contact information for other local Irish emigrants who had already completed the voyage to a new life in America. For some emigrants of this era, the upcoming challenging passage was made easier by relatives already living in Boston, New York, Philadelphia or other Irish immigrant locales.

More prosperous already-relocated relatives might mail money or travel tickets, as well as detailed advice about how to navigate the journey and how to enter their new homeland. Organizations such as the Irish Emigrant Society, located on Chambers Street in Manhattan, offered *Remittances to Ireland – Passage Tickets by all Steamship Lines* as a service to Irish already living in New York. It is not known whether John McMurry would have been able to avail himself of these benefits.

Emigration in late nineteenth century Ireland was markedly easier and more affordable than it had been for the earlier impoverished and emaciated Irish emigrants of the 1845-1850 Potato Famine era who languished for many weeks aboard the deplorable wind-powered Coffin Ships. The advent of coal-fired metal sailing

vessels had cut Trans-Atlantic travel times dramatically, and more sophisticated marketing of immigrant voyages to the United States were being well-promoted to young men like John McMurry.

Very likely, McMurry would have become aware of affordable sailing options such as those being offered by the respected American Line that sailed frequently from Liverpool. The development of an Irish railroad network had already made it feasible to travel from Leitrim to Dublin, and small ferry packet vessels made frequent trips from Dublin's Kingstown Port [now re-named *Dun Laoghaire*] to Liverpool. He weathered a three-to-four-hour crossing of the unpredictable Irish Sea.

McMurry would have needed to have his wits about him after setting foot on shore in bustling 1890 Liverpool. Dozens of wily English predators and con artists feasted on these arriving Irishmen, charging absurd sums for miserable overnight accommodations or for safe storage of luggage.

McMurry likely had his transatlantic ticket already in-hand, a lower-priced place aboard the SS Lord Gough. This route from Liverpool to Philadelphia took a bit longer than the Liverpool to New York voyage, but the ticket was less expensive.



Figure 14 Promotional poster targeted at prospective Irish emigrants in the late nineteenth century. The American Line was owned and operated by the enormously profitable Pennsylvania Rail Road



Figure 15 Liverpool Wharf Scene circa 1890

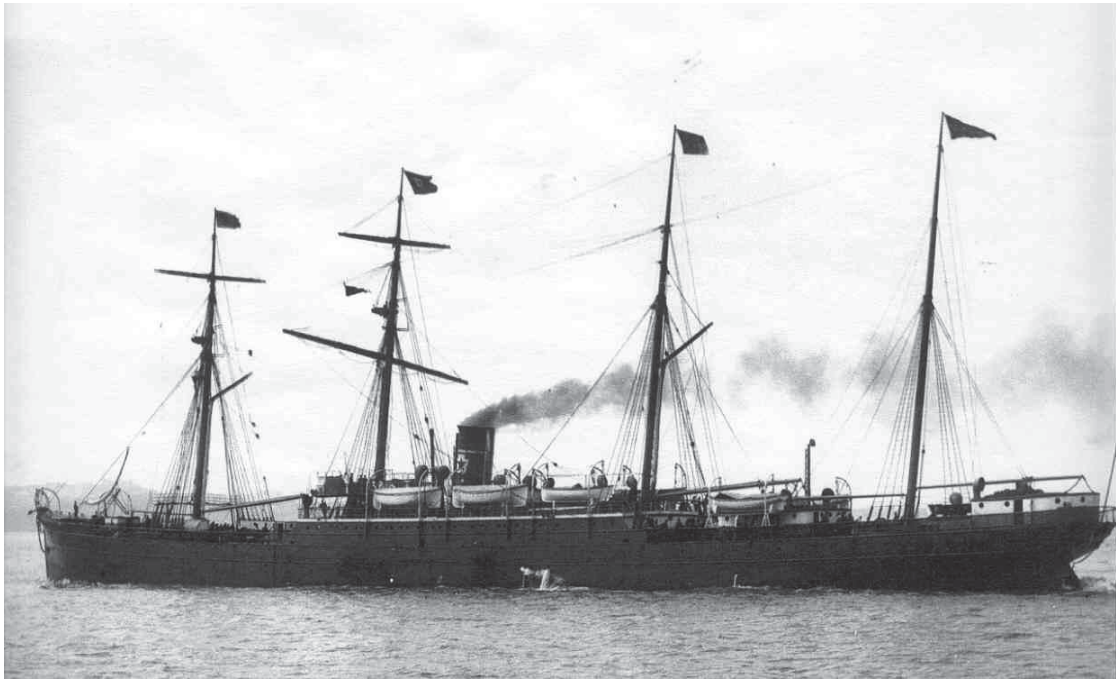


Figure 16 The SS Lord Gough in 1891 this was the vessel that had carried John McMurry from Liverpool to Philadelphia image courtesy of the White Star Line

The American Line, an immigrant transportation fleet owned and operated by the very successful Pennsylvania Railroad, advertised frequent and affordable voyages to Philadelphia, via Liverpool. The route from Liverpool to Queenstown to Philadelphia was longer than the Liverpool to New York crossings, but it was also somewhat less expensive. On the passenger list assembled in Liverpool, McMurry declared his American destination as NY.

However uncomfortable that April 1890 voyage across the cold North Atlantic was, McMurry steamed North up the Delaware River, past many of today's familiar Delaware beach communities, before docking on April 16, 1890. Most likely, the Lord Gough stopped first at the now-abandoned Lazaretto Quarantine Station on the banks

of the Delaware River in Tinicum Township close to today's Philadelphia International Airport. There, immigration officials performed a cursory check on the arriving immigrants to cull out obviously ill immigrants.



Figure 17 A 1929 aerial photo of The **Lazaretto Quarantine Station** in Tinicum Township along the Delaware River. Immigrants arriving on steamships in the late nineteenth century, including John McMurry in 1891, were medically examined before passing upriver to the Port of Philadelphia. The site remains intact today, just West of today's Philadelphia Airport.

Then the ship would have proceeded a few miles upriver to a dock adjacent to Philadelphia's Washington Avenue. After clearing Customs and Immigration,

McMurry would have been greeted by Pennsylvania Railroad staff for a final inspection and for his train ticket on to New York City.

This method of directing immigrants to their intended destinations at the Washington Avenue Immigration Station was a convenient, one-transfer option for less affluent Irish immigrants who could then arrive in New York City within a few hours.

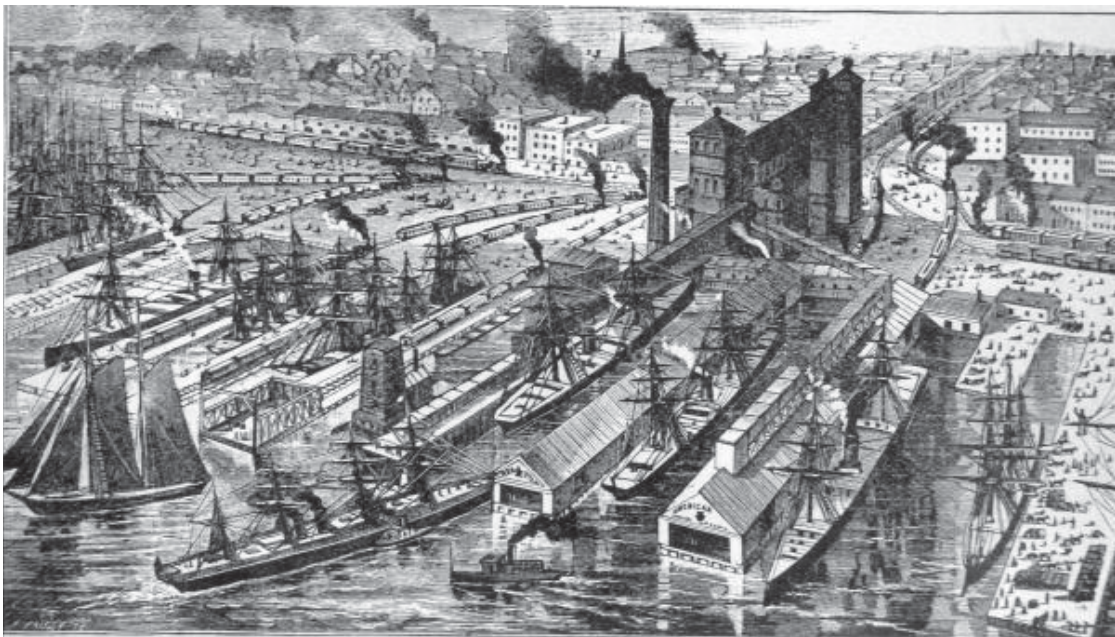


Figure 18 An 1887 engraving of the **Washington Avenue Steamship Landing and Immigration Station**, opened by the Pennsylvania Railroad in 1873 to receive immigrants, likely including John McMurry, arriving from Liverpool, and other ports of embarkation.

It is likely that McMurry would have learned about this emigration option, both from the promotional posters and via word-of-mouth in central Ireland at that time. The passage, on newer-technology steam ships, was both swift and affordable.

Tracing young John McMurry's early life has proven elusive, though the *Lord Gough* passenger manifest and arrival documents available through the National Archives indicate that he arrived alone and intended to travel to New York City after arriving in Philadelphia.

Life in Carrick-on-Shannon in rural County Leitrim looked fundamentally unpromising for 27-year-old John McMurry. Lightly educated and lightly skilled, he likely decided by his mid-twenties that emigration would be his best option for steady employment and possibly marrying and beginning a family.

Irish immigration patterns via Liverpool to Philadelphia or other East Coast ports in the U.S. were well established in the late nineteenth century, and steerage tickets on the various steamship passenger lines were reasonably affordable. According to Philadelphia author and historian Fredric Miller, there were at least three sailings each week between Liverpool and Philadelphia (Miller), and McMurry sailed aboard the *S.S. Lord Gough*, arriving at the Port of Philadelphia on April 16, 1890.

According to a narrative published in the *Philadelphia Record* by the Donald Macintyre family, their Irish immigrant father sailed aboard the *SS. Lord Gough*, a 4-masted steamship of 2370 tons, owned by the American Line and sailing out of Liverpool. In the late 1800s, the voyage to Philadelphia ordinarily took 16 days.

After passing both infectious disease and immigration examinations, McMurry declared on his immigration document his intention to travel from Philadelphia to New York. It seems probable that McMurry would have made arrangements in advance to meet a person [unknown to this author] already living in Manhattan. As an unskilled but able-bodied laborer, McMurry would have had various low-wage job

opportunities in New York prior to meeting a New Yorker willing to employ ambitious Irishmen as an apprentice bartender at an Irish neighborhood saloon.



Figure 19 Bustling port area of Manhattan s West Street, circa 1900 John McMurphy might have been familiar with scenes like this after his arrival by rail in Manhattan in 1890 [image courtesy of NYC Municipal Archives]

Chapter 5

THERESA A. GARRAHY [GRAY] OF COUNTY CLARE

5.1 Young Annie of Knockanoura in Clooney Parish

Peter Beirne is an experienced, mid-career professional librarian heading up the Local Studies Centre at the County Clare Library in Ennis. He also evinces Irish hospitality, receiving dozens of American visitors annually at his modest office adjacent to the main library building. Many times these visiting descendants of Irish ancestors arrive in Ennis seeking specific information about one or more of their presumed Irish ancestors, usually linked in some fashion to County Clare.

It was in that spirit of genealogical quest that I had contacted Peter Beirne weeks prior to a trip to Ennis and nearby areas where I believed my maternal grandmother had been born and grown into adolescence before emigrating to New York City. Yet, as Beirne cautioned me, in email messages and in-person at the Centre, Irish ancestral records can be incomplete and uncertain, often requiring confirmatory second sources to verify preliminary research notions. In many cases, probability supplants certainty in these kinds of ancestral searches.

County Clare is located on the western coast of Ireland, part of the province of Munster. It was greatly affected by the potato crop failure and resulting Great Famine of the mid-nineteenth century, with the county population declining from 212,000 in 1851 to only 95,000 residents in 1926. It was an overwhelmingly Roman Catholic county throughout the recent centuries.

I began with my father's New York City birth certificate. The mother's name on that document is *Theresa A. Gray*. I had arrived in Ennis to confirm what my previous online research had suggested that Theresa A. Gray was, in fact, the third daughter of the Patrick Garrahy family of Knockanoura in Clooney Parish within County Clare.

The hand-written Irish birth and baptismal records are uncertain documents. Often, the clerical records of the local parish prove to be more accurate and complete than the secular government documents. In the case of the Patrick Garrahy family of Knockanoura in Clooney Parish of County Clare, family records seem to have become less complete over time, as Patrick failed to register information about his younger children.

The 1901 Irish national census of the Clooney District Electoral Division includes a Garrahy family, headed by 50-year-old widower Patrick Garrahy. He had been born in County Clare and was literate in both Irish and English languages. Patrick reported his occupation as labourer, and his four children as son Michael, age 16 and also a labourer, daughter Bridget, an unmarried 19-year-old domestic servant, a second daughter Mary, nearly 18-years-old and also an unmarried domestic servant, and the youngest child, Annie, then a 15-year-old listed as going to school. The Roman Catholic Garrahy family lived in house number 8 in Knockanoura. In my 2013 visit to the site, no residence occupied that space.



Figure 20 Pastureland in Knockanoura, Clooney Parish of County Clare, from where Annie Garrahy departed to Queenstown and her 1903 voyage to Ellis Island

I subsequently traced a young woman and professed domestic servant aged 18 named Annie Gray from Clooney Parish in County Clare to boarding the White Star Line steamship *Celtic* on April 16, 1903 at Queenstown. Annie Gray arrived just eight days later at Ellis Island, probably intending to join her older sister Mary Gray, already an American immigrant and employed as a domestic servant for a family residing at 138 Amsterdam Avenue in Manhattan's Upper West Side.

My central research question was Did Theresa Ann Garrahy of Knockanoura sail to Ellis Island under the name Annie Gray and ultimately give birth to my father at a Catholic home for unwed mothers in Manhattan some twenty months later?

This question had burned in my mind for weeks before and after my research at Beirne's tidy Clare Library office.

Several Irish Family Research guidebooks remind the reader to accept uncertainty and ambiguity as a normal condition of this genealogical research. Peter Beirne later reminded me of this too-frequent reality. In a conversation at his Ennis Centre office, Beirne told me

“yes, it was quite common for Irish families of this place and of that time to be irregular in registering the names, birthdates, and baptisms of each subsequent child. Theresa Ann was perhaps her formal baptismal name, but ‘Annie’ was likely how she was known by her family members. And the changing of a Gaelic-sounding surname like Garrahy very well might have translated to Gray for the purposes of booking passage on a voyage from Liverpool to Queenstown to America. Especially if Annie’s older sister had provided her with a ticket and advice about Anglicizing the family surname. I find no reason to discount the validity of your family research here.” (Beirne)

My working assumption, based on my prior online research, my on-site review of parish records at the County Clare Study Centre, and on archival documents later discovered is that Theresa Ann Garrahy was known in her local school and household as Annie Garrahy and subsequently as Annie Gray during and after her TransAtlantic immigrant journey. At the time of giving birth in New York on December 14, 1904 the attending Catholic Misericordia nursing nuns recorded her name as Theresa A. Gray on my father's birth certificate, in all probability.



Figure 21 Queenstown Harbor Circa 1902



Figure 22 The White Star Line Wharf - Queenstown circa 1900

5.2 Joining her older sister in New York City

As an 18-year-old younger sister, Annie Garrahy had to be excited to escape a place with little promise of a fulfilling life and exchange it for the bustle and excitement described in some detail in letters sent home by her older sister Mary. According to the Irish records, each of the Garrahy children was able to read and write the English language.

Patrick Garrahy had been widowed for several years when Annie sought his approval to join Mary in New York in 1903. Perhaps he was relieved that 18-year-old Annie was declaring her independence and would become self-sufficient in America. She might even find a worthy Irish immigrant lad there and marry. He agreed with Annie's departure plans, and they arranged for Annie to travel from Knockanoura to Queenstown Harbor to begin her journey.

New York City in 1903 was at the center of so much awe-inspiring activity for people of every age, but especially for the young. Annie Garrahy arrived at Ellis Island on April 24, 1903 as Annie Gray, anxious and awe-struck, but eager to investigate whatever life opportunities might await her.

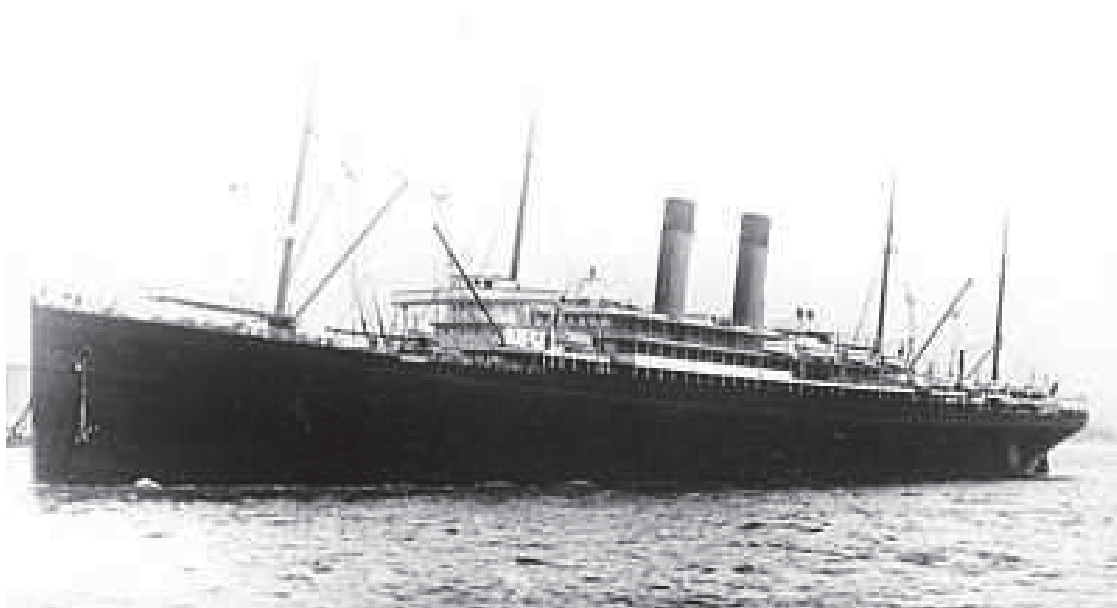


Figure 23 The White Star Line's RMS Celtic 2, in 1903, the year that Annie Gray sailed from Queenstown to New York / Ellis Island

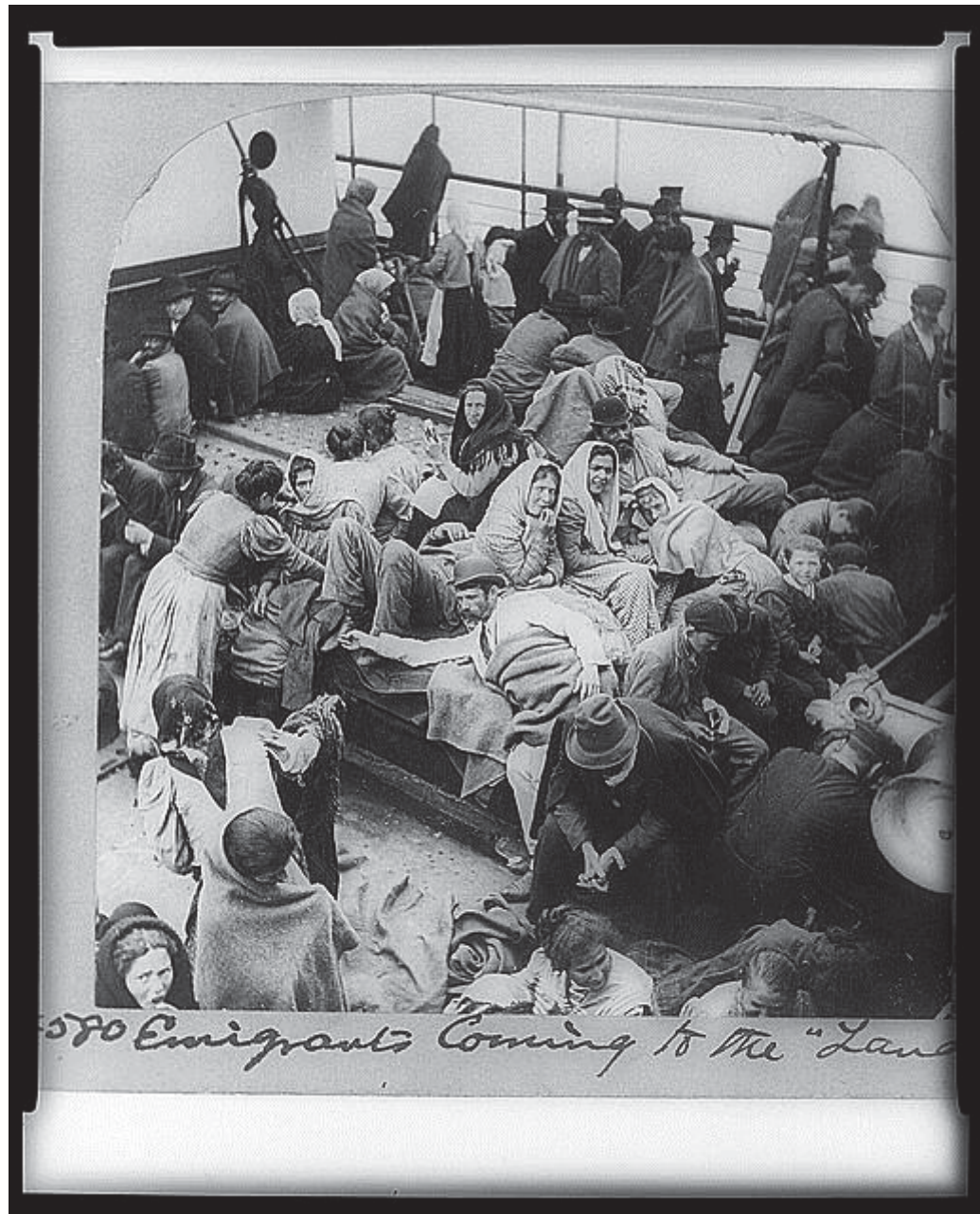


Figure 24 Young Irish emigrants departing Queenstown 1903

Those new home possibilities would have come into view as the Celtic slowly eased into the Ellis Island dock. Annie had likely chatted with her fellow second-class passengers during the week's ocean crossing, developing preliminary notions about what she would see and how she would navigate the Ellis Island arrival process.

As another eighteen-year-old Irish immigrant, Francis Hackett, described his impressions as his ship arrived in New York in 1901, "My heart had risen at the sight of land that morning. I was used to stone houses and brick houses, or to thatched cabins with mud walls. Everything was like a vacation; it was all so gay and foreign." (Hoobler, 46)

For the newly-arrived immigrants, there were brusque and intemperate immigration officials to contend with before finally being cleared to claim baggage and meet family or friends on the far side of the arrival hall. There were also perils for the naïve and unwary who had no protector to keep these welcoming wolves at bay. Among these wolves were a range of confidence men ready to separate the young Irish from their meager funds, with vague offers of immediate jobs, inexpensive lodging, and available, easy women for young Irish men. Gullibility often proved costly, on either side of the Atlantic.



Figure 25 1903 view of the Ellis Island lawn with New York skyline in distance. Arriving Irish immigrants, including Annie Gray, would have had a similar first glimpse on their future home.



Figure 26 Irish women immigrants arriving at Ellis Island in 1900 Wikimedia Commons



Figure 27 Immigrants arriving in New York 1903 [Library of Congress image]

Life in 1903 Manhattan must have seemed overwhelming to an 18-year-old girl from rural County Clare. Nothing in her childhood or teen years could have prepared her for the sights, sounds, and brusque fast-paced daily events of her new home. Annie Gray would have relied heavily on her older sister Mary to help her decipher the culture and the behavioral expectations for becoming accepted by potential employers and others that Annie would have encountered.

In the first decade of the twentieth century, New York City was a mixed blessing for the new resident - full of excitement and novelty, but also full of competitive rejection and mean-spirited treatment of the immigrant class. The work week was undoubtedly arduous for the working class, but the occasional leisure time options in New York City were plentiful, especially if you had amassed a bit of spending money. The specific events of Annie Gray's life in Manhattan between April and December of 1903 are unknown. It seems likely that Annie's older sister Mary, already working as a domestic servant on Amsterdam Avenue, would have met Annie at the Ellis Island receiving station in April and then also provided introductions that would allow newcomer Annie to secure an entry-level job in the same New York neighborhood.

It is probable that Annie Gray would have familiarized herself with the neighborhood, grateful that Irish working class girls were already accepted there. She would have attempted to build a limited social network and secure a regular paycheck as a domestic servant like Mary Gray had done.



Figure 28 Irish domestic working women circa 1900 Mary Gray and her younger sister Annie Gray may have been employed as domestic servants, similar to these young immigrant women in New York City



Figure 29 Children and adults in the Sheep Meadow of Central Park 1900-1910
[image courtesy of the NYC Municipal Archives]

Having survived her first eight months as a Manhattan resident, Annie may have looked forward to an even more exciting New Year of 1904 and becoming more fully integrated into the Irish-American immigrant neighborhood where she was living. It would be Leap Year, and there were significant events taking place throughout New York City, some of which affected the entire city, and other events affecting the nation, and the civilized world, and some that affected only Annie.

Even as a lightly-educated newcomer, Annie Gray would have learned about the United States gaining control of the Panama Canal zone in February, about Longacre Square in midtown Manhattan being renamed Times Square in April when

the powerful *New York Times* newspaper relocated its offices there, about the Louisiana Purchase Exposition World's Fair and associated third modern Olympic Games in St. Louis, about the horrific General Slocum riverboat fire in Manhattan's East River, and about the landslide re-election of Republican President Theodore Roosevelt in early November. And Annie probably listened to Scott Joplin's ragtime piano music like much of America did. She also learned about a 40-year-old Irish immigrant bartender named John McMurry. In late March or early April she learned that she would be bearing a child in December of that same year of 1904. This was not a positive life event for young Annie Gray.

5.3 A pregnant teen by John McMurry

Of great interest for this thesis and for this Wescott family is how the teenaged Annie Gray would have met a 40-year-old Irish immigrant bartender named John McMurry and developed an illicit and intimate relationship so soon after arriving in America. By the spring of 1904, about one year after her immigration, Annie would have told her sister Mary and perhaps several others that she would be having a baby without the benefits of having a husband.

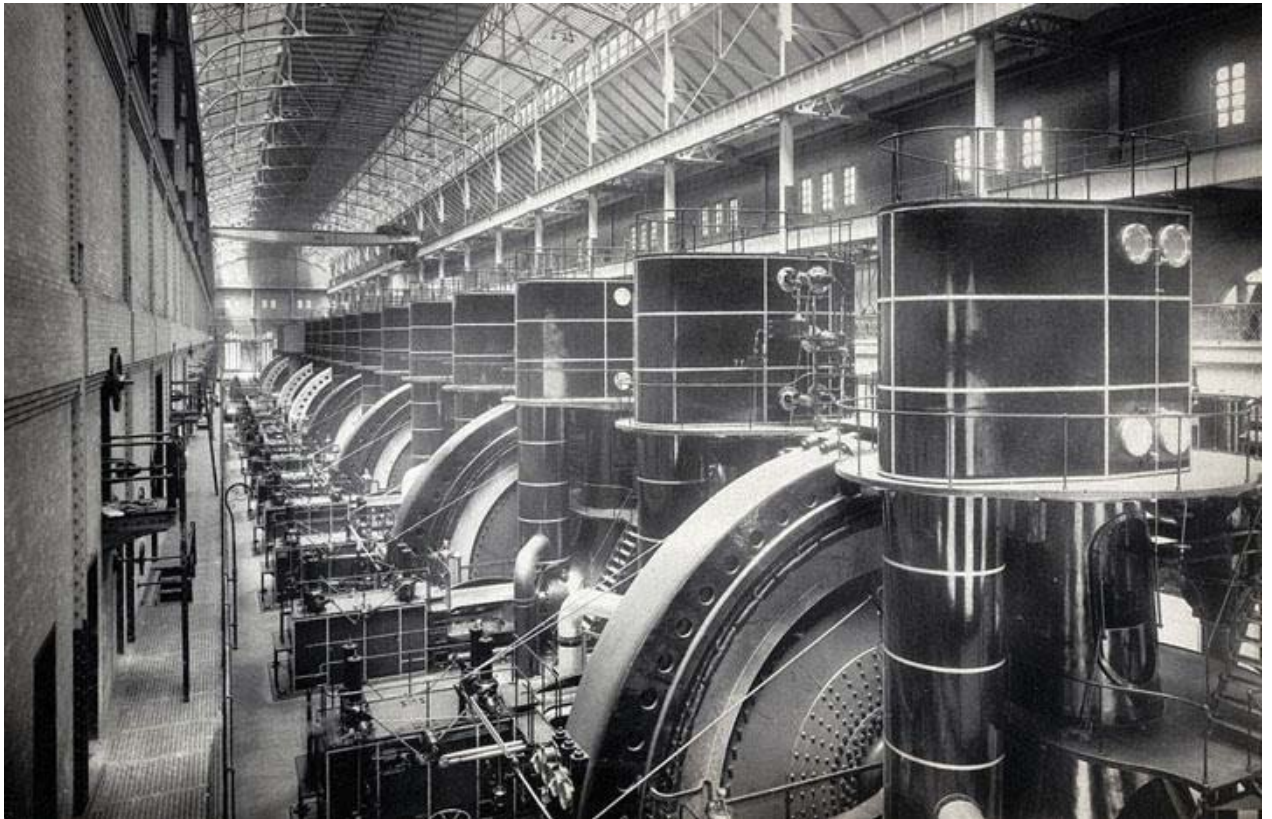


Figure 30 Interior view of the IRT subway powerhouse at 58th and 59th Street in 1904

At some point in the late spring or early summer of 1904, Annie Gray would have sought a place of psychological comfort and refuge from the reproofing glances of more advantaged and conventional New Yorkers. Perhaps older sister Mary might have learned about nearby supportive resources of the Irish-American Catholic Church, and suggested this recourse to Annie. In all likelihood, John McMurphy would have been unwilling or unable to provide either emotional or financial support to Annie, especially if he already had other mouths to feed in his immigrant Manhattan neighborhood. At age 19, Annie Gray was essentially left to her own devices to navigate the remaining months of her pregnancy.

Fortunately, there was the New York Mother s Home of the Sisters of Misericordia for destitute women, and unmarried girls hitherto respectable, who were about to become mothers, according to James J Walsh in his 1919 book *History of Medicine in New York*. Known as Rosalie Hall, the Sisters maintained accommodations for as many as 125 women who paid nothing for their room and board and for as many as 30 women who were able to pay for a single room there.

5.4 Birth and death among the Misericordia Nuns at Rosalie Hall

The Misericordia religious order traces its founding to a Canadian widow and midwife named Marie-Rosalie Cadron Jette. She was a native of Quebec and founded the order in Montreal after the death of her husband there in 1832. She took religious vows, then focused the order on the mission of tending to unwed mothers, initially providing care from her own home before establishing other homes for these disrespected young pregnant women. Sister Marie-Rosalie is now of the pathway to sainthood for her heroic virtue and sustained charitable efforts, having been designated as Venerable by Pope Francis in December 2013.

In 1887, New York Archbishop Michael Corrigan persuaded Montreal s prelate, Archbishop Fabre, to dispatch five Misericordia Sisters to Staten Island to help a local New York priest care for poor unwed pregnant women. According to the New York Medical College s History of Our Lady of Mercy Medical Center website, the Sisters first settled on Staten Island, then Harlem, until their purchase of land on East 86th Street in rural Yorkville secured them a permanent home. The Sisters ministered to hundreds of young women. By 1893, 717 unwed mothers had been given free service, and all the general medical and surgical services of the time were offered.

In 1905, to reflect the broad work of the home, its name was changed to Misericordia Hospital. (www.nymc.edu)

At the time that O. Henry [William Sydney Porter] was writing *The Gift of the Magi* at Pete's Tavern on East 18th Street and Irving Place, a poignant story about a poor New York City couple preparing for the Christmas season, unwed young immigrant mother Theresa A. Gray was approaching her delivery date. It must have been an apprehensive Advent season at Rosalie Hall for Unwed Mothers. Perhaps the Misericordia nuns would have allowed Theresa's older sister Mary to visit as the due date approached. But it is unlikely that John McMurry would have visited the mother-to-be of his child, either because the nuns forbade such visits or because John would have wanted to disclaim any visitation rights. Either way, the arrival of Sebastian Gray at 531 East 86th Street on Wednesday, December 14th, 1904 would have been the occasion of very mixed emotions.

Life at Rosalie Hall in 1904 may have resembled to a great extent the daily life portrayed in the popular 2013 movie, *Philomena*. Certainly pregnant and unwed young women, usually economically deprived, came to live together under the control of a community of Catholic nuns before giving birth and then relinquishing their newborn children, though the film's setting was in Ireland rather than in Manhattan.



Figure 31 Renovated Yorkville neighborhood frame house dating from the mid-1800s. a structure likely similar to others along East 86th Street near Rosalie Hall - as posted on Yorkvillestoopstonots.blogspot.com

Hopefully, Annie Gray would have been treated with understanding and compassion by the nuns at Rosalie Hall. She undoubtedly wondered each passing day how her life might be repaired, and whether she might envision a future relationship with the child she bore. Moving through the weeks of her pregnancy, she would have spoken with the other Rosalie Hall residents about her daily anguish and about her hopes to salvage her sad immigrant life after the birth of her child.

It has been suggested, though not with any verifiable support, that Theresa A. Gray died in childbirth that December day. However, to-date, no New York City death certificate has been discovered. Conversations with today's successor to the Rosalie Hall organization have been minimally productive, allowing only that the records of those births and deaths remain sealed and unavailable in the Manhattan archives of the organization, again resembling the *Philomena* movie storyline.

There are several plausible explanations for not knowing what became of Annie Gray after delivering infant Sebastian Gray on that long-ago December 14th. One possible outcome was that Annie in fact died in childbirth at Rosalie Hall. Hemorrhagic uterine bleeding leading to hypovolemic shock was still a relatively common cause of maternal death in the early 1900s. In that scenario, the joyful birth of Sebastian Gray would have been followed by pronouncing new mother Annie Gray expired.

A second plausible explanation for the separation of mother and child would have been the reluctant or voluntary recruitment of Theresa A. Gray into the order of Misericordia Sisters after an appropriate post-partum recovery period and the placement of infant Sebastian Gray with a suitable Catholic institution – the Catholic Home Bureau. The recruitment of unwed mothers by the religious order has been reported to have taken place periodically, though it is not known whether this might have entailed an additional name change for the former unwed mother.

Yet a third explanation is that Theresa Gray successfully delivered Sebastian Gray and willingly surrendered her maternal rights, perhaps under some pressure from the attending nuns, and was later sent away from Rosalie Hall with the scriptural

admonition of go, and sin no more. As of this writing, it has not been determined which explanation most resembles reality.

One verifiable reality of the time took place on New Year's Eve of 1904. It was the inaugural New Year's Eve celebration in recently-renamed Times Square, an annual celebration that continues to this day. Neither Annie Gray or Sebastian Gray would have attended and observed the festivities, but perhaps John McMurry could have been in the crowd, unaware of the arrival of his son, Sebastian. The life story of Annie Garrahy, also known as Theresa A. Gray, remains a puzzling enigma.



Figure 32 New York City Tenement House with immigrant children pictured in
1910
Library of Congress photo

Chapter 6

SEBASTIAN GRAY

6.1 A ward of the New York Archdiocese and Catholic Home Bureau

In the chapter titled “*The Warren Harding Error: Why We Fall for Tall, Dark, and Handsome Men*,” journalist and popular author Malcolm Gladwell reminds us in his book, *Blink The Power of Thinking without Thinking* that people often allow their most deep-seated prejudices about physical attractiveness to influence and even make important decisions. (Gladwell) It can never be known with certainty the precise appeal or sexual attraction that a 40-year-old Irish immigrant bartender may have had for the Irish teenager, Annie Gray. We can only surmise that Annie’s romantic decision-making and acceptance was impaired by factors that cannot be understood two generations later on. That they became mutually and inappropriately attracted and involved in the spring of 1904 was made manifest by the birth of a son at East 86th Street in Manhattan’s then-déclassé Upper East Side in December 1904. The Misericordia nursing nuns attending the birth named him *Sebastian Gray* since the birth mother was unmarried.

Despite his socially-awkward and unplanned entry, Sebastian went on to become a remarkably accomplished young man and later life adult. He also became my father 39 years later.

It was an auspicious time to be born in America and in New York. Confidence-inspiring Theodore Roosevelt had been elected to his second term as US

President the previous month, horse-and-carriage-clogged New York City was booming with the opening of its new IRT subway system, and super-wealthy Scots-American industrialist Andrew Carnegie had just provided nearly \$5 billion [in today s dollars] to fund libraries, museums, and other marvelous nation-building institutions. Sadly, little of this burgeoning largesse would have enhanced the lot of a newborn Sebastian Gray in 1904 or subsequent years.

STATE OF NEW YORK DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH		No. of Certificate 949	
CERTIFICATE AND RECORD OF BIRTH			
Name of Child <i>Sebastian Gray</i>			
Sex	<i>Male</i>	Father's Name	<i>Barthender</i>
Color	<i>White</i>	Mother's Name	<i>Theresa A. Gray</i>
Date of Birth	<i>December 14 1904</i>	Mother's Maiden Name	
Place of Birth	<i>St. Paul's R.C. Ch.</i>	Mother's Birthplace	<i>N.Y.C.</i>
Father's Name	<i>John M. Gray</i>	Mother's Birthplace	<i>Ireland</i>
Father's Residence	<i>N.Y.C.</i>	Mother's Age	<i>19</i>
Father's Occupation	<i>Ireland</i>	Number of previous Children	<i>None</i>
Father's Age	<i>40</i>	How long since last Child	<i>One</i>
Name and address of person making this report		Signature	
Date of Recording <i>December 14 1904</i>		<i>[Signature]</i>	

Figure 33 Sebastian Gray s December 14, 1904 New York City Birth Certificate, indicating that both parents were born in Ireland

Sebastian Gray passed through many people's hands during the early years of his life, en route to his sudden death 65 years later in a Florida construction site accident. Many of those hands involved the Roman Catholic Church, ranging from the Misericordia Canadian midwife nuns who delivered him at Rosalie Hall Home for Unwed Mothers through the Catholic Home Bureau of New York City, to placement with adoptive Catholic parents who sent him to a Catholic college and ultimately to an exemplary life as a role model Catholic head of household with the name of Louis Sebastian Wescott.

Though he likely died without any in-depth knowledge of how the Catholic Home Bureau directed his life, Lou Wescott would have been grateful for their prudent ministrations during his infancy. The Bureau pre-qualified and then arranged for the transfer of baby Sebastian Gray to his adoptive parents in the early 1900s. The Catholic Home Bureau today is one of the consolidated non-profit entities of the New York Catholic Archdiocese's Catholic Guardian Services, providing a broad range of social and economic services to disadvantaged families and individuals throughout the metropolitan New York City region.

In 1899, the Bureau was a fledgling organization, recently founded by members of the St. Vincent de Paul Society of New York at the direction of Cardinal Hughes and his Diocesan lieutenants. Its stated purpose was to serve as the first agency in the U.S. to place orphaned children directly into private homes, rather than into orphanages or foundling institutions. In the first decade of the twentieth century, it was an ideal conduit for baby Sebastian Gray.

In a letter to one of his leading parishioners, Archbishop Hughes explained how this new Bureau would operate.

"Let one or two gentlemen be employed, one to keep office during the absence of the other, but one or the other to go abroad through the interior of the country, with good letters to make the acquaintance of the bishop of a diocese and the priest of a parishes well as such Catholic mechanics and farmers as might be disposed to receive one or other of the children who will come under your charge, and in the way let the children be in their house of protection just as short as possible. Their lot is, and is to be in one sense, a sufficiently hard one under any circumstances, but the sooner they know what it is to be, the better they will be prepared for encountering its trials and difficulties" (Letter to [B. Silliman Ives](#), 19 June, 1863).

The Saint Vincent de Paul Society of New York City [SVdP] was a lay Catholic organization of volunteers that performed a range of charitable services. Ensuring the welfare of orphaned infants and children was one of their major interest areas in the early 20th century. Working with the Catholic Archdiocese, members of the SVdP agreed in 1899 to establish the Catholic Home Bureau to better facilitate the transfer of orphaned New York area infants and children directly into the homes of carefully-vetted Catholic families who wanted to adopt. Sebastian Gray was one of the fortunate adoptees, but he did not learn of his adoption until he was 60 years old, just five years before his untimely accidental death.



Figure 34 Poster for the New York Children s Aid Society circa 1900 from The Adoption History Project www.darkwing.uoregon.edu

6.2 Difficult early life yields mid-life rewards

In 1965, Lou Wescott learned from the woman he believed was his older sister that he had been adopted as an infant by a Wescott family then living in Kane, Pennsylvania, the so-called "ice-box of Pennsylvania" for its severe Winter weather. This news was a substantial later-life "ice bucket" shock to Lou, who had never suspected that his parents and his sister were not blood relatives.

Lou had believed that his ancestry was both Irish and English, since his mother, Mary Smith, had emigrated to the U.S. from England before marrying Earl Wescott. The actuality of Lou's birth in Manhattan to unwed Irish immigrants did not become known until forty-two years after his death.

The name on the State of New York CERTIFICATE AND RECORD OF BIRTH is simply *Sebastian Gray*. Additional document notations are minimal. Sebastian was a white male born on December 14, 1904 to 19-year-old Theresa A. Gray. Residing at Rosalie Hall Home for Unwed Mothers on East 86th Street in Manhattan s Yorkville, she was native to Ireland. The father s name was John McMurry a New York City bartender, age 40 and also born in Ireland. Sebastian s birth also marked the exit of both parents from his life. His benign and hidden adoption process began on the day of his birth.

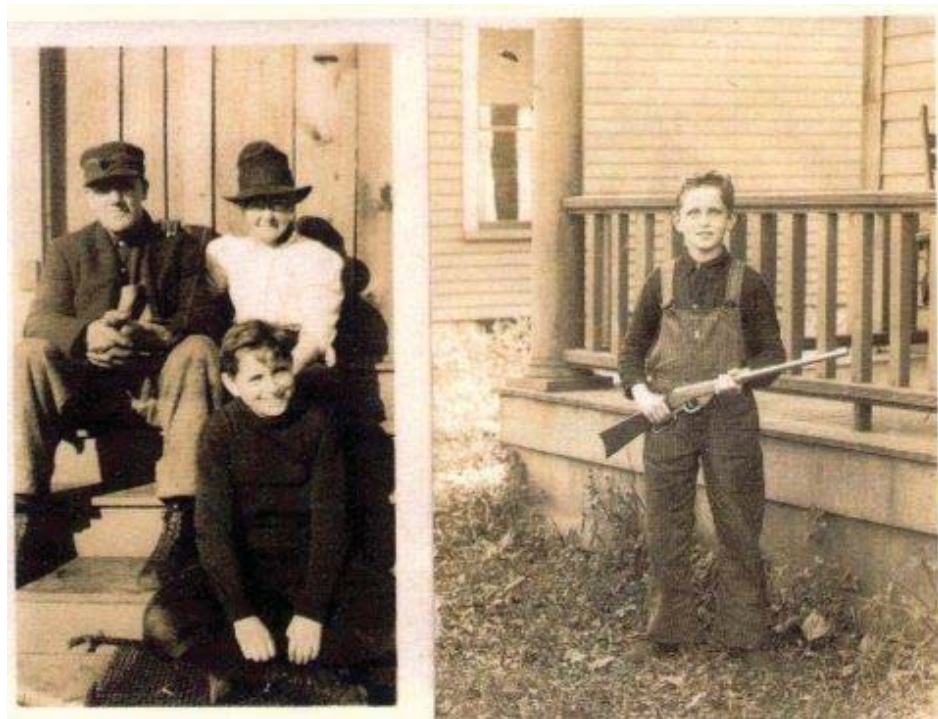


Figure 35 Louis Wescott [Sebastian Gray] with his adoptive parents Earl and Mary Smith Wescott at his boyhood home in North Olean, NY circa 1915 [family photos]

Olean, New York in the early 1900s was a timber, railroad and manufacturing center for western New York State and neighboring parts of northwestern Pennsylvania. It was both prosperous and gritty, a reasonably cosmopolitan smaller city for the well-to-do, but a hardscrabble community for working class families like the Earl Wescott family.

North Olean was a rough-and-tumble section of town, with both Polish and so-called shanty Irish neighborhoods. Earl and Mary Wescott lived in a modest frame house in the Irish neighborhood with their adopted daughter Sarah and son Louis. In the few family photographs available, the surrounding yard appears to be mostly well-worn dirt with no evident landscaping. Earl's job as a mechanic in the Pennsylvania Railroad's Olean maintenance yards was steady work, though Earl was excessively fond of whiskey, according to his son Lou, and periodically failed to show up at his job for days when he was disabled by a significant bender. Despite these recurrences, Earl kept his railroad job and even qualified for a life railroad travel pass when he retired.

Mary Smith Wescott, herself an immigrant from England, was also the keystone figure in the family. She was a hard-working woman with strong ethical values, according to Lou, and exerted a strong positive influence on the two children. Mary took in neighbors' laundry to earn pocket money for the family, and also cleaned neighbors' homes, hiding the cash from Earl so that he would not use it to purchase more whiskey. Mary, Sarah, and Louis cowered together in fear when Earl would return to the house after a day or more of steady alcohol consumption. Earl was a large man who could be loud and obnoxious after drinking too much.

Mary Wescott instilled her personal values in her son Louis, telling him at an early age that he had great potential to excel in school by working hard and then make a good living in adult life. Lou Wescott obviously accepted his mother's opinions and beliefs, securing a neighborhood *Saturday Evening Post* weekly magazine route at the age of 12 and saving his earnings so that he could buy a bicycle and complete his route more efficiently.

Still, Lou Wescott's early life was not easy. Some of his *Saturday Evening Post* customers lived in the especially inhospitable Polish immigrant neighborhood of North Olean where the Polish-American boys would intercept the small-statured Louis and chase him with sticks as he rode past on his delivery route. Lou saved everything he earned throughout his early teen years in order to become the family's first college student. As an Olean High School student, Lou excelled. He graduated in three years, becoming class valedictorian at age 16. He was also modest and self-effacing, a trait that persisted throughout his life.

When he was accepted by the Augustinian Catholic order's Villanova University in suburban Philadelphia, Lou and his mother Mary were thrilled by the prospect of having a college graduate in the Wescott family. It was an immigrant's dream fulfilled. Mary Smith Wescott had saved a significant sum of money from her work as laundress and house-cleaner. She contributed all that she had earned over those years to her son's college education. Lou continued to work during his years as a Villanova undergraduate, bussing tables in the Dougherty Hall dining area and doing other odd jobs around campus. He also arrived on campus shortly after the introduction of intercollegiate basketball there in 1920, and became a lifelong fan and supporter of the sport. It was a compelling and formative period in Lou Wescott's

young life. He was an honors graduate with a Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering degree in the class of 1925.

In a later life conversation, he confessed to me that he would have rather majored in English literature that I really loved, but there was no money in it. I chose engineering instead because I thought that somebody would always be willing to hire engineers. (Personal conversation of Lou and Phil Wescott)

Lou Wescott became a proficient and sought-after professional engineer. He began his civil engineering career as a member of a horseback land surveying team mapping out highway paths across the woods of northern Pennsylvania in the mid-1920s.

Later, he joined a large Pittsburgh design and engineering firm that built highways, bridges, airports and other major public works projects. He advanced to become chief engineer on multiple high-salience projects including the building of mountainous West Virginia's first municipal airport.

Lou Wescott's life changed dramatically for the better a few years after he graduated from Villanova. He had begun dating the lovely young Chestnut Hill College music major coed Genevieve Theresa Flynn of Olean, a young woman clearly from the right side of the tracks. They had ridden the Philadelphia-to-Olean train route together during their college years, and now civil engineer Lou Wescott had accumulated sufficient work history and savings to ask for Genevieve's hand in marriage. Her patrician wealthy father, Will Flynn, granted them permission to marry in 1931. Lou Wescott married into the wealthy and socially-prominent lace curtain Irish Flynn family of Olean for the right reason—he was smitten with this shy lovely Genevieve Theresa.

10-20-2020 (10-20-2020)

Notice to Town and City Clerks. This form is to be used only by town and city clerks for making copies of marriage records to be filed with county clerks. It must not be given to applicants for marriage licenses or used by clergymen or magistrates for the certification of a marriage.

PLACE OF REGISTRY
STATE OF NEW YORK

NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Division of Vital Statistics

MARRIAGE LICENSE

Registered No. 5472

County of Catt.

Town or City of Glenn

Know all men by this Certificate, that any person authorized by law to perform marriage ceremonies within the state of New York to whom this may come, be, not knowing any lawful impediment thereto, is hereby authorized and empowered to solemnize the rites of matrimony between:

Louis Sebastian Wescott of Illigary and state of New York

and Genevieve Teresa Flynn of Glenn and state of New York

in the County of Glenn and state of New York and to certify the same to be said parties or either of them under his hand and seal in his ministerial or official capacity and thereupon he is required to return his certificate in the form hereto annexed. The statements endorsed hereon or annexed hereto, by me subscribed, contain a full and true abstract of all the facts concerning such parties disclosed by their affidavits or verified statements presented to me upon the application for this license.

In Testimony Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed the seal of said Town or City at

Glenn, N.Y. this thirty-one day of September 1931

SEAL

John Joseph

The following is a full and true abstract of all the facts disclosed by the above-named applicants in their verified statements presented to me upon their applications for the above license:

FROM THE GROOM

Full name Louis Sebastian Wescott

Color White

Place of residence 27 Parthorne Ave.,

Glenn, N.Y.

Age 25 Date of birth Dec. 16, 1906

Occupation Engineer

Place of birth Glenn, N.Y.

Name of groom's father Carl H. Wescott

Country of father's birth U.S.A.

Maiden name of groom's mother U.S.A.

Country of mother's birth U.S.A.

Number of proposed marriage First

I have not to my knowledge been infected with any venereal disease, or if I have been so infected within five years I have had a laboratory test within that period which shows that I am now free from infection from any such disease.

Former wife or wives None

Living or dead None

Is applicant a divorced person No

If so, when and where, and against whom divorce or divorces were granted None

I declare that no legal impediment exists as to my right to enter into the marriage state.

FROM THE BRIDE

Full name Genevieve Teresa Flynn

Color White

Place of residence 27 Parthorne Ave.,

Glenn, N.Y.

Age 25 Date of birth Oct. 1, 1906

Occupation None

Place of birth Glenn, N.Y.

Name of bride's father Carl H. Wescott

Country of father's birth U.S.A.

Maiden name of bride's mother U.S.A.

Country of mother's birth U.S.A.

Number of proposed marriage First

I have not to my knowledge been infected with any venereal disease, or if I have been so infected within five years I have had a laboratory test within that period which shows that I am now free from infection from any such disease.

Former husband or husbands None

Living or dead None

Is applicant a divorced person No

If so, when and where, and against whom divorce or divorces were granted None

I declare that no legal impediment exists as to my right to enter into the marriage state.

COUNTY CLERK COPY

FUTURE ADDRESS (Name and EXACT FUTURE ADDRESS after marriage if known)

27 Parthorne Ave., East Glens Falls, N.Y.

Figure 36 September 23, 1931 Marriage License of Louis Sebastian Wescott and Genevieve Teresa Flynn



Figure 37 September 1931 wedding of Louis S. Wescott [Sebastian Gray] to Genevieve T. Flynn in Olean, New York

After their wedding, Lou politely declined offers of family financial assistance during the early years of married life together, with the full agreement of his young

wife Genevieve. She periodically remarked that she knew her young husband was very smart and could provide for her and a family through efforts of his own.

Lou and Genevieve had four children, including a son who died in infancy. They relocated often throughout their first dozen years together; Lou was valued by his employer as an effective and efficient engineering manager, and was periodically re-deployed to crucial shifting major project assignments on short notice. It was a recurring source of stress for Genevieve to disrupt a successful household and attempt new daily life patterns in unfamiliar locations. These repeated dislocations and the loss of her infant son were clearly life event factors in Genevieve's early-onset clinical depression. Ultimately, in 1958, Lou lost his wife to major depressive disorder.

During the early years of World War II, Lou was dispatched to clear the terrain and begin the sophisticated site preparations for the Department of the Army Corps of Engineers' Oak Ridge, Tennessee Manhattan Project. His contributions to that huge and important project were noted years later in a citation when he was awarded an Honorary Doctorate by his alma mater, Villanova University.

In 1950, he established the L.S. Wescott Construction Company in Pittsburgh and began bidding on major state and federal highway projects. A meticulous professional engineer who routinely worked 60-hour work weeks, he was often successful in winning large contracts, including for sections of the Pennsylvania Turnpike. He was also proud that he was able to hire many hard-working tradesmen and immigrant laborers wanting to gain a foothold in the American economy.



Figure 38 Shift change at the Oak Ridge, TN Y12 Uranium Enrichment plant in 1943 at the site cleared by Lou Wescott's engineering crew in 1942

6.3 Adoption revealed in later life

On a visit to his sister's residence in Hornell, New York in 1965, Lou Wescott learned that he had been adopted nearly 60 years before. He was stunned. He asked his sister, Sarah, why nobody had told him earlier in his life. Apparently Earl and Mary Wescott had asked Sarah to not disclose the adoption to young Louis and she had maintained her silence for nearly a lifetime.

Sarah did not tell Lou his original birth name or the identity of his birth parents, probably because she herself did not have this information or the adoption records of Earl and Mary Wescott. Over the next year after this later life disclosure, Lou was able to attain some perspective and acceptance of the reality that he had lived

his life not knowing of his adoption. He decided that he was still very blessed in his life.

On balance, Lou Wescott enjoyed a good life, living to see his three surviving children marry and have children of their own. He became a more available grandparent than he had been as a parent consumed by the demands of his career. While his wife Genevieve outlived him, he was extraordinarily devoted to her nursing home care until the day he died on a large construction project in Pompano Beach, Florida. Lou Wescott is buried in the St. Mary's of Pine Creek cemetery close to his infant son David, in suburban Pittsburgh.



Figure 39 Lou Wescott in 1957 with his first grandson Bruce and his youngest child Phil Wescott



Figure 40 First generation Irish-American Lou Wescott awarded honorary doctorate at 1958 Villanova University Commencement

Chapter 7

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

7.1 The Immigrant Experience – Illusion, Disillusion, Potential Resolution

Both academic and specific professional organizations and individuals have devoted years and even working careers to gaining enhanced understandings of migration, emigration, and immigration. For example, Fordham University and New York University both allocate substantial organizational resources to researching and publishing further insights into the New York Immigrant experience. Likewise, the American Psychological Association [APA] has made immigration a major focus for enlightening its thousands of professional psychologists in its membership.

In its comprehensive 2011-2012 examination of psychological factors involved in immigration, the APA produced a valuable evidence-based report titled *CROSSROADS: The Psychology of Immigration in the New Century*, referring primarily to the twenty-first century but also relevant to the time period dealt with in this thesis. The APA Task Force on Immigration that produced the report that is fundamentally encouraging to those engaged in today's immigration policy issues. The report begins with examining the literature about immigrants as individuals, deriving three conclusions that immigrants are resilient and resourceful despite the issue being framed by the politicians and the media as a social problem in need of solving; that recently-arrived immigrants face many stressors and risks, but they nonetheless perform more effectively in their new surroundings than do their

counterparts who remained behind in the country of origin; and that the human immigration experience is the result highly-variable reciprocal interactions between individuals and the social environment.

In examining the important dimension of immigrant acculturation, the report's authors conclude that this is a multidimensional process involving change in language competence and usage, cultural identity, attitudes and values, food and music preferences, media use and many others. This psychological acculturation is dynamic and occurs in phases as the immigrant gains feedback from the local community of resettlement. A further important acculturation factor is the age of the immigrant, being easier for children and especially difficult for the elderly immigrant. (American Psychological Association) Some of the APA Report findings may seem obvious, but they are essential to keep in mind when we examine the individual immigrant's attempt to acculturate and assimilate.

Other generalized conclusions about welcoming / assimilating immigrants into a new land and culture include:

- Immigration is typically driven by deep and persistent dissatisfaction with perceived prospects for a satisfying life in adulthood. It is a rational economic and psychological response to a limiting or even repressive social environment.
- Immigrating involves both intense introspection about personal life satisfiers as well as insightful analysis of a range of possible implications and enduring/ probably lifelong outcomes.
- Immigrating is difficult and arduous, but often not as challenging as achieving assimilation into the new culture and economy.

- The immigration process is fraught with periodic disappointments and daily frustrations. Managing expectations is essential for the immigrant.
- The availability of a multi-faceted socio-economic support structure in the adopted land greatly improves the likelihood of successful assimilation and major life satisfiers, though some immigrant assimilations succeed without the availability of such welcoming support structures.
- Immigration typically involves dreams deferred. It may not be possible to achieve the envisioned improvement in quality-of-life indicators during the immigrant's lifetime.
- American acculturation is an especially delicate process for the immigrant or for first-generation American offspring. As University of California sociology professor Claude S. Fischer writes "America is more of a club than a family" we're used to choosing to join together for a goal or not whenever we want to. This ideological impulse of Americans makes it more challenging for the immigrant to truly grasp this elusive American mindset. Fischer continues "American voluntarism is the merging of our individualistic and communal strains, the world-view that individuals forge their distinct fates with like-minded people in groups that they have individually, freely chosen to join and are individually free to leave." (Fischer)

Some generalized conclusions about the Irish-American Immigrant Experience in New York 1891 to 1904:

- The departure of so many young, talented, and often desperate Irish men and

women over successive generations may have constituted a problematic brain drain for Ireland's national economy, But it contributed paradoxically to the expansion of Irish culture and traditions across the English-speaking world at a time when the English-speaking world was asserting its prominence, thus influencing a far larger population than would have been the case without these waves of Irish-American immigration.

- The Irish economy of the 20th and 21st century has experienced a welcome boost as a result of so many affluent English-speaking sons and daughters, grandsons and granddaughters of Irish immigrants returning to the auld sod in search of ancestral linkages. This writer is among those returning to learn about from whence we came.
- Then, as now, the lyric of a popular 1979 Frank Sinatra song encapsulates the young immigrant's empowering illusion:

*Start spreading the news
I am leaving today
I want to be a part of it
New York, New York...*

*My little town blues
They are melting away
I'm gonna make a brand new start of it
In old New York*

If I can make it there

*I'll make it anywhere
It's up to you
New York, New York*

Copyright 1979 Francis Albert Sinatra

7.2 Postscript from Dublin via Outer Mongolia

Immigrants are role models for humanity, often unwittingly. Their migratory behavior inspires those of us who benefited but did not undertake intrepid, enduring, often irrevocable life change.

During my genealogy research trip to Ireland in June of 2013, I spoke with a Mongolian woman in her mid-thirties named Una working in a Dublin *Centra* neighborhood tea shop. After briefly describing my family history research in County Clare, I asked about her own decision-making process and subsequent assimilation / acculturation experiences as a Mongolian-Irish immigrant.

Native to Ulan Bator, Una assessed her potential and probable life satisfaction if she remained in Ulan Bator, wed to a Mongolian man. Then in her mid-twenties and responsible for rearing her eight-year-old daughter, she assessed her life options. Her family of origin expected to continue living in Mongolia, but Una decided that economic progress and self-determination for females were very important to her. She also believed that educational opportunities for her child would be more available outside her native land. She acknowledged the difficulty of leaving her Asian family and culture, but courageously assessed potential places to establish a new home where her daughter might enjoy benefits that Una had not had.

Una analyzed plausible options, including emigrating to other Asian countries. She concluded that full acceptance as a Mongolian immigrant would actually be less likely in China, Japan, or Korea than it would possibly be in Western Europe.

Well educated by Mongolian standards and speaking some English, Una determined that the Republic of Ireland offered her and her daughter the best option for acceptance and entry-level employment, though she had no family or Mongolian-specific social support in Dublin. After their arrival in Dublin, Una found that Irish authorities provided them ready acceptance and better housing than she had in Ulan Bator.

After nearly nine years living and working in Dublin, Una had attained a reasonable level of socio-economic comfort, and developed strong English language proficiency. She believes that her daughter, now completing high school and fluent in both English and the Irish language, has better employment and cultural acceptance prospects than Una could have imagined when she embarked for her new life in Ireland. This willing and selfless deferral of Una's own comfort and mid-life aspirations in favor of creating opportunity for the next generation seems to be a common behavior of many immigrants.

I also observe this steadfast immigrant courage within my own family relationships. My elder daughter Kim married an American-born Chinese [so-called ABC] man whose parents came to Chicago as teenagers from the Toisan region of South China. Descended from generations of rice farmers working tiny plots and living with few material possessions, they have become culturally comfortable and economically prosperous by sustaining their intense assimilation focus and by capitalizing quickly on emerging educational and commercial opportunities. In their

assessment, the travail and the affronts and rejection of the established Caucasian power structure have been a reasonable and remunerative trade-off.

My younger daughter Kristen has embarked on a decade-long reverse migration, exchanging her comfortable and familiar Manhattan lifestyle for a demanding Franco-centric lifestyle as wife of a native Parisian, now rearing three bilingual and bi-cultural children of her own. Many days and many weeks, her life is beset with perplexing customs and bureaucratic requirements. Yet, she persists, overcoming acculturation challenges to attain both French citizenship and a Paris Driver's License. It has been by turns frustrating and tearful, but also soul-stirring and self-satisfying for this daughter.

And so these intrepid migratory movements continue, with gut-level cost versus benefit calculations and estimates of life factor fulfillment made repeatedly by Mongolians, Irish, ethnic Chinese, Americans, and by individuals in every nation. Some of these intrepid migrations will prove to be intolerably disruptive, and ultimately unsustainable. But for so many other immigrants who sacrifice the known and the familiar in pursuit of a motivating illusion, it becomes a bright portal for them and for their progeny.

7.3 Melding genealogy with genomic technology

A variety of scientists and commercial entrepreneurs have understood the implications of and economic potential for blending traditional genealogy methods and resources with advances in understanding the human genome. For example, a handful of ambitious Scots launched the website www.irelandsdna.com in 2012 to capitalize on a narrow market segment of curious and perhaps gullible English-speaking affluents, offering to trace your genetic inheritance beyond the written

record, uniquely blending science and history to help you discover your ancient ancestry through YDNA (fatherline) and mtDNA (motherline) testing for a mere 220 to 250 Euro. (irelandsDNA)

The demand for deeper insights into our origins and migratory pathway is clearly growing, as motivated individuals and families seek to understand their inherited traits and health susceptibilities, and perhaps to eventually explore the possibility of so-called designer baby offspring. It is in mankind's genome to attempt to apply what has been recently learned.

Despite the substantial misgivings of religious leaders and bioethicists, molecular biology holds forth the possibility of an aspirational Darwinian intervention and chromosomal migration into our core evolutionary pathways. We can only imagine how the immigration process of the future might be influenced by the engineering of chromosomal refinements and enhancements that could redefine our understandings of race, ethnicity, and geo-defined community.

As Seamus Heaney once observed, writing perhaps like human migration is a journey where each point of arrival turned out to be a steppingstone rather than a destination.

*"Cast a cold Eye
On Life, on Death
Horseman, pass by!"*

- Self-written epitaph on W.B. Yeats' headstone in Drumcliffe, County Sligo

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