

Emigration Story

THE JOURNEY



BY MIKE LAFFEY

*This book is Dedicated to
Mom, Dad, Helen, David, Jack,
Rita, Tom, Claire and Jimmy.*

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BY MIKE LAFFEY

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Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe
Galway County Council



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DAVID LAFFEY, 1897-1957.

PROLOGUE

DAVID LAFFEY

1897-1957

My father was the most remarkable man in my lifetime. David Laffey (1897-1957) was born a son of Michael Laffey (1858-1939) and Ellen Mahoney (1859-1943) in the townland of Ballinruane, Menlough, Ballinasloe, County Galway, Ireland, on October 16th, 1897.

My dad had a lifespan of only sixty years. During his life, he proved to be a hero to his eight children, whom he raised without his partner and wife Mary, who died at the early age of 41 from pneumonia on November 16th, 1938 during the historic Great Depression of the 1930's.

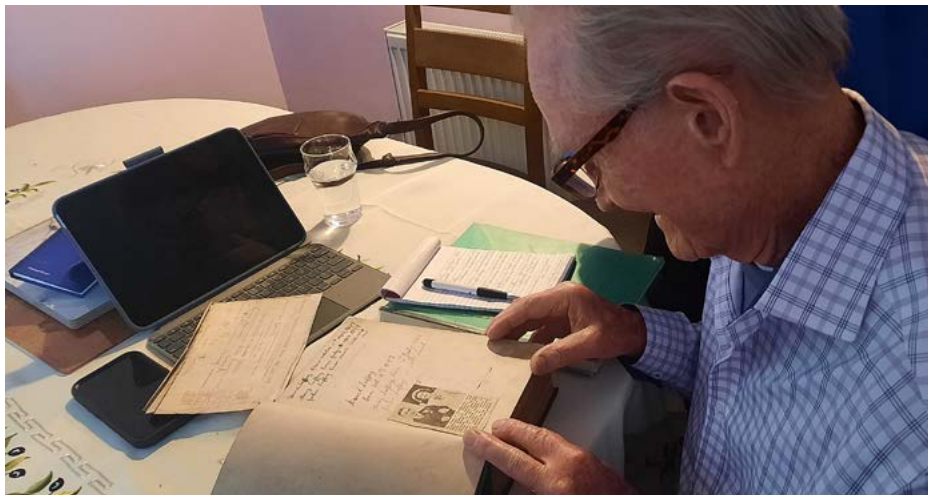
This is his story...



Mike Laffey when he returned first to Ireland at the Menlough sign and later in 2023, 40 years after first photo was taken.

CHAPTER ONE

Windfield Road, Menlough, County Galway



Mike is reading his Grandmother's bible (Ellen Laffey nee Mahoney) where she has written his father David's name and birth date. This was a huge tradition during this period.

Young David age seven years of age hears his mom Mary coming into his bedroom to arise him for the start a new day. David gets dressed and kisses mom and goes out the back door with his wellington boots on and plants his feet on the farmlands of his father Michael that has been home to Laffey families for over centuries of time. David catches up with dad as he is rounding up the cows for their 7 a.m. milking. As he watches his dad milking the cows he dreams of the day when he can relieve him this chore. Mom calls David in for breakfast consisting of eggs, sausage and brown bread that just came out of the oven and for the mile walk to St. Joseph's National School with his neighborhood friends. David is the oldest of three children followed by Mary and John.



Mary married a Menlough farmer Jack Collins resulting in a family of five children.



The tombstone in the Killascobe cemetery with the inscription of Cormac Laffey – 1778.

David's father Michael (1860) was the son of David (1822-1905) who was the son of Cormac (1720-1778) all of whom raised their families on the Laffey Windfield farm. There is a tombstone in the Killascobe cemetery with the inscription of Cormac Laffey – 1778.

According to the 1911 census Dad attended St. Joseph's school, Ballinruane, Menlough, and graduated after eight years with the ability to speak Gaelic in addition to his English. Now working full time David loved working beside his dad on the farm and at the age of seventeen growing up to be a strong young man doing the heavy work hoeing the farmland and driving the heavy farm machinery. After working on the farm during the week David enjoyed the week with his buddies playing football at the Menlough GAA Stadium on Saturday and Sundays. Later enjoying Sunday evening at Melody'



St. Joseph's school, Ballinruane, Menlough



Menlough GAA Stadium.

pub drinking stout and dancing with the young maidens with music provided from a four-piece band. His father Michael and mother Ellen were proud of the way he has grown up to be a most responsible young man and farmer whose name was inserted on the Land Documents that stated that he would inherit the farm upon his father's death.

(A.) COUNTY OF Galway COUNTY HEALTH DISTRICT OF Galway UNION OF Mountbellew 12

Townland of Ballinacraun O.S. 59 Rural District of Mountbellew Electoral Division of Derryglassan

Reference to Map	NAME		Description of Tenement	Statutory Acreage												OCCUPATION	
	Original	Substrate Tenement		Acre			Roods			Perches			Total				
19-20	<u>Joseph Spence</u> <u>John Spence</u>	In fee L.A.P.	No off land	53	2	36	2	0	15	0	1	0	0	2	15	0	587
21	<u>Thomas Gallagher</u>	In fee L.A.P.		14	2	12	6	5	0	0	15	0	0	7	0	0	
22	<u>Patrick Hanberry</u> <u>1897</u>	In fee L.A.P.		33	3	36	6	15	0	0	10	0	0	7	5	0	592
23	<u>David Laffey</u> <u>1902</u>	In fee L.A.P.		46	3	22	5	15	0	0	10	0	0	6	5	0	20 1902
24A	<u>Edward Henry</u>	In fee L.A.P.		7	0	21	1	10	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	31 10 0
24B	<u>John Kelly</u> <u>Thomas James</u> <u>Thomas James</u>	In fee L.A.P.	No off land	4	3	0	0	5	0	4	15	0	0	5	0	0	24 3 0
25	<u>Thomas Laffey</u> <u>Thomas Laffey</u>	In fee L.A.P.	No off land	11	2	10	2	15	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	30 22 1902
26	<u>White Derrygan</u>	In fee L.A.P.	Land	40	1	20	10	5	0	0	0	0	0	10	5	0	109 2

Land Documents, Laffey transfers 1914-1927.

COUNTY OF Galway COUNTY HEALTH DISTRICT OF Galway 12

Townland of Ballinacraun O.S. 59 Electoral Division of Derryglassan

Reference to Map	NAME		Description of Tenement	Statutory Acreage												OCCUPATION	
	Original	Substrate Tenement		Acre			Roods			Perches			Total				
19-20	<u>Patrick Kennedy</u>	In Fee L.A.P.	No off land	52	2	24	2	0	15	0	1	0	0	2	15	0	56 14 0 1/2
21	<u>Thomas Gallagher</u>	In Fee L.A.P.	No off land	14	2	12	6	5	0	0	15	0	0	7	0	0	58 2 1/2
22	<u>John Hanberry</u>	In Fee L.A.P.	No off land	13	2	10	6	15	0	0	10	0	0	7	5	0	33 10 0 1/2
23	<u>David Laffey</u> <u>Michael Laffey</u>	In Fee L.A.P.	No off land	10	2	22	5	15	0	0	10	0	0	6	5	0	30 22 1902
24A	<u>Edward Henry</u>	In Fee L.A.P.	No off land	7	0	21	1	10	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	31 10 0
24B	<u>John Kelly</u>	In Fee L.A.P.	No off land	4	3	0	0	5	0	4	15	0	0	5	0	0	24 3 0
25	<u>Thomas Laffey</u>	In Fee L.A.P.	Land	11	2	10	2	15	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	30 22 1902

Land Documents, Laffey transfers 1965.

The younger son of the family John had graduated from St. Joseph's National School and was doing light work helping David in the farm chores but he knew what the family legacy was and he realized that someday he would have to follow the route of many of young men and ladies of Ireland who would leave homeland and find a new life abroad. Michael and Ellen had been preparing John for the time when the time would come to leave Windfield Road. Michael and Ellen decided that John would travel to Liverpool, England to set up a new life. Liverpool was the fifth largest city in United Kingdom that had provided many opportunities of employment for young Menlough men in the hotel, health care and construction industries.

That day came when John reached the age of seventeen. Michael had a contact in Liverpool who had a successful business in finding room and board and work as a laborer for young Menlough men like John as a startup position. Many had then branched out to other opportunities. Michael's contact set John up with a room in an apartment building that housed young emigrants and a job on a construction site.

John wrote a letter home informing his dad and mom that he had settled in and was doing fine, that he will be communicating often. Unfortunately, this was the last letter that his parents received. John being just seventeen years old, in a new country and no guidance began to make some bad choices. Resulting in him drifting from job to job barely making enough money to pay the rent. Thankfully Michael and Ellen's contact in Liverpool reached out to them about John and suggested to bring John home. Michael wired money to the contact who put John on the passage boat that made daily trips between Galway and Liverpool. Michael and Mary were most disappointed with this news and didn't fully realized that bringing John home would result a situation that they didn't expect.



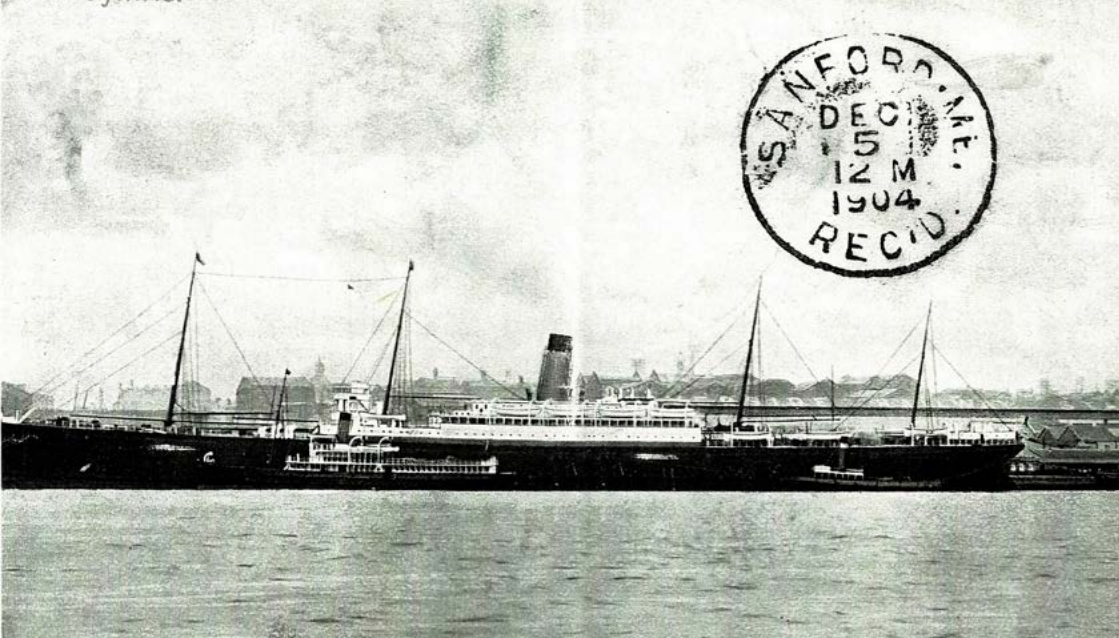
c. 1938 Windfield Rd.

Left to right: Johnny Gilligan (neighbour and farmhand), John Laffey, Delia Laffey (nee Scanlon).

Children at front, left to right: Tommy Laffey, Eileen Laffey, Mikey Laffey and David Laffey.

When Michael picked up John at the ship docking site, he saw a disheveled young man. John would be home for good. David was very sad when John left for Liverpool but was shocked upon seeing his brother on his return from Liverpool. As time went by Michael and Ellen would spend evening after evening in conversation with tears in their eyes realizing that it was apparent that John would have to stay on the family farm where he could be looked after.

After many hours of conversation, always ended with the tearful decision that the Laffey farm was not big enough for both David and John. David would have to leave his beloved Windfield farm to make way for his young brother. Michael and Ellen asked David to sit down for a family meeting that began with Michael and Ellen saying how much they loved him and how much he gave to the Laffey farm and what they were going to say would require



The S.S. *Cymric* passenger ship.

a sacrifice; the sacrifice for him to leave Windfield Road for abroad David was stunned with what he was hearing and that his life was now turned upside down. David broke down in tears and seemed incapable of believing what he just heard from his parents. This night turned out to be just the first of many sit down conversations among David his mom and dad and would tell him how he grew to be one of the top young farmers on Windfield Road and well respected by all.

David's father Michael Laffey was told that some neighbours children Martin Warde, James Warde and Thady Hansberry had booked a passage to New York sailing from Liverpool on the SS Cymric on 2nd June 1915. They were being sponsored by a Kitty Warde, Aunt of the Warde brothers who resided in 214 West 92nd Street New York City.



From left to right: Jackie Ward, James Ward and Kitty Ward.

After communicating with Kitty Ward she informed Michael that she could indeed sponsor David at her residence however, she could only provide a month's lodging due to lack of space. Kitty also informed Michael that David could then follow the successful route that a few other Irish immigrants made by continuing onto Philadelphia by bus to the Irish Brother Boarding Home, located at 1254 South 50th Street, Philadelphia. Kitty provided Michael with the means to make the necessary communication and arrangements with the Philadelphia Boarding Home.

Michael and David were now ready to visit the Galway Emigration office to process the necessary paperwork for a working visa and passport and was time to book passage on the *S.S. Cymric* that meant David would have the Ward brothers and Hansberry for company for the entire journey of eleven days at sea.

CHAPTER 2

David's Voyage to Ellis Island, New York City



Ellis Island, New York City.

After arriving at Liverpool the Ward brothers, Hansberry and David were ready for their journey to America that proved to be very interesting for young David being away from Windfield for the first time and being on a ship for the first time. The food was fine enough with evenings listening to music and dancing in the main ballroom. There were many other young men and women aboard who were making the trip to Ellis Island and they all had much in common. It was very easy for the Ward brothers and Hansberry and David to fit in.



Harry Aloysius Lafferty
 Jane O'Connor Lafferty
 John McRae Lafferty
 Joseph J. Lafferty
 The Lafferty Family
 The Lafferty Family
 Neal Lafferty
 William J. Lafferty
 Anna Geraghty Laffey
 Bridgett Laffey
 David Laffey
 John Joseph Laffey
 John Laffey
 Julia Laffey
 Myles J. Laffey
 Myles Laffey
 Sloan Laffey
 Thomas Peter Laffey
 Maria Deldon Laffranchi
 Pietro Giuseppe Laffranchi
 August C. Lafin
 Dominick and Mary Lafiosca
 The Giuseppe Lafiosca Family
 The Lucrezia Nobile Lafiosca
 Family
 Joe LaFirenza
 James C. Lafkas
 Thomas A. Lafkas
 Ann Slyt LaFleur
 Alexis Lafond
 Louis Michel LaFond
 Lucie Marcoux LaFond
 Terri Passas LaFond

New York skyline from the Emigrant's Wall, Ellis Island, where David Laffey's name is recorded.

There was plenty of room on the main deck of the *S.S. Cymric* for walks during the day and evening after dinner. David would get excited with the daily announcement from the ships Captain of how many days left in the trip to reach their destination of Ellis Island and what to expect at Ellis. The ships manuscript noted that they boarded the *S.S. Cymric* on June 2nd and after 11 days at sea arrived at their destination, Ellis Island on June 13th.

At Ellis Island David, James Ward and Thady Hansberry had to pass through four stations for entry into New York City. The first station was for a medical examination where according to the ship's manuscript they were examined by Dr. Doughlas Bruce and they passed without incident. Secondly their visa; at the Third Station they had to show an amount of not less than \$50.00. Finally at the



Saint James's Court, New York City.

Fourth Station the four young men were notified that an official inspection had been performed by an government inspector that showed Kitty Ward did indeed reside at 214 W.92nd Street, New York City and now they were officially welcome into the United States of America.

David, James Ward and Thady Hansberry arrived at Kitty Ward's apartment and were greeted not only by Kitty Ward but also an abundance of Irish neighbors who made the boys feel right at home. The day turned into the evening and there was a celebration of good food and drinks for all. The boys didn't venture too far from Kitty's on their daily walking tours around the neighborhood for the fear of getting lost.

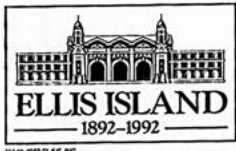
STATES IMMIGRATION OFFICER AT PORT OF ARRIVAL

must upon arrival deliver data shown to the immigration officer. This (blank) sheet is for the listing of STEWARDE PASSENGERS ONLY.

Arriving at Port of New York

13 June 1915

12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
1	NY	New York	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de
2	NY	New York	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de
3	NY	New York	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de
4	NY	New York	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de
5	NY	New York	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de
6	NY	New York	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de
7	NY	New York	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de
8	NY	New York	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de
9	NY	New York	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de
10	NY	New York	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de
11	NY	New York	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de
12	NY	New York	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de
13	NY	New York	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de
14	NY	New York	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de
15	NY	New York	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de
16	NY	New York	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de
17	NY	New York	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de
18	NY	New York	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de
19	NY	New York	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de
20	NY	New York	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de
21	NY	New York	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de
22	NY	New York	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de
23	NY	New York	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de
24	NY	New York	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de
25	NY	New York	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de
26	NY	New York	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de
27	NY	New York	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de
28	NY	New York	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de
29	NY	New York	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de
30	NY	New York	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de
31	NY	New York	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de	de



The Statue of Liberty-Ellis Island Foundation, Inc.
proudly presents this
Official Certificate of Registration
in

THE AMERICAN IMMIGRANT WALL OF HONOR

to officially certify that
David Laffey
came to the United States of America from
Ireland

joining those courageous men and women who came to this country in search of personal freedom, economic opportunity and a future of hope for their families.

[Signature]

10000
of Liberty-Ellis Island



CHAPTER THREE

New York - Philadelphia

No. 1247 REPLICATION SERVICE TRIPLICATE FORM

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

DECLARATION OF INTENTION

Invalid for all purposes seven years after the date hereof

State of Pennsylvania,) ss: In the Court of Quarter Sessions of Philadelphia County,
County of Philadelphia.) Pennsylvania.

I, David Laffey, aged 19 years,
occupation Blacksmith, do declare on oath that my personal
description is: Color white, complexion fair, height 5.6 feet 7 inches,
weight 170 pounds, color of hair brown, color of eyes blue
other visible distinctive marks None
I was born in Ballymurn, Ireland
on the 14th day of April, anno Domini 1897; I now reside
at 1254 S. 50th St. Philadelphia, Pa.
I emigrated to the United States of America from London, England
on the vessel Edinburgh my last
foreign residence was Ballymurn, Ireland
It is my bona fide intention to renounce forever all allegiance and fidelity to any foreign
prince, potentate, state, or sovereignty, and particularly to George V King of
United Kingdom of England, of whom I am now subject;
I arrived at the port of New York in the
State of New York, on or about the 14 day
of June, anno Domini 1915. I am not an anarchist; I am not a
polygamist nor a believer in the practice of polygamy; and it is my intention in good faith
to become a citizen of the United States of America and to permanently reside therein:
SO HELP ME GOD.

Subscribed and sworn to before me in the office of the Clerk of
said Court at Philadelphia, Pa., this 9th
day of April, anno Domini 1917
Theresa W. Lynch
Clerk of the Court of Quarter Sessions.
By Joseph J. [Signature], Assistant Clerk.

[SEAL.]

David Laffey's USA Declaration.

David arrived at the Irish Boarding House located at 1254 South 50th Street, Philadelphia on August 14th, 1915. One of the first requirements of the City of Philadelphia was to fill out a government form titled 'Declaration of Intentions to become a citizen of the United States of America and to permanently reside therein.' The form was also used to gather information on new arrivals to the city. David was now ready to settle in at the Boarding Home. The Home accommodated 12 young men like David at any one time and you had a maximum of 1 year residence and then leave to make room for the next Irish immigrant.



Borden's Dairy Company, postcard 1920. Courtesy of flickr.

A labor job was waiting for David at a construction site that was building a high rise apartment house. David's job consisted of doing anything that was asked of him such as unloading trucks, carrying supplies and using a wheel barrel to secure bricks for the mason building the walls. David gained a reputation of being a good worker always on time for work and willing to do anything that was asked of him. A few boys from the Boarding House were working alongside him and they soon developed a bond among each other. The job was for six days a week making enough salary to pay for the room and board and to go out sightseeing in historic Philadelphia where the United States Declaration was signed in 1776.

David was also ready to join his friends at the Saturday night dance at the gym of the local Catholic Church while drinking a few pints, and to save money for the day that he had enough to make his

way back to New York City where he felt he wanted to settle down. That day came a year from his arrival at the boarding home and he left in good grace with good wishes from all the personnel especially the cooks who it seemed that they couldn't make enough food for the hard working young men.

David arrived at the bus terminal located on the west side of New York City in a section that was known as 'Hell's Kitchen' that was an enclave of Irish immigrants within an area of one square mile of five story old law tenements. David had contacted Kitty Ward to assist him in finding a rental apartment on the west side neighborhood and she noted that there was one advertised in the local paper that was located at 130 West 63rd Street and thankfully David was successful in renting it. It was time to look for a job and through networking he applied for a sales position at the neighboring Borden's milk bottling plant.

The job consisted of driving a harnessed horse and carriage that carried an array of Borden's dairy products including fresh eggs, bread, butter, bacon and cheese, selling door to door in the high rise tenements. After the job interview David was saying prayers to be hired as this was a perfect fit for him being around the horse would remind him of home. David seemingly made a positive impression on the hiring manager who selected him for the sales position from a large contingent of applicants. David would go through a stable training program learning about the horse that was to be assigned to David's carriage and the duty included washing the horse on a daily basis. His manager made out a sketch of the area that he would be responsible for all being five story buildings with families on each side of each floor meaning ten families as potential customers in each building.

David went through a two week training period learning to travel through the streets of 'Hell's Kitchen'. It didn't take too long for David with his Irish brogue to be a very good salesman knocking on the doors of the Irish tenements on each floor. Throughout

this time David sent letters home to Windfield Road, his parents Michael and Ellen were delighted with his good fortune of work. On weekends he made friends from the neighborhood who attended the local pub for recreation and attended dances at his local church St. Paul the Apostle that was a few blocks from his apartment. David was invited to join them and a group of young ladies from Ireland were also attending the dances. Among them was Mary Killarney who was born in Abbert-Abbeyknockmoy, Tuam, County Galway. On November 21, 1897, Mary had subsequently made her way to America settling in New York City 1914 a year ahead of David.

Mary's home in Abbert was approximately five miles from Menlough. David was quick to make acquaintance with Mary and found that they had a lot in common. After meeting David a second time she accepted a request for a date in an effort to get to know him and the date included dinner at a local restaurant. They were both good reminiscing about home.

Dating soon became a courtship and at the end of the current year of 1924 they made a plan to become engaged writing to their respective parents seeking their blessing. David enclosed his employment record at the Borden's Milk Plant that proved enough to receive blessings from Mary's parents Martin and Mary Killarney. Finally David asked Martin for permission to marry his daughter Mary which he granted.

CHAPTER FOUR

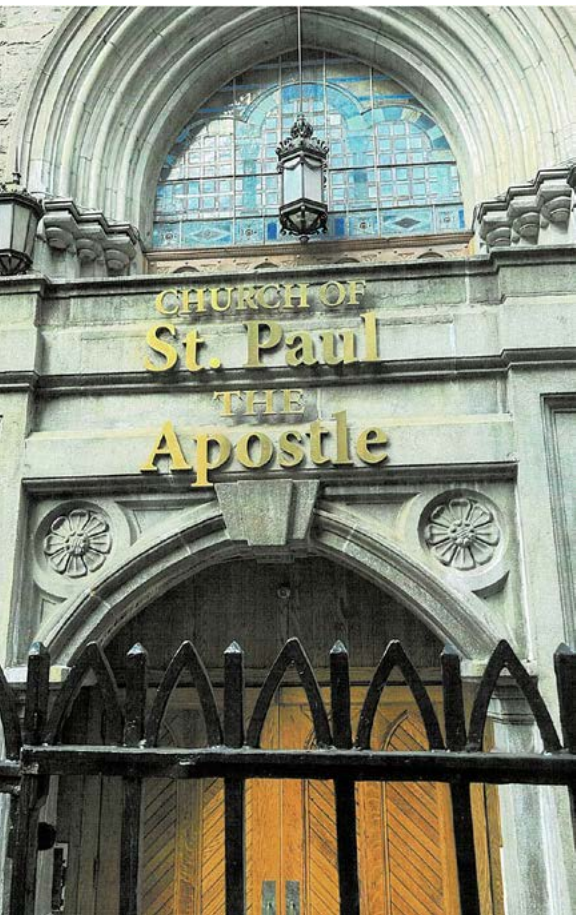
Marriage of Mary Killarney and David Laffey



Wedding Day of David
Laffey and Mary Killarney,
9th June 1925.

Mary and David were married at St. Paul the Apostle Roman Catholic Church located at 405 West 59th Street, New York City on June 7, 1925 with Fr. Joseph Sullivan officiating, Mary Donahue as Maid of Honor and Martin Laffey serving as best man and witnesses.

Since David's apartment located 130 West 63rd Street had less rent than Mary's they decided that David's apartment would be their home and to renovate with Mary's good decorating taste. The world of Mary and David was bliss, both had a good job so it was time to think seriously about saving to buy a new home. At the turn of 1926 Mary and David happily announce that Mary was to become a mother and on September 11, 1926 their daughter Helen was born.



St. Paul the Apostle Roman Catholic Church, located at 405 West 59th Street, New York City.

The Laffey's in Menlough and Killarney's in Abbett were happy to hear the good news and were so proud of Mary and David's start of their new Life. Good fortune continued to shine on Mary and David as they were blessed with a baby boy named David was born on March 12th, 1928 and followed up with John Martin who was born on November 25, 1929. To speed up their goal to save at least \$5,000 as a down payment for their new home, David added the job of janitor at their W. 63rd street apartment that required keeping the common areas clean and to tend to the coal heating furnace in the basement with compensation being free rent of their apartment.

Being weekly attendees at St. Paul's Sunday mass they were intrigued by an announcement in the church Bulletin from the Bishop of the Diocese of Brooklyn that they had completed construction of a new church in the Bay Ridge section of Brooklyn named after the statehood of St. Ephrem that was located at 929 Bay Ridge Parkway, Brooklyn, New York inviting interested parishioners to contact their rectory. This was of definite interest to Mary and David as they could foresee a rural area to raise a family. They made contact with the rectory office and made a date for a Sunday visit to the church and to look over the area of the proposed development site. One of their many friends in their building would babysit for Helen, David and John.



St. Ephrims.

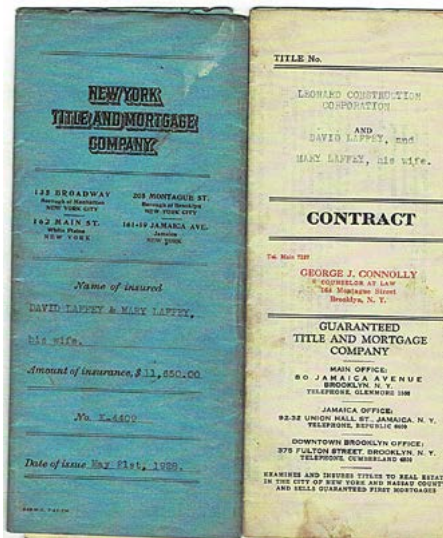
The mode of travel was to take the subway to the downtown section of New York and board the ferry to the 69th street pier of Bay Ridge where a minibus would take them to the rectory for a meeting. Attending the meeting was the pastor of St. Ephrem, a representative from the local bank and a manager of the Leonard Construction Company who would be the home builder. In addition to this meeting the pastor arranged for a tour of the farmlands that would be developed into a row of attached single family homes. The representative of the bank informed David that they would back up a mortgage loan from the Leonard Construction Company for qualified buyers. At this point the Pastor suggested that they all board the bus for a tour of the proposed site. The tour took them around farmlands that immediately reminded David and Mary of home and that they were impressed with the site.



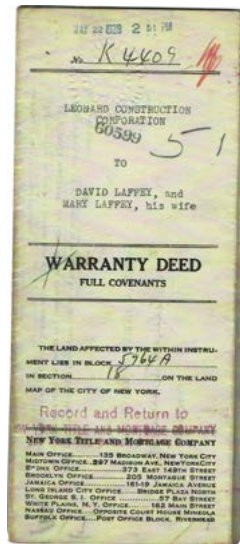
The new house, built originally on farmland.

The bus returned to the rectory at which time the pastor suggested that they take the prepared material with them to study and take their time as they heard a lot of financial information and if interested make another visit or two for assurance purpose. It was now time for one of the most important decisions of their young marriage life. David and Mary went home with excitement that this may be a blessing and the start of a new way of life for their family. The booklet that the pastor gave them to study contained the following financial requirements to purchase a new home:

- \$ 500.00 at signing of the contract
- \$ 4,650.00 mortgage from Leonard Construction @ 6%
- \$ 5,500.00 down payment
- \$ 155.83 interest from 12/1/1927
- \$ 10,805.83
- \$ 844.17 misc fee



Mortgage contracts.



Deed for the new home.

Total price of the one family home that will be constructed on the lot of land that will have the address of 960-77th Street, Brooklyn, NY would be \$11,650.00. David and Mary had saved a total of \$6,000.00 in the bank so the price was within their financial means. After one more visit and numerous evenings of discussion they agreed to proceed with the purchase and the signing of the contract that took place at the office of Leonard Construction on April 27, 1928. In the beginning of their journey to buy their new home David had kept his manager at Borden's Milk plant current with his plans and knowing that Borden's also had a milk plant in the Bay Ridge section asked his manager to assist him in obtaining a transfer to the plant and his manager was happy to do so. Mary and David were now parishioners of St. Ephrem's Church, Bay Ridge, Brooklyn with a job at the Bay Ridge Borden's Milk Plant.

Mary and David had kept their neighbors current with their plans and while they were happy for Mary and David they were also sorry to see one of their most popular family's at W.63rd Street leaving them. It took eighteen months to complete

construction of the first of the row of homes and their address would be 960 77th Street. It was now time to move into this beautiful one family brick home with modern appliances with steam heat throughout. Leaving their friends on W.63rd Street was very hard for Mary and David but particularly for Mary who developed close relationships with all the families in their building. Mary had an outgoing personality and was very generous with her time with neighbors in time of need. The afternoons were teatime and biscuits among the Irish families and often dinner parties. But all their friends knew that the Laffey's were taking a big risk with their adventurous purchase of a home in the Boro of Brooklyn across the East River not knowing anyone in a new parish and sent them with best wishes and many gifts for their home.

Helen and dad spent many afternoons reading the drawings and Helen could totally described the interior from memory. The entrance to 960-77th street had a short stoop of four steps that led to a heavy entrance door and upon entrance there was a foyer to hang coats. Then a sitting room leading into a large kitchen that mom loved to cook and do her baking. There was a large yard with green grass with a center walkway.

On May 26, 1931, I was born increasing our family to four children an event that brought joy to all and I was one of the earlier infants to be baptized at St. Ephrem's Church. This also gave Mary and David the opportunity of meeting our new neighbors at our baptism party. Mom made an apple pie for each family new family moving into the row of homes on 77th Street.

David was doing the same work in Bay Ridge for the Borden's Milk Company that he did in New York City so he was totally familiar with the carriage and wagon and horse routine. The difference however, the customer base was one family homes instead of the five story tenements that created a lower sales base. He also noticed that the historic deep depression of the 1930's was starting to take a toll on his income.

CHAPTER FIVE

Depression Era of the 1930's

The daily newspapers had headlines every day about the tremendous loss of jobs that was taking place throughout the entire nation. The dreadful moment arrived where David was among the large number of employees that lost their jobs at the Brooklyn Borden Milk Company.

For about six months Dad and Mary were able to pay their mortgage from their bank savings however, it was not too long before payments to the Leonard Mortgage Company could not be met and mom and dad received an notice of eviction. Dad held a meeting with Leonard to seek assistance to sell their home but Leonard told dad that their company was flooded with bank closures and their company was in financial stress. With the loss of his job there was simply no work to be found and now the family was on a slippery slope.

Families who received an eviction notice had thirty days to gather their furniture and belongings to move out of their home. David immediately started looking for an apartment in the adjacent parish of the Basilica of Our Lady of Perpetual Help where apartment rents were cheaper. David visited the church who put him in contact with Fay's Real Estate to assist him in obtaining an apartment.

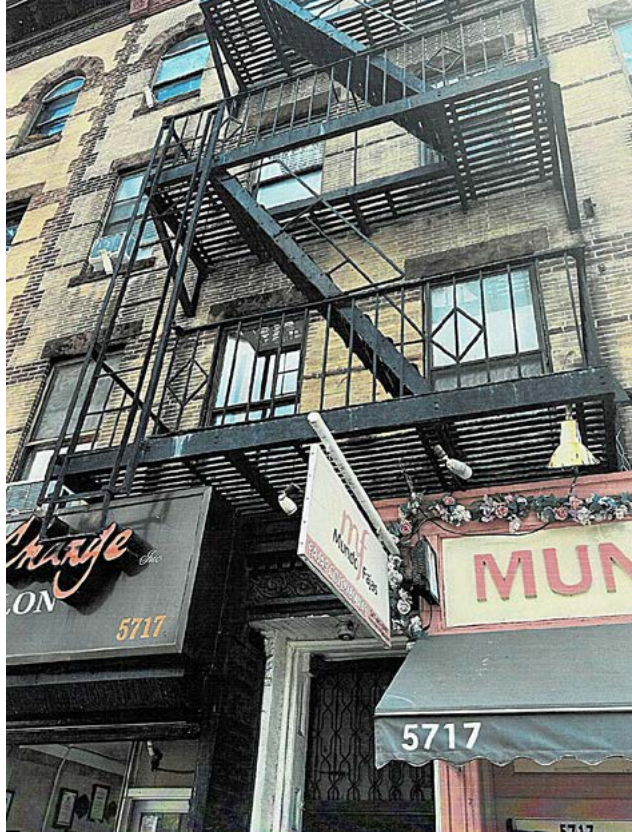
Fay's office was located on 5719 5th Avenue and 57th street that was three blocks from the church. Mr. Fay was very helpful in providing an apartment in his six family tenement building located above his real estate office at the cost of \$20.00 per month. Dad had a minimal reserve of approximately \$100.00 to be used for rent and food. The apartment was a coldwater flat that depended on a large coal burning cast iron stove in the kitchen that was not only

used for cooking but also providing limited heat throughout the apartment. Although there were 5 rooms dad closed the door to the front 2 rooms of the apartment to conserve the heat. I was in the room adjacent to the kitchen with David and Jack and my crib was the top drawer of the chest of drawers. Mom and dad and Helen had the other room. Mr. Fay also mentioned to dad that men in similar circumstances were finding limited opportunity for work at the local docks as longshoremen with the only tool required was a hook that fitted in your belt. The hook was used to move cartons around the dock and on the docked ships.

Men were shaping up every day hoping to find work with dad among them. After six months of paying \$20.00 rent dad visited Mr. Fay to explain to him that he had to stop paying rent rather he was spending his reserve on daily food. Mr. Fay was understanding and informed dad that the family was eligible for assistance from the Federal Home Relief program that would pay our rent and also the family would also be eligible for food stamps. Mr. Fay helped dad to fill out the required forms. Mr. Fay also owned another six family building on 4th Avenue that was one block from his 5th Avenue property that had an vacant apartment that would be a better fit for his family and the building was occupied with friendly Irish immigrant families. It was time to pack up and move into the vacant apartment.

We moved into our apartment at 5717-4th avenue that was located on the 2nd floor over a retail store that was at ground level. There were three apartments per floor for a total of six families of Irish immigrants..

Across the hallway in the next apartment was the family of Mary and Jack Cawley from County Galway. They have five children Mary, Claire and Catherine and two boys Jamie and Franny.



The new apartment above a retail store at 5717-4th avenue.

Our families mixed immediately with our children playing together and mom and dad were invited into the Cawley's apartment for tea and biscuits. Little did we know at this time the major role that Mary Cawley would play in our lives. Mary and mom become instant best friends and find that they have so much in common with each other. They meet every morning for tea and biscuits, while dad and Jack find comfort in their new relationship. Jack is a linoleum floor layer when he can get some work. Dad continues to shape up on the docks every day and finds work on at least one day a week with ten hours with good pay. Mary makes a plan for a Sunday night party so we can meet our neighbors above. There is music and singing and the exchange of stories and news about the 'ole country.' There is ice cream and milk for the children.

Mary had a small accordion musical instrument that dad was familiar with, he played some tunes on it to the delight of all. We find out that there is a gathering every Sunday evening in one of the neighbors apartment to share about the news of the week from home and also how each family is doing. Mom and dad feel most fortunate in their new surroundings. Mr. Fay visits us to see how we are adjusting and is delighted to find out all is well. He reminds dad that our participation in the Federal Home Relief program will cover us for the entire year which will make life less stressful for mom and dad.

On a Monday morning there is a knock on our door, dad opens the door and is greeted by a young man in a suit and tie who introduces himself as Dr. David Levine, dad invites him in. Mom immediately makes the young doctor comfortable with a cup of tea and small plate of biscuits. Dr. Levine informs us that he is a recent graduate of the New York University Medical School and is guaranteed two days a week of work at the N.Y.U. hospital with the other days of the week out in the field selling the hospital's medical plan. He informs dad and mom by filling out a one page form at no cost he receives \$5.00 and we receive Dr. Levine as our family health provider. This is a program totally under-written by the United States Government. Since Dr. Levine lives in Brooklyn he was supplied with geographical map that takes in our entire neighborhood. In this time of the great depression he is thankful for this opportunity to established himself in his medical career. Mom and dad not only fill out the form but dad takes Dr. Levine to meet all of our friends in the building who after listening to Dr. Levine and mom and dad giving him our reference he sells the N.Y.U. Health Program to each of the neighbor. Dr. Levine was eternally grateful to dad and mom, little did we know how important he would become later on in the lives of the Laffey family, where he became a true friend to both my mom and dad.

Helen, David, Jack and myself were enrolled in the grammar school of Our Lady of Perpetual Help. Mom get us ready in the morning after eating a big bowl of oatmeal and a glass of milk that keeps us until lunch time. The school provides a lunch of a peanut butter and jelly sandwich, an apple and a pint container of milk. This will last until we come home at three o'clock in the afternoon to a snack prepared by mom. Six months go by and the family is doing real well, mom adds to the joy of our friends by announcing that she is expecting a baby. Nine months later the new Laffey is delivered by Dr. David Levine and our new arrival is a beautiful blue eye baby girl, she is christened with the name of Rita who now becomes the new darling of entire building. At Rita's christening the neighbors had chipped in to buy mom a new coach carriage to take Rita out for walks in the neighborhood usually accompanied with Mary Cawley.

Living in our cold water flat for the past winter with the only heat supplied from the cast iron stove in the kitchen mom starts to think how wonderful it would be if we could live in a heat radiated apartment with a radiator in each room as we had at 960-77th Street. Dad is doing well in shaping up for work continuously getting at least one or two ten hour days of work each week with good pay. Their Federal Home Relief Coverage will end next month and they start to think about making a visit to Mr. Fay with their idea of seeking a steam heated apartment. Mom shares their intention with Mary and Jack Cawley who say that they would be sorry to see them leave but they are happy for them and that they too would like to think about renting a steam heated apartment sometime in the future. At the usual weekly neighbor gathering on the Sunday night mom and dad share their intention of leaving their apartment and while they are surprised they too like the Cawley's are happy for mom and dad and the gathering starts with a toast to the Laffey's with a big glass of beer and the music and good wishes abound. Mom and dad take a visit with Mr. Fay and tell him of their intentions, he says that it is a very good idea. Having a steam heated apartment is not a luxury but with our large family it is a necessity.



The apartment on 60th street, 469-60th Street, Bay Ridge, Brooklyn, New York City.

He informs mom and dad that there is an apartment on 60th street with the address of 469-60th street that is located half a block from The Basilica of Our Lady of Perpetual Help at the rent of \$30.00 per month which is currently vacant. Mom and dad express interest and go to visit the apartment with that Mr. Fay makes the arrangement. They meet with the building landlord Mr. Anthony Capece who shows them the apartment with five rooms, the first thing mom sees is a radiator in each of the rooms. They inform him that they are interested in renting the apartment and they return next week with the required deposit of \$30.00 and sign the lease agreement that includes the apartment getting a full coat of fresh paint and make plans of the move the next week. The move is made, beds are set up and mom starts to dolly up the apartment.

CHAPTER SIX

469-60th Street, Bay Ridge, Brooklyn, N.Y.

While mom and dad regret leaving their friends at 5717-4th avenue, they immediately find comfort in seeing a radiator in each of five room apartment. The family is only a block walk too the local school. Mom and dad go about setting the apartment and the kids are on the street making new friends. They find 60th street as one of diversity with a mix of Italians, Irish, Polish and Norwegians all blending together in harmony.

The Basilica is only half block away and gives mom the time to frequently early morning mass. The first visitor to our new home is Mary and her husband Jack Cawley and they love our apartment and after many subsequent visits make a decision to leave 4th avenue. They visit Mr. Fay at his real estate office and notify him of their intention of moving and he tells them that an apartment across the street of the Laffey's with the address of 478 - 60th street that will become available as soon as the present family find a new apartment. Two months later Mr. Fay informs the Cawley's that the apartment will be available within a week and the Cawley move is made to the delight of mom and dad. Now mom and Mary will be together once again sharing tea and biscuits every morning. The Laffey's and Cawley's get acquainted with a musical event that takes place every Sunday afternoon when Mr. Kirwin, an native of Scotland, living across the street from us, plays his bagpipe from two o'clock to three o'clock with his windows opened up to their maximum height to assure his music is heard by all neighborhood especially dad.

The children of the Cawley's love their new apartment and renew their friendship with the Laffey family. Within a month

mom shares the news that she is expecting a new arrival, after a wonderful summer and fall seasons a baby boy is delivered by Dr. Levine on November 26, 1934 with the name of Thomas joins the family. A christening date is set and invitations are hand delivered to our neighbors and also to our friends on 4th Avenue. It is a wonderful party with everyone happy for the Laffey's.

Our family is doing well during the years of 1934 and 1935 with dad getting at least two days of work each week. Students are moving up in grades at Our Lady of Perpetual Help school and all are in good health and holidays are joyful. The year brings an addition to our family with the arrival of a beautiful baby girl named Claire to the family on March 12, 1936 by Dr. Levine with all of the family getting in line to hold their new baby sister. Mom dresses Clare for strolls in her new carriage up and down the block to introduce her to our neighbors who are overjoyed to meet her.

Once again the Laffey's make the announcement that the family will be increased as mom is expecting a new arrival, after a summer season and baby boy Jimmy is added to the family on September 11, 1937 delivered by Dr. Levine. Helen helps mom with her new brother by wheeling him in the new carriage. Mary Cawley and neighbors stop by on a daily basis with baby gifts and Mary volunteers to assist mom with sitting with the family while she does food shopping and other chores.

Our landlord Mr. Capece informs dad and mom that the tenants on the top floor are moving out and the Laffey's can move up and enjoy a much needed additional bedroom. The Year 1938 arrives with dad finding enough work to provide a comfortable living for our family. Students continue well in school and weekends are spent at the local Leif Ericson park where there is plenty of room where there swings to swing and monkey bars to climb. When we come home tired but happy, mom puts a roast in the oven that will be enjoyed within a couple of hours that will include ice cream for dessert. Summer season arrives with kids



Mary Laffey (nee Killarney) with her sons Jack and Mike, 1930s New York.

playing outside activities every day. There is also swimming each day at the local municipal pool that is located six blocks from the house. Helen is now twelve, is a big help to mom by walking us to and from the swimming pool each day.

At the end of the summer mom sets up the new school schedule. Helen has been an 'A' student in each of her grades and will be in the 7th grade, David getting ready for the 6th grade, Jack at the 4th grade and Michael in the 2nd grade. Rita, Tommy, Clare and Jimmy would be home with mom. Throughout the years Dr. Levine would examine all of the family before the start of the new school year to assure we have good health. Mom and dad were blessed with good health and there never any need for other medical attention. However, mom had developed a cough within the first couple of weeks in October. Dr. Levine wasn't happy with her cough and writes out a prescription for some cough medicine. At the end of October Dr. Levine informs dad that the cough has now developed into a heavy congestion condition and he expresses concern that moms condition may develop into pneumonia and that he is making arrangements for mom to go to the Kings County Hospital where mom could get additional attention. Within two days the attending medical staff informs Dr. Levine that mom has pneumonia.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Passing of Mary Killarney Laffey

It is now November 15, 1938 and my mom Mary has been a patient at the King County Public Hospital located in downtown Brooklyn, NY with pneumonia. Her bed is on the 3rd floor ward that is totally enclosed with an oxygen tent and with an oxygen breathing mask over her face.




Mom's attending doctor advises Dr. David Levine to notify dad that her vitals indicate that she is close to death with approximately twenty four hours to live, he should make plans to visit her. Dad simply cannot understand what was happening to his healthy wife during the past three months.

It is noon and Dr. Levine makes the trip to David and consoles him with the news about the attending physicians report. Dad makes the decision that he will take the family with him who will be Helen twelve and half years old, David aged eleven, Jack aged nine and half and myself at age seven and half. Dad arranges with Mary Cawley our neighbor and mom's best friend to baby sit.

We arrive at the hospital, this is the first time for us to be on an elevator, the elevator operator takes us to the third floor, he then opens the iron gated door that folds like an accordion onto the third floor. We enter into mom's room, the sight before us of seeing mom enclosed in an oxygen tent, oxygen mask sends Helen screaming 'what did you do to my mom - what did you do to my mom' that seems to send her into shock and bewilderment. Helen has been at mom's apron strings since she was four years old every day beside her at the stove making meals and baking pies and biscuits.

She falls into the arms of dad crying, dad embraces the four of us. Tears abound. There is a half inch yellow painted cord extended all around the bed to prevent anyone getting close to the bed. In the room with us are the hospital attending physician, a nurse that give a nod to Dr. Levine who is present with the indication that they will leave, they do so with a tear in their eyes after witnessing this emotional scene. After a half an hour dad gets us ready to go home and tells us to 'throw a kiss to mom.' We were crying so hard that it took some time before we could. Dr. Levine drives us home and dad sits down with Mary Cawley and tells Mary of the pending outcome that makes her sad with tears.

On the morning of November 16th 1938, Dr. Levine arrives with the news that mom died peacefully during the early morning hours. He hugs dad with each making eye contact trying to make sense of what the family has gone through during the past twenty four hours. Dad gets the family together in the kitchen and asks each one of us to sit down on one of the chairs. With much difficulty he tells us that mom is in heaven and will not be home with us anymore. We put our face into our arms and just cry. Dad is standing behind us just rubbing our back and hugging us. We cry. Dr. Levine leaves and dad tells Helen to go across the street to Mary Cawley's apartment and ask her to join us in the kitchen. He tells Mary of mom's passing and as she struggles to comprehend the news dad asked Mary to sit with the family while he notifies our local funeral home director J. Albert Barron of the need to prepare for the burial of mom. As dad leaves the house, he is met by many of our neighbors who have gathered outside awaiting news of mom's hospital stay but were unprepared to hear that mom passed on. They assure dad that they will pray for mom and family at The Basilica. The funeral home is located across the street from our church The Basilica of Our Lady of Perpetual Help. Dad asks Mr. Barron to call our Pastor the Reverend John Sephton, C.S.S.R of the Redemptist Order of St. Alphonus to join us in making the plans for the wake, funeral mass and the burial of mom.

<p>"We have loved them during life; let us not abandon them until we have conducted them by our prayers into the house of the Lord." ST. AMBROSE</p>  <p>IN LOVING MEMORY OF Mary E. Donohue Died June 8, 1952</p> <p>☉ GENTLEST Heart of Jesus, ever present in the Blessed Sacrament, ever consumed with burning love for the poor captive souls in Purgatory have mercy on the soul of Thy departed servant MARY.</p> <p>Be not severe in Thy Judgment but let some drops of Thy Precious Blood fall upon the devouring flames, and do Thou O merciful Saviour send Thy angels to conduct Thy departed servant to a place of refreshment, light and peace. Amen.</p> <p>May the souls of all the faithful departed through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.</p> <p>Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord! and let perpetual light shine upon them.</p> <p>COUGHLIN & POOLE Funeral Directors 877 Tenth Ave., New York City Phone COlumbus 5-3078</p>	<p>"We have loved her during life; let us not abandon her, until we have conducted her by our prayers into the house of the Lord." ST. AMBROSE</p> <p>☩ My Jesus have mercy on the Soul of Mary E. Laffey Died November 15, 1938</p> <p>☉ GENTLEST Heart of Jesus, ever present in the Blessed Sacrament, ever consumed with burning love for the poor captive souls in Purgatory, have mercy on the soul of Thy departed servant MARY.</p> <p>Be not severe in Thy judgment but let some drops of Thy Precious Blood fall upon the devouring flames, and do Thou O merciful Saviour send Thy angels to conduct her to a place of refreshment, light and peace. Amen.</p> <p>May the souls of all the faithful departed through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.</p> <p>Eternal rest grant unto her, O Lord! and let perpetual light shine upon her. Sacred Heart of Jesus have mercy on her. Immaculate Heart of Mary, pray for her. St. Joseph, friend of the Sacred Heart, pray for her.</p> <p>(100 days for each aspiration) NIEHL OBSTAT Rev. Arthur J. Scanlon S. T. D. Censor Librorum</p> <p>IMPRIMATUR ☩ Patrick Cardinal Hayes Archbishop of New York</p> <p>J.A.McGee&Son, 161E.123rdSt.,N.Y.C.</p>	<p>"Blessed are they that mourn for they shall be comforted." St. Matt. V.5.</p>  <p>Your gentle face and patient smile With sadness we recall You had a kindly word for each And died beloved by all.</p> <p>The voice is mute and stilled the heart That loved us well and true Ah, bitter was the trial to part From one so good as you.</p> <p>You are not forgotten loved one Nor will you ever be As long as life and memory last We will remember thee.</p> <p>We miss you now, our hearts are sore As time goes by we miss you more Your loving smile, your gentle face No one can fill your vacant place.</p> 
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Mary Laffey Killarney's memorial card.

on the block as the wake was well attended. Pastor John officiated at Mary's funeral mass and in his homily he ask the congregation to pray for Mr. Laffey's family not only today but also in your daily prays. The interment was at the recently opened diocese St. Charles cemetery in Farmingdale, N.Y. approximately forty seven miles from the church. The cortege took two and half hours to the cemetery and two and half hours to return. It was a painful journey.

At the conclusion of the day Pastor John told dad that he would visit with him tomorrow to discuss a plan that he has been working on to guide the family through the immediate days ahead.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Pastor John's Plan for the Survival of the Laffey Family

Plan 1:

Pastor John realizes that the first need for David was to solve the problem of caring for the one and half year old Jimmy and three year old Claire and he reaches out to the Mother Superior of the Nursing Sisters of the Sick Poor who have a convent two miles from the Basilica. They know each other well from working on the needs of Our Lady of Perpetual Help parish and he brings her up to date with the Laffey family. After much conversation Mother Superior gives Pastor John a commitment to provide a nurse to the Laffey family on a daily basis for the hours of 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. from Monday to Friday to tend to the needs of Jimmy and Claire for six months. The visiting nurses specialize in the care of those of all ages that require nursing assistance and also infant children care on special occasions.

It was time for Pastor John's meeting with dad and he informs dad that his two youngest children will be cared for by the visiting nurses that brings immediate gratitude from dad. Helen was the only one of the family that sat with dad and the Pastor at the kitchen table and she would tell us over the following years that the Pastor's plan gave him a sense of confidence to deal with the monumental task that was ahead.

Plan 2

Pastor John informed dad starting with tonight's dinner our family would be eligible for the O.L.P.H. Church Food Program. Pastor John labeled it as the 'left over program' but it is not what is left over on a plate but what remains from the daily dinner order submitted by the two Irish cooks in the kitchen necessary to feed the needs of the priest's food for the next forty eight hours. They knew that any excess can goods would be most helpful to the families in the program and the daily overage always consisted of at least four or five vegetables, potatoes, a few extra pounds of chopped beef or beef stew and a loaf of bread.

Dad appointed me as the one to pick up the food that was placed in a 'mini suitcase' at the church rectory between the hours of 4:30 p.m. and 5:30 p.m. since I was familiar with Brother Lewis who administrated the food program. The priest would have early dinner in time for their daily evening prayer service and this routine would last for three months, the same routine would then be transferred to the Sisters of St. Joseph convent for three months. The sisters had the same arrangement for food ordering as the rectory. The convent was located a half block away from the church rectory. In essence this program gave time for dad to set up our own kitchen routine with Helen as his aide.

Plan 3

Pastor John brought up the impending Thanksgiving Day that was a month away and informs dad that arrangements have been made for the O.L.P.H. Ushers Committee to visit dad and family on Thanksgiving Eve with a turkey and all of the trimmings that include a ten lb. bag of potatoes, cranberry sauce, cans of turkey gravy and other cans of vegetables for dad and Helen to cook. Dad is grateful for this blessing.

Plan 4

Pastor John informs dad that an organization named the O.L.P.H. Benevolent Group will visit the family on Christmas Eve and will set up a Christmas tree with decorations and toys for all. The visit will include a turkey dinner with all of the trimmings. Again dad is extremely grateful for the Pastor's thoughtful involvement in assuring our family a good Christmas Holiday.

Plan 5

The Catholic Social Services Family Foster Care Program. Pastor John describes the program to dad as a catholic organization designed to keep families intact but may need assistance in caring for young children for a period of time. Pastor John starts a most difficult conversation with dad about taking advantage of the program for one and half year old Jimmy and three year old Claire.

The age requirements for the program were that the children must two years old. Jimmy will be under the care of the Nursing Sisters for the next six months, then the processing of the Foster Care program and paper work will bring us up to the month of March when Jimmy turns two. Dad is reluctant to break up his family but fully realizes that he has no choice than to accept this program.

Pastor John informs dad that there is a catholic family who reside in the Boro of Queens named Healy who have a positive experience in the Foster Care Program for caring of infant children and he recommends dad to meet the Healy family. The Foster program is set for a six month period and if the program is satisfactory to both families the period is then extended for another six months to a limit of two years. The goal of dad is to reunite the family within one and a half years that would bring us to year nineteen forty one when Jimmy will be three years old and Claire four and half years old. Pastor John has set up a Sunday visit for dad to the Healy family and dad takes me along and they greet us warmly. Travel by the subway system has taken us one and half

hours. The Healy's have a family of two young daughters and one son that are perfect ages for playmates for Jimmy and Clare. The Healy home is a one family with a large backyard with a swing set and other toys. Dad gets a feeling of satisfaction. Once back home dad sets up a meeting with Pastor John to discuss the program, the Pastor suggests that dad move forward and to process the necessary legal forms. Dad had been telling the children of the plans for Jimmy and Claire to be away for a while staying with the Healy family and they have much difficulty in understanding the program. It is now time to dress Jimmy and Clare and to get ready for the train ride that is one of the most saddest for dad as he will return without his two youngest children.

We are greeted at the door of the Healy home with their children waiting to meet and play with their two friends. Healy's have prepared lunch, they tell dad they know how difficult his decision has been for him but also tell of their success with children of the ages of Jimmy and Claire. After lunch, Jimmy and Claire have been playing in the back yard return to the living room where dad sits Jimmy on his lap with Claire right next to him. It is now time to leave. Dad and myself kiss Jimmy and Claire and they expect to go with us but dad hands off Jimmy and Claire to the Healy's and with the entrance door open to leave he looks unsure of what he has done but the Healy's continue to say goodbye. Jimmy and Claire start to cry and dad and I go out the front door and remain on the top stoop landing listening to Claire crying out through the entrance door 'daddy take me home with you... take me home with you.' Dad appears stunned hearing Claire's voice and says 'what have I done to my children... what have I done to my children.' Dad grabs the stoop railing and for the first time ever I see my dad with tears in his eyes. It is difficult for him to go down the stoop to the street level and we finally leave for the long trip home. It would be at times like this that dad would always regale me of his farm days on Windfield Road but on this trip dad had very little to say. The Foster Program has begun.

CHAPTER NINE

Tom to Riverton, N.J.

It is springtime 1939, Tom's health becomes an issue. In his second year he developed Eczema that caused redding, swelling of his face, itching and finally scabbing. Dad received a prescription from Dr. Levine that was a cream that was continuously renewed as it took months to clear up. At the age of five he suffered with Scarlet Fever that deeply concerned Dr. Levine as it was noted that this disease had the potential to cause damage to the liver and heart in addition to minor issues such as body rashes. While the vaccine of penicillin was discovered in 1938 it was not approved for human use until 1941.

Dr. Levine nursed him through the months of May and June. By this time Aunt Agnes who is mom's sister who has been keeping in touch with dad called him and he informs her of Tom's condition and towards the end of the conversation she suggests that Tom could spend the summer months with her and her family in Riverton, N.J. where he could take advantage of the rural fresh air environment and take a break away the crowded tenement area. Dad knew that Aunt Agnes had a large family and he liked the idea and that he will speak with Helen and explain to Tom about spending the summer season in Riverton with his cousins and would return her call shortly.

Aunt Agnes was born on January 5, 1895 and was the older sister of my mom Mary who was born on November 21, 1897 to the parents Martin and Mary Dunn Killarney of Albert-Abbeyknockmoy, Tuam, County Galway lived on a farm that was approximately five miles from Menlough. Martin and Mary were facing a dilemma that was prevalent among farm families

June she arrives and after a good day of lunch and catching up with the Laffey children she returned to Riverton with Tom where he was gracefully intertwined with the family of six. Jack and Dick took him under their wing and were involved with Tom throughout the summer season with ballgames, summer events and at the same time Tom made friends with kids his age. With Aunt Agne's delicious cooking Tom had a weight gain and a growth spurt of a couple of inches. Now with the beginning of Labor Day it was time for Tom to return home and he bade goodbye to all.

Jack and Dick accompanied Tom back to 60th street and had a good day meeting their Laffey cousins and dad prepared lunch. It was safe to say that Tom's initial trip to Riverton was a good experience.

The year of 1939 has turned into 1940 and Helen became fourteen, David to twelve and half, Jack eleven, Michael nine, Rita seven, Tom six, Claire four and half and Jimmy three. Dad had visions of getting the family together again. Helen graduated from Our Lady of Perpetual Elementary School with a scholarship to the prestigious all girls Bishop McDonald High School. Dad was happy for Helen and very proud of her achievement. However, after one month of attending Bishop McDonald High School Helen sat down with dad and explained to him that it would be better to leave Bishop McDonald High School as there were many expenses that they were unprepared for such as a new school uniform and expensive set of books. Helen also explained to dad that when she informed the principal of her intention she suggested that I enroll at St. Alphonsus High School that was located in Manhattan that was a two year secretarial school with teaching nuns.

St. Alphonsus accepted Helen's application with Helen settling in well with classmates that included a few from her class at Our Lady of Perpetual Help.

Dad had been in touch with Pastor John for the return of Jimmy and Claire to the family. They had been with the Healy family for the past eighteen months that gave dad the time to set up the family routine at home and in school for his six other children's. The Healy family integrated Claire and Jimmy with their family and there were eating well, sleeping well and had the Healy children as playmates.

Dad and Helen had set a visitor time schedule so that there were three visits a month to the Healy's to see Jimmy and Claire. At the request of dad Pastor John officially notified Mr. Healy and the Social Services Department that dad was ready to have his children home with him that required processing legal papers and a date of the first Sunday in May was set for the Laffey reunion. Dad told the family of the good news, they were excited to get their brother and sister back home. Dad made his final trip to the Healy family accompanied with Helen.

The Healy family had Jimmy and Clare dressed in new outfits and dad expressed deep appreciation to them for their valuable assistance in time of his need. After lunch it was time to make the journey home to 60th street that was much different from his first trip. Over time dad had been keeping Mary Cawley current with the Laffey news and now was the time for Mary to set up a 'welcome home party' for Jimmy and Clare with ice cream and chocolate cake and soda.' A good time was had by all especially Jimmy and Claire who were glad to be home.

In order to work dad had to hire a Home Care Aide to care for Tom, Claire and Jimmy. He called Pastor John to inquire if the church maintained a roster of home care aides and the Pastor told dad that the church did and that he should call Brother Lewis in the rectory who gave dad a reference by the name Mary McGuire, aged sixty who lived on 63rd street below 5th avenue that was only a distance of three blocks from our home on 60th street.

Mary had two children, both were away in school and she had prior experience with minding children. Mary McGuire and dad came to an agreement to work up to the completion of the school schedule in June. Mary proved to be a most caring woman and it worked out well.

The summer season of 1940 was upon us and Aunt Agnes once again called dad and asked him if Tom could spend another summer at Riverton. Dad knew that would be another good opportunity for Tom and asked him if he would like to summer with Aunt Agnes and the Riverton family and he told dad that while he didn't like the idea of being away from his brothers and sisters he remembered how well last summer worked out for him and he told dad yes that he would like to return to Riverton.

Tom's return to Riverton for the summer season was happily greeted by the Laverty family particularly Jack and Dick who felt that they had their little brother back with them. Tom renewed his friendship with the boys he met last summer so now was ready for a season at Riverton once again. Similar to last year, there were baseball, softball games and basketball that kept Tom outdoors all day coming home for lunch and then supper all under the careful eyes of Aunt Agnes.

Like all summers time seemed to fly by and it is time for Tom to return to 60th street. Dick once again was the courier and knew the route so well. The fall season and holidays were celebrated and the family looking for the New Year of 1941. David was now in the eighth grade, Jack moving up to the seventh grade, myself to the fifth grade and Rita to the second grade. The school semester went well for all and particularly for Helen who found that traveling back and forth from St. Alphonsus was an education itself. Helen found life at St. Alphonsus most enjoyable and had breezed through the first and second years with subjects of shorthand, typing, English and bookkeeping and was preparing for graduation at which time Helen would be sixteen years old.

The summer season of 1941 arrived with the usual phone call from Aunt Agnes asking once again to allow Tom to spend the summer in Riverton. By now dad knew how well Tom had thrived during the past summers and how seamlessly he became part of Aunt Agnes's family and said yes to Aunt Agnes and once again thanked her thoughtfulness concerning Tom. This summer seemed to be better for Tom than in the past since now he was seven years of age getting taller, eating more and getting stronger. He enjoyed the sports of baseball, softball the most and enjoyed hitting a home run once in a while. He liked playing in the infield with third base as his favorite position.

Aunt Agnes started to think ahead to the forthcoming school year and gave thought of the possibility for Tom to stay in Riverton and to enroll in the local Sacred Heart Elementary School. She knew how much pressure dad had been facing over the years and she thought it would be beneficial not only for Tom but for himself as well. Dad's immediate response was while he was grateful for Aunt Agnes's help during the previous two summers but starting school in Riverton was not in his plan and that Tom should get ready to come home. This now was the start of a contentious period. Dad thought that Aunt Agnes was audacious to even make this suggestion. Aunt Agnes however, took the first step and enrolled Tom at Sacred Heart that meant Tom would not be going back home to 60th street. School started at Our Lady of Perpetual Help for our family children but without Tom.

It was now time to pause to try to find common ground for agreement to figure out what would be best for Tom. Dad as a parent wanted to keep the family together and Aunt Agnes thought it would be best for Tom to become part of her family. After raising six children of her own it could be time for Joe and herself to start thinking about slowing down and perhaps give thought to some travel but it turned out Aunt Agnes would rather raise Tom through his school education of eight years at Sacred Heart School and

four years of high school at Palmyra High, incur all of the expenses that this would entail and many expenses thereafter. Each of her children of Rose, Alice and May and sons Jack and Dick loved Tom and continuously showed it during the past two years when Tom was spending his summers at Riverton.

Aunt Agnes had Tom start school without agreement from dad. Holiday season arrives and Aunt Agnes called dad to tell him how well Tom is doing in school and to wish him and family a Merry Christmas. After the fall season Dad called Aunt Agnes to inform her that she has taken advantage of him that he is still not at all comfortable with Tom's school arrangement and that they will have a conversation at the end of the school semester.

His first school semester is over and Aunt Agnes calls dad that Tom was a good student with a good report card and that she intends to bring Tom home to 60th street for the summer season and it is time to think about having Jimmy spend the summer at Riverton. It was easy for dad to assume that Aunt Agnes was making assurances that Tom would be back in Riverton.

Dad informs Aunt Agnes that he could start legal proceedings to bring Tom home for good but also tells Aunt Agnes such a drastic action would benefit no one. Dad and Aunt Agnes came to an agreement that Tom will spend his summers at 60th street and return to Riverton to continue school and that he will consider this arrangement as temporary for the present time.

Dick is once again the courier bringing Tom home to 60th street and Jimmy to Riverton. Tom comes home and is happily surrounded by dad and the entire family tugging at him. Dad could see how wonderful and healthy Tom looks and right away he loses no time in getting involved with his siblings. There are trips to Coney Island for a day of swimming and there are days of playing baseball and softball at the big baseball fields near the shoreline. Jimmy is now the new darling in Riverton with his blond and curly

hair and Dick and Jack cater to him all summer. There are trips to the ice cream stand on each evening after a full day of playing outside. Like his brother Tom, Jimmy makes friends with kids his age and enjoys his summer at Riverton.

The season comes to an end and time for the exchange of Tom to return to Riverton and for Jimmy to come home. Once again Dick has made his way to 60th with Jimmy and he spends the day with the Laffey family and at the end of the day Dick prepares to bring Tom back to Riverton but Tom shows sadness in leaving his dad and siblings after a great summer. Dad sits down with Tom and puts his arm around him, explains to him that school was very important was and it was time to prepare for the second term at Sacred Heart.

At the end of the long day dad sits down and reflects on the exchange and knows that with Tom returning to Riverton and school at Sacred Heart and although he will keep his name of Tom Laffey he will become a member of the extended Laverty family. He knows that Aunt Agnes means well but he has spent his life after Mary's death in his effort of keeping his family together. There is no satisfactory answer.

If we all sit down in modern time and ask the question whether Tom's life was better with Aunt Agnes's arrangement the answer may be not at the start considering dad's pain about Tom's separation from him and his family but at the end Aunt Agnes's arrangement speaks for itself. Tom flourished at Sacred Heart and then at Palmyra High School where he was elected class president for both the junior and senior years.

After graduation Tom spent time at a variety of jobs awaiting for his number to be called for his draft into the United States Army to serve which he honorably served for a two year tour of duty in 1956 and 1957. He then returned home to Riverton and became active in social surroundings. At a local dance he met a

beautiful young lady with the name of Marion Lauber and after a fun filled evening Tom asked Marian if she would like to attend the forthcoming St. Patrick's dance in Burlington with him that was always a big celebration and Marian accepted his invitation. This led to steady dating and then to an engagement and ultimately marriage on March 1, 1963.

Tom found career employment with the PSE&G utility company where he spent thirty seven years that provided for a wonderful family life with Marian and their five children MaryAnn, Richard, Michael, Eileen and Theresa.

Over the years Helen, who was our family matriarch, and myself spent hours in conversation regarding Tom's career and we will never know how his life would have been had he stayed in Brooklyn but we do know what wonderful life experience he had with the Laverty family and because of the love that Aunt Agnes had for Tom that gave him the pathway that he enjoyed with Marian, his family and work.

Finally Helen would say - "As a parent dad wanted Tom home with his family but in his heart he knew that Aunt Agnes arrangement was right for Tom."

POSTSCRIPT

While Aunt Agnes was proud of her Irish Heritage she always had a desire to become a citizen of the United States of America and in her late seventies she made application for the test. As with all applicants Aunt Agnes received a civics study book covering important U.S. history and government topics. The current test has one hundred questions from which you could be asked up to ten questions. You must answer correctly six of the ten questions to pass the test and it is safe to think that the government had the same protocol back then.

Aunt Agnes successfully passed the difficult test and her story received local TV coverage and was the subject of article in the local paper. Aunt Agnes 's family, friends and neighbors were very proud of her accomplishment.

Aunt Agnes enjoyed a long life while making a contribution to family, friends, church and society; she passed away on July 13, 1983 at the age of eighty eight years after a life well spent.

CHAPTER 10

Pastor John's Farewell

Pastor John paid a visit to dad who gave him an enthusiastic welcome to inform him that he is moving on from The Basilica of Our Lady of Perpetual Help after a serving six years from 1936 to 1942. His new assignment will be at the St. Alphonsus Providential in Baltimore, Maryland where he will be teaching high school and college courses in religion. Pastor John with a smile tells dad that 'it looks like they are putting me out to the pasture after fifty years of performing parish work.'

Pastor John and dad start reminiscing of the year 1938 with the death of Mary and by necessity the Pastor's five plan program that saved our family. Dad informed the Pastor that it was not possible without him and the Pastor responded 'thanks for allowing me to do what I was ordained for that is assisting parishioners in need.'

It was a time for the Pastor to go and he and dad embraced and wished each other Good Luck.

CHAPTER 11

Financial Needs of Our Family Eases - Dad's Health Issue

Helen has graduated from her secretarial school and started working full time. David, Jack and myself are busy with part-time work all of which make paying the family expenses becomes much easier and more importantly dad could now ease up working on the waterfront docks. He makes the habit of getting out of the house and walking around the entire block being greeted by neighbors who are happy to see him.

Dad worked out a part time schedule with Mary McGuire to care for Claire and Jimmy and it is good to have Mrs. McGuire back in the family. Claire and Jimmy loved to play outside near the stoop under the watchful eye of Mrs. McGuire.

Dr. Levine has been making periodical visits to check on the health of the family and he notes that dad seems to have begun to feel the effects of working on the waterfront docks in those many years in all types of weather conditions and in the bottom of the freighter ships where there is always pools of cold water that seep in while packing baled goods that are being sent to the ships top deck. Dad is beginning to show signs of the disease of asthma and Dr. Levine prescribes an inhaler to assist him in breathing.

Dad's asthma condition makes it difficult for him to move around the apartment his days of going outside of our apartment are less and less, going outside for his walks are now out of the question. Our family loves baseball and it rubs off on dad to where we are watching the Brooklyn Dodger team on television that turns out to be a wonderful outlet for him. And in the evening time he joys watching the Bishop Sheen show that has a better television rating then Sid Caesar the world class comedian.'

CHAPTER 12

Dad's Promotion to Glory



Mike Laffey, Ballinrooan.

Dad is approaching sixty years of age and spending more time in bed and our family is spending more time at his bedside. His health has been deteriorating for the past month.

He begins to start each of his days talking about his Windfield Road and the Laffey farm reminiscing about working with his dad Michael rounding up the cows for their milking and doing work out in the field. His manor is one of serenity and dad seems to be at total peace talking about mom every day. Dr. Levine has been making weekly visits to dad and spends more time than usual with him more so like a friend rather than a patient when he holds dad's hand while thinking of the first time they met in the tenement on 4th avenue and the subsequent years in between.



This is the pathway that David Laffey took leaving his parents and Windfield Road for his journey to America.



**David Laffey's home and the tree he planted before he emigrated.
The tree was to remind his mother of him.**

Mary Cawley and her husband Jack have been visiting dad a couple of times each week as we all sense that dad's condition is worsening and in silent empathy feel that dad is asking our Lord that it is time to take him home to be with his beloved Mary. During the night of May 12, 1957, Jesus heard him and brought dad home as he passed peacefully in his sleep thus ending the life a devoted husband and father who was loved by his eight children. Dad will never be forgotten with his legacy intact to provide inspiration to all present and future generations of Laffey families. May they enjoy his story and plan a visit to Windfield Road and see the homestead farm and a fully blossomed tree that he planted before he left his beloved Windfield Road for America, never to see it again - 'My Father, The Most Remarkable Man Of My Life.'



IN LOVING MEMORY OF

David Laffey

Died May 12, 1957

Let Us Pray

Incline thine ear, O Lord to our prayer, in which we humbly entreat Thy mercy; bring to the country of peace and light the soul of Thy servant which thou hast summoned to go forth from this world and bid it to be numbered with Thy saints. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

—From the Missal

Jesus, Mary, Joseph
Indulgence 7 years each time.

Raccolta N. 256

Franciscan Missionary Union, Chicago

Memorial card for David Laffey.

ATTACHMENT 1

ELLEN MAHONEY'S HEIRLOOM - A SPOON FROM HER 1880 STERLING SILVER SET

Ellen Mahoney (1859) at the age of sixteen left Menlough for the Port of Immigration in the City of Boston, Massachusetts and found employment as a domestic for the family of Henrietta and Kirt Hobart and their three children son Benjamin and daughters Jennie and Ethel.

Ellen seamlessly became a member of the Hobart household who were a family of wealth. After time Ellen yearned for home in Menlough and notified Mr. & Mrs. Hobart of her plans to take a vacation home. They set up her passage and bade her farewell at the Port of Boston and to enjoy her time with her family.

During her vacation Ellen met Michael Laffey and she extended her vacation each month that she was scheduled to return to the Hobart's.

Eventually Ellen and Michael after a courtship of steady dating became engaged to be married and Ellen wrote the news to Henrietta and Kirt that she would not return to Hobart's family rather she was to settle down to married life on the Menlough farm of Michael Laffey on Windfield Road. While the love that they had



for Ellen and being overjoyed for her marriage they also missed her tremendously.

Ellen received a letter from the Hobart's that they were making plans to visit Ireland that will include a visit with her and Michael on Windfield Road. The letter was received with apprehension and anxiety, was their home on Windfield good enough for the Hobart's she wondered, however Ellen's fear proved to be unfounded as Kirk and Henrietta made their way to Windfield and enjoyed their reunion with Ellen and Michael tremendously so. They also carried a wedding gift with them consisting of a beautiful set of sterling silver with the initials of EM (Ellen Mahoney) at the top of each piece of the entire set.

During the year 1950, Eileen Laffey, daughter of David's brother John and Delia, emigrated from Windfield Road to the City of Philadelphia finding employment in a local church rectory as a domestic.

The following year Eileen made a visit to dad and our family at 469-60th street and she carried with her a spoon from the sterling silver set for dad. When she put the spoon in his hand, he cried for he knew immediately that the spoon came from his mother's silver set and this spoon is considered a family heirloom that was passed down from generation to generation and is now in my possession. It offered wonderful memories for him, of his mom and dad.

ATTACHMENT 2

MARY LAFFEY'S HEIRLOOM - A DINNER PLATE FROM HER CHINA SET OF 1925

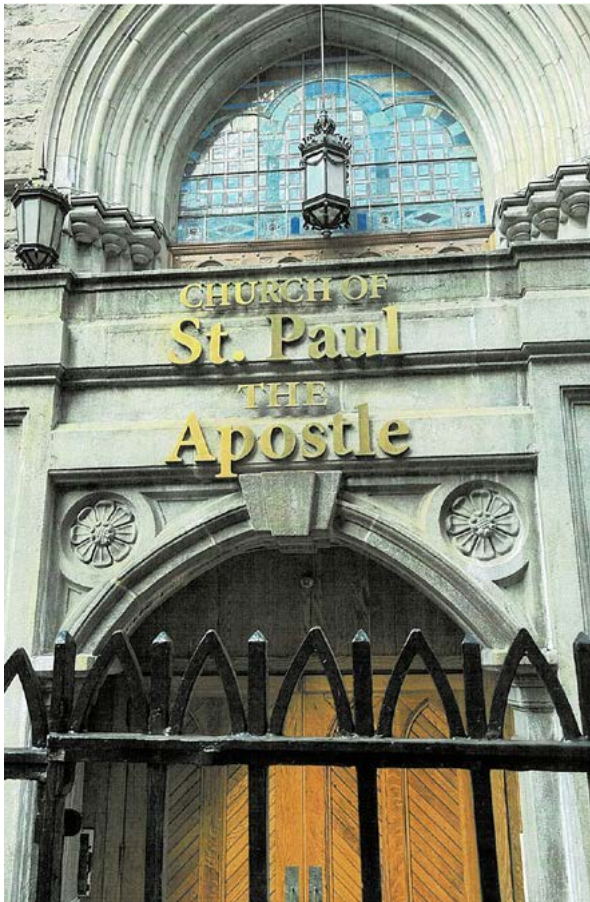


Mary and David were married on June 7, 1925 at the Church of St. Paul the Apostle that is located on 405 West 59th Street, New York City.

Among the first items of home furnishings that they purchased was a china ware dish set that served them well down through the years, but the china set was difficult to keep intact with the movements of home relocation's from New York to Brooklyn at 960-77th street and then onto 5719-5th avenue and then to 5719-4th avenue and finally to 469-60th street. I am in possession of the only remaining dish plate from the original set as a family heirloom of one hundred years old.

ATTACHMENT 3

CHURCH OF ST. PAUL THE APOSTLE



St. Paul the Apostle Church is located on the mid-town west side of Manhattan on Columbus Avenue and W.60th street and is one of the two most glorious edifices constructed in the mid-town area. The other being St. Patrick's Cathedral on the famous 5th avenue. Of the two, St. Paul's church will always have a soft spot in the hearts of our Laffey families since dad first met Mary Killarney at a Saturday evening dance at St. Paul's dance hall.

The dance developed into a friendship and then into steady dating, engagement and finally marriage on June 7, 1925. As a parishioner and regular attendee at Sunday mass and it was at St. Paul's Church that an invitation was printed in the church bulletin for interested parishioners to relocate to the borough of Brooklyn to partake in the development of a new church and parish named after St. Ephrem. The advertisement stated 'that if you are looking for a home in a rural area and that you financially qualified you can pick out a site in the farm lands located adjacent to the church and build your home for the future.' The advertisement developed into a reality for mom and dad as they became parishioners of the newly built church of St. Ephrem.

The Church of St. Paul the Apostle was a haven for Irish and Italian immigrants from Europe who found residence in the local 5 story tenement buildings. The parish was the focal point of religious and social life throughout the late 1800's and early 1900's. A large Spanish speaking populations changed the make-up of the parish in the 1950's that included Puerto Ricans and immigrants from Latin America. Many of the tenements and apartment buildings were demolished to make room for Fordham University and the Lincoln Center complex. With a smaller population the church pews were rarely filled. By the time of a major renovation in 1993 the removal of third of the pews reduced the capacity to approximately seven hundred to where it is today. St. Paul's the Apostle church prides itself of the diversity of its congregation where the LGBTQ+ community are welcome.

ATTACHMENT 4

VISIT TO ELLIS ISLAND



Ever since I learned that my father, David Laffey, gained entry to the United States through the Immigration Center on Ellis Island, I had a desire to trace his footprints as he worked his way through the acceptance process of the famed Island. Accompanied with my daughter Maureen and son Michael, with our reservation for a guided tour in-hand of Ellis Island for Monday, January 12, 2024.

We met our tour guide named Alex who proved to be an expert on the history of Ellis Island. The day of our tour was very cold that may have accounted for only the three of us showing up



Michael Jnr Michael Snr and Maureen, pictured on Ellis Island.

and therefore, we received Alex's personal attention at every stop of our tour. We shared with Alex the story of dad's journey across the Atlantic ocean onboard of the S.S. *Cymric* passenger ship that left the port of Liverpool, England on June 2, 1915 and landed on Ellis Island on June 13, 1915 and that we were writing a book about his journey.

During the period of time when my dad landed on Ellis Island from the ship, barge or ferry he passed through an imposing entrance sheltered from bad weather by an overhead canopy. Then the immigrant would join the long line waiting for admission to the Main Building clutching the manifest tags given to them onboard the ship S.S. *Cymric* that brought him to America. During the peak years Ellis Island's facilities were so overcrowded that newcomers might have to wait several days on their ship before a ferry could even bring them to the Island.

Once inside the main building they were directed to the Baggage Room and checked their baggage before ascending up the stairs to the Registry Room with the Inspector standing at the top landing to detect any sign of lameness or other obvious deformity that might disqualify an immigrant. The Registry Room contained Examination Department of the Legal Inspectors and the Medical Department where they were inspected by doctors who would ultimately pass on his eligibility to land on the shore of New York City.

Carrying his Identification papers, he entered into a long narrow row with piping on each side of him with an interval of 20' between immigrants he would walk toward the examining doctor who already took note of his legs, hands, head and arms during the walk. If the immigrant revealed any intimation of any disease or deformity this fact was noted. If the immigrant revealed no reason why he should be held at this point he would be ready for the dreaded medical physical but if there was the least suspicion in the mind of the doctors that there was anything wrong with immigrant, a chalk mark would be placed on the lapel of his/her coat. The chalk marks were coded-B -for back, C- for conjunctivitis, Ct- for trachoma and Pg- for pregnancy. On average, fifteen to twenty percent of the immigrants were marked for further examination.

The medical examination was the most dreaded part of the process for many of the immigrants particularly the eye examination on where the doctor would flipped up the eyelids of each immigrant with a button hook, a hairpin or the fingers searching for common eye diseases such as trachoma, that was contagious and could lead to blindness if not treated. Those found with trachoma were not allowed to enter the United States. Steamships had the responsibility of inspecting immigrants before bringing them to America and were required to pay return passage for any passenger rejected as per law requirements. In the peak year of 1907, 13,064 of 1,285,349 were sent home.

Immigrates who got past the medical inspectors were divided into groups according to how they were listed on ship's manifest and waited their turn on long wood benches to be called to the lectern of the inspector for the final phase of inspection to answer questions of name, sex, marital status, occupation, literacy, last residence, ever in prison, final destination, who was meeting them and how much money they had in their possession a minimum of fifty dollars was required.



After completing their inspection in the Registry Room with the Legal Inspectors and the Medical Personnel to their satisfaction the immigrants were then directed to the Community Room where they received legal documents indicating that they had satisfactorily passed inspection to debark Ellis Island. They were ushered to the stair landing to descend this divided flight of stairs, called the “Stairs of Separation.” The right -hand side led to the railroad ticket and telegraph office where they could notify relatives of their safe arrival; the left-hand side, to the New York ferry; and the central steps that led to the detention rooms. This stairway marked the parting of the ways for many families and friends with different destinations.

It was at the ferry that David Laffey was reunited with Martin and James Ward and Thady Hansberry that was a cause of immediate jubilation among them hugging each other shouting out we done it! We done it! We are on our way to America. As the ferry left Ellis Island and passed the Statue of Liberty ever so closely that felt they could reach out and touch this magnificent Lady.

The boys rendered a salute of respect and appreciation. When the ferry reached the harbor shore line and after the securing the ferry and lowering the exit ramp they finally walked on the soil of the United States of America. On the shore to meet them was Aunt Kitty Ward, with two neighbors for comfort, carrying a 12"x12" cardboard sign on a wooden stick with the names of Ward, Hansberry and Laffey on it and they found each other without any delay.

Now Aunt Kitty had the honor to introduce the boys to the New York Transit subway line up Broadway that was ceremoniously opened in 1904 and once aboard the subway train they were on their way to 214 West 92nd street the address of Kitty Ward's apartment building where a party of was waiting for them for their journey and achievement of crossing the Atlantic Ocean to the United States of America.

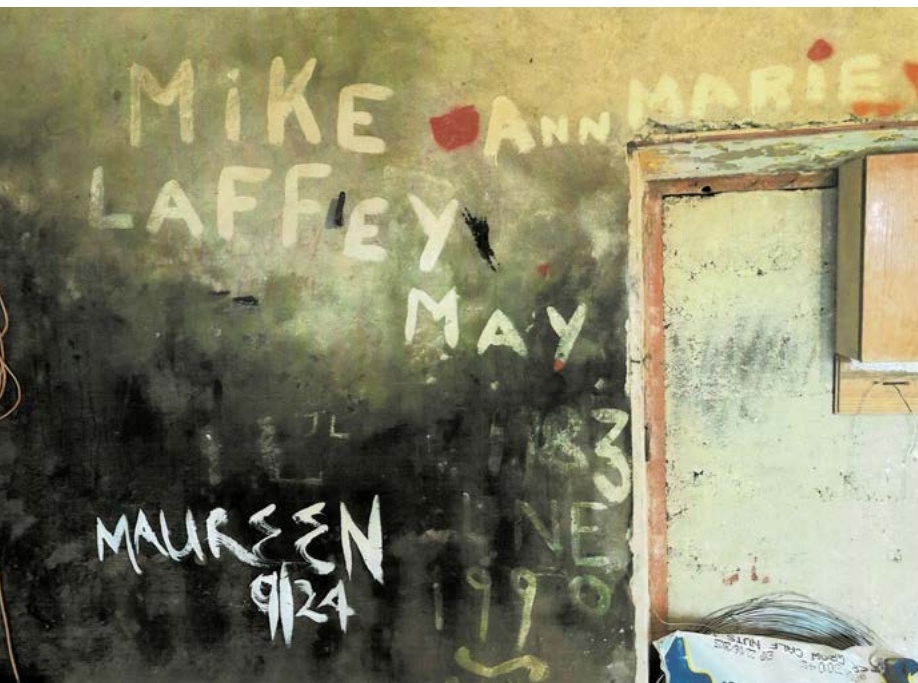
During WWII, Ellis Island was used almost exclusively as a detention center for enemy aliens - German, Italians, Japanese, Hungarian, Romanians and Bulgarians who may have spent up to six months pending resolution of their status.

After WWII activity on the Island waned and there were calls to close it. Over the next several years an increasing number of people complained that Ellis Island had outlived its usefulness as an immigration station. They eventually prevailed and Ellis Island was formally closed on November 12, 1954.

In 1965, President Lyndon Johnson declared Ellis Island a National Monument and made it part of the Statue of Liberty Monument to be administered by the National Park Service and funded by congress.

SPECIAL COMMENTS

1. As covered by the New York Times newspaper the first immigrant to enter and be registered on the new building on Ellis Island in 1882 was a rosy cheek little 15 year old Irish girl name Annie Moore a resident of County Cork, Ireland. As soon as the gangplank was run ashore Annie crossed it and hurried into the main building. By a prearranged plan she was escorted to a registry desk” When the little voyager had been registered Col. Weber, the Commissioner of Immigration presented her with a \$10 gold piece and made a short address of congratulations and welcome. It was the first United States coin she had ever seen and the largest sum of money she had possessed.
2. Other ports of entry for immigrants to gain admittance to the United States of America were Boston, Baltimore, Philadelphia, New Orleans and San Francisco.
3. Many of those who entered the country via Ellis Island in one way or another contributed to the greatest of America. A few examples are Irving Berlin, Knute Rockne, Supreme Court Justice Felix Frankfurter, Al Jolson, Samuel Goldwyn, Pauline Newman, Edward G. Robinson, Frank Capra and Fr. Edward Flanagan of Boy’s Town.
4. First and second -class passengers could bypass inspection on Ellis Island and have their inspection performed onboard the ship while the steerage passengers had to go through their registering process on Ellis Island.
5. According to Ellis Island - “In the sinking of the Titanic passenger ship in 1912 the ship’s manuscript listed names of 500 immigrants from Europe with a final destination of Ellis Island.”



Writing on barn wall, Windfield Road.

In conclusion of our tour of repeating the footprints of my father who successfully entered Ellis Island on June 13, 1915. Our tour is also an historic lesson for Maureen, Michael and myself from our tour guide Alex to whom we were so grateful.

Additionally, for our research for this attachment we were referred to read Pamela Reeves wonderful book titled 'Ellis Island - Gateway to the American Dream.' Pamela's book was of considerable assistance.

LAFFEY FAMILY QUOTES

“I felt very light and happy the first few days in Ireland, but that feeling ratcheted up considerably as soon as I stepped on the Laffey Farm.”

Nancy Hart, daughter of Mike Laffey

“For decades, I sat at tables, sipped tea, picked caraway seeds out of Irish soda bread, and listened to stories and tales and longing from grandparents, aunts, and uncles with brogues. None of which prepared me for the simplicity and grounding I felt in the soles of my feet and the fall of my shoulders when family on Windfield Road quietly said, ‘welcome home.’ Home. Yes, home.”

Maureen Laffey, daughter of Mike Laffey

“Returning home for the first time, I found a part of myself that I didn’t know was missing.”

Michael Laffey, Jr, son of Mike Laffey

“Ever since I visited Ireland, the wind has been at my back.”

Terence Laffey, son of Mike Laffey

“The beauty of Ireland takes my breath away every time I am there. But it’s the people who capture my heart and soul with each visit.”

Patti Falvey, daughter of Mike Laffey

“I was born in Brooklyn and raised in New Jersey. But after stepping foot on the Laffey farm in Menlough, I felt home.”

Matt Laffey, son of Mike Laffey

“I’ve always been proudly Irish, inheriting my grandparents’ immense pride in their roots and their many stories about our ancestors. Poppy on the bagpipes or Nanny singing Danny Boy are the songs of my childhood. I knew I would love Ireland before I ever stepped foot on its soil, but I wasn’t prepared for how much it would truly feel like coming home. Visiting the family farm was an unforgettable experience. Ireland is the most beautiful place in the world and I can’t wait to come home again soon.”

Bridget Hart, daughter of Nancy, granddaughter of Mike Laffey

“A life changing and emotional experience with the people I love most - one I will never forget. It deepened my appreciation for my family in ways I didn’t expect and made me proud of where we come from.”

Caitlyn Laffey, daughter of Tim, granddaughter of Mike Laffey

“God bless the motherland.”

Tim Falvey, Jr, son of Patti, grandson of Mike Laffey

“Coming ‘home’ feels like being spun up into an endless blanket of love and warmth woven together by all the ancestors who came before me and those who will follow. There is no place like Ireland, and there is nothing like Galway.”

Catherine Falvey, daughter of Patti, granddaughter of Mike Laffey

“The landscape was so refreshing.”

Patrick Falvey, son of Patti, grandson of Mike Laffey

“Meeting our relatives in Ireland was a profound experience for me. Coming to know and building relationships with our distant native family is something that I will certainly never forget.”

Terence Falvey, son of Patti, grandson of Mike Laffey

“So blessed to visit this special home and family.”

Eileen Conville, daughter of Tom Laffey, niece of Mike Laffey



Mike with his family.

Back row, left to right: Michael Laffey, Matt Laffey, Terence Laffey, Tim Laffey and Nancy Laffey Hart.

Front row, left to right: Patti Laffey Falvey, Maureen Laffey, Ann Laffey and Mike Laffey.

“Ireland 9/2024 was a powerful, emotional, and trilling trip of a lifetime. So many highlights, but one particular memory was the opportunity to visit the house my grandfather was raised in with 3 generations - dad, me, my sisters, and my oldest daughter Caitlyn. So proud of my Irish heritage and the wonderful traditions that come with it. And now I can’t wait to go back.”

Tim Laffey, son of Mike Laffey

LAFFEY FAMILY PHOTO GALLERY



Above: Tim Laffey and his daughter Caitlin. Below: Jenny Pfister Laffey.





Above: Patrick, Bridget and Matthew Hart. Below: Mike Laffey.





Caitlin Laffey.



Above, left to right: David Laffey (Mike's first cousin) with the Hart Family, outside the Barn, Windfield Road.

Below: Maureen Laffey.

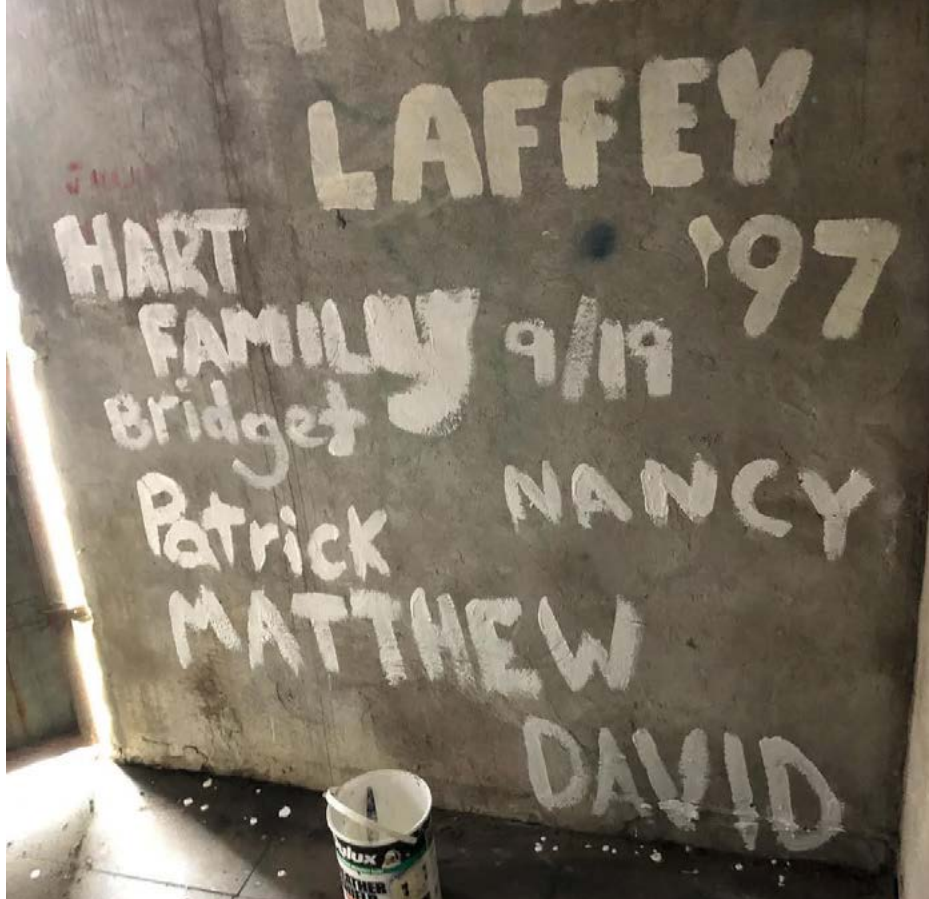




Above, left to right: Elliot and Steph Olson.

Below, left to right: Falvey Family, Tim, Patrick, Patti, Catherine, Terence and Tim.







Mike Laffey, 2025.

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To Jerry Tortorella - technologist, who was important in the initial stage of the book in setting up the computer for necessary interface with Emma on Windfield Road.

Lastly to thank all of my family here in USA and in Ireland. I leave you all my father David Laffey's emigration story. To keep his memory alive for generations to come.

Mike Laffey
Mahwah
USA

Emigration Story

THE JOURNEY

A story of a young emigrant man leaving his rural village of Menlough, in the townland of Ballinruane, County Galway, to journey to New York City in 1915.

This is the story of David Laffey (1897-1957), who was born a son of Michael Laffey (1858-1939) and Ellen Mahoney (1859-1943) in the townland Ballinruane, Menlough, Ballinasloe, County Galway, Ireland, on October 16th, 1897.



Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe
Galway County Council

