

For the next generation ...

*“A family tree tells us who our ancestors were. Their stories tell us who they became—and, in many ways, who we are. Together, they tell the story of our collective American Dream.”*

– MATTHEW CONNELLY

# Preface

## LIVES REFLECTING UPWARDS

I have often stood beneath an old tree and looked upward through its branches. At first, I noticed only the trunk and the larger limbs. But as the light changed, new branches appeared. Leaves that had blended into the canopy became distinct. Textures, patterns, and connections that had always existed slowly revealed themselves. The tree itself never changed. Only the light—and my perspective—did.

Researching my family has been much the same experience. Every new discovery became another source of light. A faded photograph. A passenger manifest. A church record. A newspaper article. A stained-glass window. None of these changed the lives of my ancestors. They simply allowed me to see those lives more clearly.

I began to realize that genealogy is not merely the collection of names and dates. It is the gradual discovery of people. Each record reflects another dimension of a life. Each generation reveals another branch. Every story deepens our understanding of those who came before us—and, in turn, of ourselves.

This book is my invitation to look upward through those branches—not simply to trace a family tree, but to discover the remarkable lives that continue to shape our own. It tells the stories of the men and women who became our parents and grandparents, reaching across nearly 300 years of life in America.

These portraits are drawn from fifty-five years of research. They are not intended to be exhaustive biographies or to include every genealogical detail. Instead, each portrait brings together carefully curated facts, documents, photographs, family stories, and memories that best reveal the person behind the name. Together, they form an album of lives, each contributing its own voice to the larger story of our family.

CHAPTER ONE

Where the Journey Began

OUR WOVEN PLACE IN AMERICAN HISTORY

We all know the story of the United States—its historical events and turning points, and the storied figures who shaped and defined our country’s history. What we may not know is where our own family fits within that story.

Through research, family stories, artifacts, photographs, and records saved and passed down through generations, we can begin to discover that place. The challenge is to gather those pieces, understand them, and tell an accurate series of family stories that might otherwise be lost.

The fabric of America is woven from the stories of American families. Those stories are found in where people lived, the work they did, the families they raised, the hardships they faced, the opportunities they pursued, and the contributions—large and small—they made along the way.

Most were not famous. They did not make speeches or have their names written into history books. They were everyday people who built lives, supported families, served their communities, practiced trades, crossed oceans, endured wars and loss, and adapted to a changing country.

Their lives were part of American history, too.

So where is our family woven into the American story?

That is the question these pages seek to answer.

OUR ONGOING AMERICAN DREAM

This book is intentionally focused on my family’s American story. It begins with the immigrant

Generation of the men and women who left their homelands to build new lives in America—and follows their descendants through the present day.

While many of these families have rich histories stretching back centuries in Germany, Ireland, and elsewhere, those stories deserve their own separate work.

Here, the focus is on the generations that transformed the dream of immigration into the reality of an American family.

I was eleven years old when my mother handed me a family tree starter kit when the family first moved into the house in Harleysville, Pennsylvania. She probably thought it would be an interesting project to engage with my grandparents who were now living with us.

Neither of us could have imagined that small gift would become a discover journey lasting more than fifty years.

Armed with a notebook, the kit worksheets and youthful curiosity, I began asking my parents and grandparents interview questions about their lives and ancestors. I carefully wrote down their answers in my own handwriting that I still have in my possession. At the time, I didn’t realize I was preserving names with great stories that would one day be impossible to recover.

For generations, immigrants have come to the United States seeking opportunity, freedom, and the hope of a better life. Our nation has been shaped by people from every corner of the world who arrived with little more than determination, faith, and a dream for the future. The American story is, in many ways, an immigrant story.

Immigration has long been as natural to our country as waves rolling onto the shore. Each generation has added its own traditions, culture, values, and talents to the great American melting pot.

While the journey was often difficult, countless families found the opportunity to build lives that would have been unimaginable in the lands they left behind.

The immigrants who left Germany and Ireland in my case could never have imagined that one of their descendants would spend years reconstructing their lives, travel back to their towns and churches, stand where they once stood and then preserve their stories for future generations.

My goal is not simply to create a family tree filled with names, dates, census records, and obituaries. Those facts are important, but they are only part of the story. I want to understand who these people were, what they valued, what challenges they faced, what dreams they carried with them, and how their choices shaped the generations that followed.

As I have researched my family’s history, I have come to appreciate that every branch of the tree represents real people whose lives mattered. They were sons and daughters, husbands and wives, parents and grandparents. They celebrated holidays, endured hardships, built businesses, mastered their crafts, served their communities, and passed along traditions that still influence our family today. This work is my attempt to tell their story.

Generations later, it is important to know that our ancestors’ stories and all the following generations afterwards to present day are additive to our family’s’ American Dream.

You are an important person to the continuation to our living our still active American Dream as we watch your reflections shimmer in the lights of the day.

THE GERMAN EXPERIENCE

CHAPTER TWO

Why They Left Home

THE GERMAN EXPERIENCE

The decision to leave Germany was rarely based on a single event. Rather, it was the result of generations of hardship that affected entire families and communities. While every immigrant carried a personal story, most shared common pressures that made remaining at home increasingly difficult. Some sought relief from the devastation left by decades of warfare. Others struggled to obtain land, support growing families, or practice their faith without interference. At the same time, stories from America described a colony where land was plentiful, religious diversity was accepted, and opportunity appeared within reach.

For many, immigration was not an escape from one problem but a calculated decision to pursue a better future.

A REGION SHAPED BY WAR

The German lands, particularly the Rhineland and the Palatinate, endured repeated invasions during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Armies crossed the region several times, villages were burned, farms destroyed, and crops ruined. Families who rebuilt after one conflict often faced another only a few years later.

The cumulative effects of these wars left many communities economically exhausted. High taxes, damaged farmland, and uncertain harvests made it increasingly difficult for ordinary families to prosper.

LAND, OPPORTUNITY, AND FAMILY

Even after peace returned, another challenge remained. Land was scarce. Farms were divided among heir’s generation after generation, leaving many young families with little opportunity to own productive property.

For skilled craftsmen, laborers, and farmers alike, Pennsylvania offered something that had become increasingly difficult to obtain in Europe—a chance to build a future through hard work and land ownership.

William Penn actively encouraged immigration by promoting Pennsylvania as a place where industrious settlers could own land and practice their religion freely. His reputation spread throughout German-speaking Europe, making Philadelphia the principal destination for thousands of immigrants between 1682 and the American Revolution.

FAITH AND RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Religion also influenced many emigrants. While conditions varied greatly from one German state to another, Protestants often experienced restrictions depending upon the policies of local rulers.

Among those seeking greater religious freedom were Lutherans, German Reformed believers, Mennonites, and later the Moravians, who established communities throughout Pennsylvania beginning in the late 1730s.

These immigrants carried more than their possessions. They brought their churches, languages, customs, craftsmanship, and traditions, many of which would shape Pennsylvania for generations.

BUILDING PENNSYLVANIA

After arriving in Philadelphia, German settlers steadily expanded into the forests and fertile valleys west and north of the city. Communities soon developed throughout present-day Montgomery, Berks, Lancaster, and surrounding counties.

They became known primarily as farmers, but they were also blacksmiths, butchers, coopers, millers, wagon makers, craftsmen, merchants, and builders.

With mattocks, axes, and mauls they cleared forests, constructed homes and barns, built churches, and transformed wilderness into productive farmland. Their work helped establish the agricultural and economic foundation of colonial Pennsylvania.

OUR FAMILY’S JOURNEY

Our family’s story reflects this larger history.

The earliest known immigrant in this German branch was **Hans Bernard Wolf**, who arrived in Philadelphia aboard the *William and Sarah* on **September 18, 1727**, accompanied by his son. Like thousands of other Palatine Germans, he chose Pennsylvania as the place where his family could begin again.

Five years later, **Markus Jung (Young)** followed this same path. He arrived aboard the *Loyal Judith* in Philadelphia on **September 25, 1732**, one of the many German immigrants whose arrival was announced in a contemporary Philadelphia newspaper. Like other adult male immigrants of the period, he took the required Oaths of Allegiance and Abjuration before beginning his new life in Pennsylvania.

Together, Hans Bernard Wolf and Markus Jung became part of one of the most significant migration movements in colonial American history. Their decision to leave Germany permanently altered the future of our family. Every generation that followed traces its American story to the courage these men displayed when they stepped ashore in Philadelphia nearly three centuries ago.

Following their arrival in Philadelphia, German immigrants gradually moved west and north into the fertile valleys that today encompass Montgomery, Berks, and Lancaster Counties. Early German communities emerged in places such as Skippack, Perkiomen, and Goshenhoppen, where churches, farms, and family networks soon took root. These communities became the foundation of Pennsylvania German life, and many remain familiar places to our family nearly three hundred years later.

# THE IRISH EXPERIENCE

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The decision to leave Ireland was shaped by a combination of economic hardship, political inequality, religious discrimination, and, ultimately, one of the greatest humanitarian disasters of the nineteenth century—the Great Famine.

For generations, many Irish families struggled to secure stable employment, own land, and improve their circumstances. Opportunities were limited, particularly for Catholics living under British rule. At the same time, stories arriving from America described a country where work was available, land could be obtained, religious freedom was expanding, and ordinary people could build better lives for their families. For countless Irish immigrants, leaving home was a difficult but hopeful decision.

During a visit to Ireland in June 1963, President John F. Kennedy captured the magnitude of Irish emigration when he observed:

“Most countries send out oil or iron, steel or gold, or some other crop, but Ireland has had only one export, and that is its people.”

His words reflected a remarkable historical reality. Since 1800, more than ten million people have emigrated from Ireland—nearly twice the island’s present-day population.

The defining event in Irish emigration was the Great Famine of 1845–1852. A devastating outbreak of potato late blight destroyed the staple crop upon which much of the rural population depended, leading to one of Europe’s deadliest famines. Approximately one million people died, while another two million emigrated, many sailing for the United States. The famine permanently transformed Ireland’s population and reshaped the Irish presence throughout the world.

The famine did not occur in isolation. Ireland was governed by Great Britain, and many Irish Catholics faced longstanding political and social disadvantages. Restrictions on land ownership, limited political representation, religious discrimination, widespread poverty, and inadequate government responses intensified the suffering. For many families, emigration became not simply an opportunity, but a necessity.

Our Irish family is represented by the Connelly, Kerrigan, Walsh, and McGinty families. Although each family’s story is unique, together they reflect the broader Irish experience.

Patrick H. Kerrigan immigrated to the United States in 1838, several years before the Great Famine began. His decision reflects the hardships that already existed in Ireland before the catastrophe that followed.

Daniel and Eleanor (Ellenor) McGinty were also part of the generation that left before the famine. Passenger records show that Eleanor arrived in Philadelphia on August 21, 1838, aboard the *Cadmus* after departing from Liverpool. At approximately thirty-seven years of age, she crossed the Atlantic to begin a new life in southeastern Pennsylvania.

Edward Connelly was already living in Pennsylvania by 1850, placing his immigration during the years when Irish emigration was accelerating dramatically.

James Walsh arrived later, when Ireland was still struggling to recover from the famine’s devastating long-term effects and the limited opportunities that remained.

Together, these families represent more than individual immigration stories. They illustrate the resilience of the Irish people—survivors who left their homeland with few possessions but abundant determination. They found work wherever it could be found, established homes, raised families, strengthened their communities, and helped build the America that their descendants know today.

CHAPTER THREE

# The Economics of Leaving Home

The decision to leave home involved far more than courage—it required money. For most immigrants, simply securing enough funds to purchase a one-way passage to America was an extraordinary achievement. Beyond the ticket itself, they also needed enough money to survive after arriving until work could be found. Every dollar or shilling represented months, and sometimes years, of sacrifice.

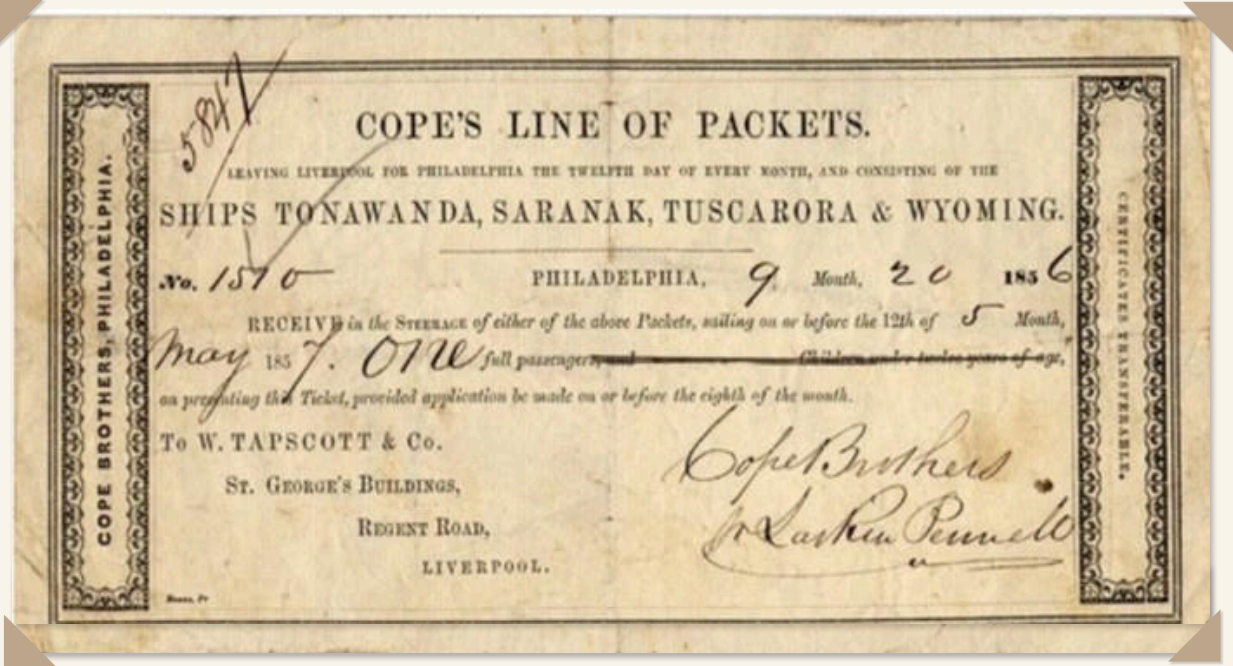
For my Irish ancestors who emigrated during the late 1830s and into the famine era, a steerage passage from Liverpool to Philadelphia generally cost between **£3 and £6** in the late 1830s. By the height of the Great Famine, increased demand often pushed fares to **£5 to £8**, and sometimes even higher.

To place those figures into perspective, an Irish agricultural laborer typically earned only **8 to 12 pence per day**, and then only when work was available. With **240 pence in one pound**, a £5 passage represented approximately **100 days of wages** before spending a single penny on food, clothing, rent, or supporting a family. Because employment was often seasonal and uncertain, saving enough money for passage frequently required a year or more of careful budgeting and sacrifice.

Many families sold livestock, mortgaged or sold household possessions, borrowed from relatives, or received **remittance money** sent by family members who had already established themselves in America. In many cases, an entire extended family worked together so that one person could make the journey, hoping that success in America would eventually allow others to follow.

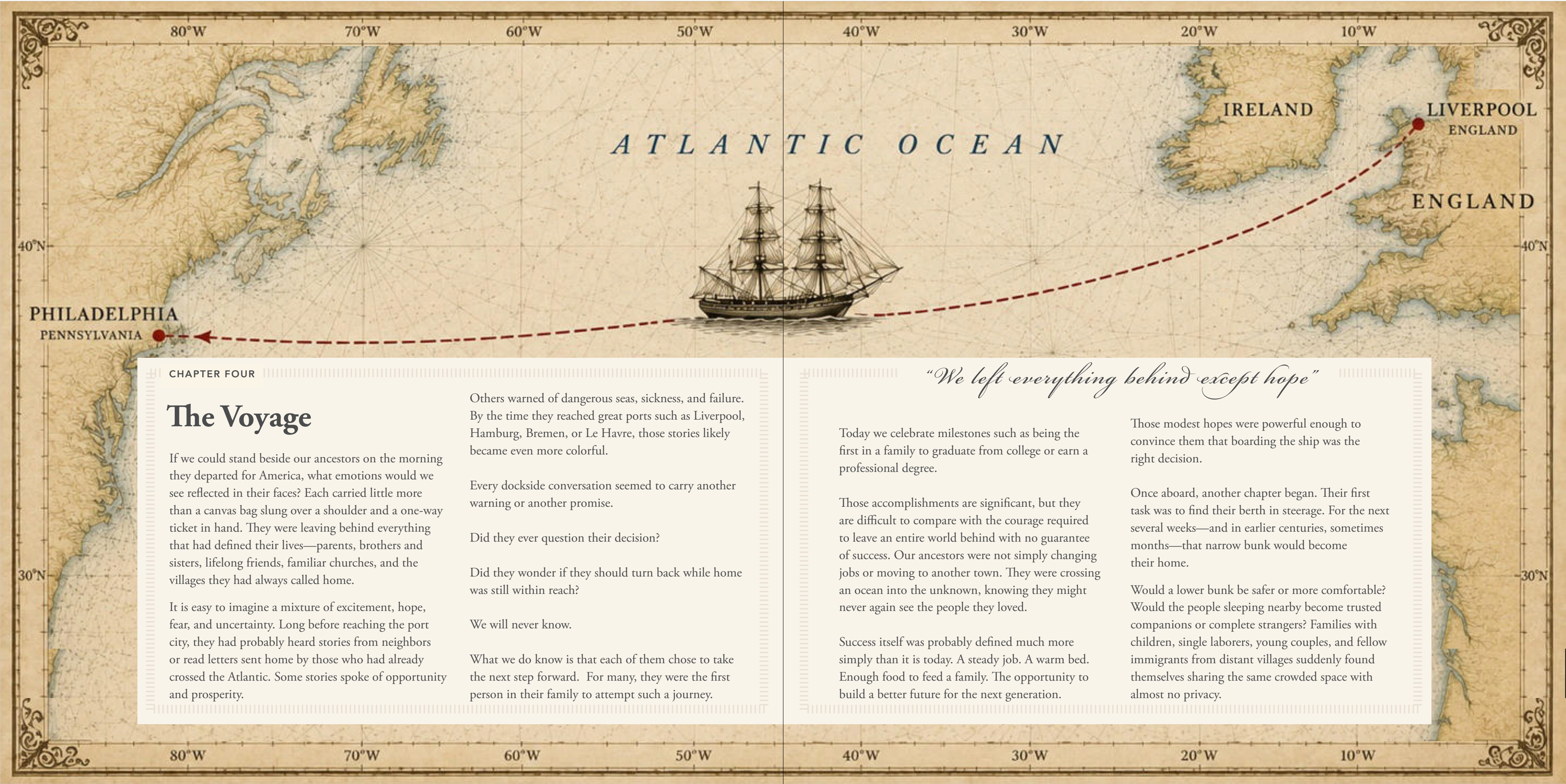
The true cost of passage was therefore measured not simply in pounds and shillings, but in years of determination, sacrifice, and hope.

Even after stepping ashore in Philadelphia or New York, immigrants faced another challenge. They still needed enough money to secure lodging, purchase food, and survive until they found employment. Purchasing a ticket was not merely paying for transportation across the Atlantic—it was an investment in a future they could only imagine.



Photograph: Steerage Ticket

An example of an 1856–1857 Liverpool-to-Philadelphia steerage ticket for one-way passage. While issued a few years after Edward Connelly's probable voyage, it closely represents the type of ticket he would have purchased. More than a receipt for transportation, it symbolized the opportunity to begin an entirely new life.



CHAPTER FOUR

The Voyage

If we could stand beside our ancestors on the morning they departed for America, what emotions would we see reflected in their faces? Each carried little more than a canvas bag slung over a shoulder and a one-way ticket in hand. They were leaving behind everything that had defined their lives—parents, brothers and sisters, lifelong friends, familiar churches, and the villages they had always called home.

It is easy to imagine a mixture of excitement, hope, fear, and uncertainty. Long before reaching the port city, they had probably heard stories from neighbors or read letters sent home by those who had already crossed the Atlantic. Some stories spoke of opportunity and prosperity.

Others warned of dangerous seas, sickness, and failure. By the time they reached great ports such as Liverpool, Hamburg, Bremen, or Le Havre, those stories likely became even more colorful.

Every dockside conversation seemed to carry another warning or another promise.

Did they ever question their decision?

Did they wonder if they should turn back while home was still within reach?

We will never know.

What we do know is that each of them chose to take the next step forward. For many, they were the first person in their family to attempt such a journey.

*“We left everything behind except hope”*

Today we celebrate milestones such as being the first in a family to graduate from college or earn a professional degree.

Those accomplishments are significant, but they are difficult to compare with the courage required to leave an entire world behind with no guarantee of success. Our ancestors were not simply changing jobs or moving to another town. They were crossing an ocean into the unknown, knowing they might never again see the people they loved.

Success itself was probably defined much more simply than it is today. A steady job. A warm bed. Enough food to feed a family. The opportunity to build a better future for the next generation.

Those modest hopes were powerful enough to convince them that boarding the ship was the right decision.

Once aboard, another chapter began. Their first task was to find their berth in steerage. For the next several weeks—and in earlier centuries, sometimes months—that narrow bunk would become their home.

Would a lower bunk be safer or more comfortable? Would the people sleeping nearby become trusted companions or complete strangers? Families with children, single laborers, young couples, and fellow immigrants from distant villages suddenly found themselves sharing the same crowded space with almost no privacy.



Life below deck was seldom comfortable. The air was heavy, the quarters cramped, and the smells of damp wood, cooking, livestock, and seasickness often mixed together. The ocean itself was unpredictable. Calm days could quickly give way to violent storms that tossed the ship from side to side, reminding everyone how small they were against the vast Atlantic. There was no escape from the motion of the sea or the close quarters. Day after day, they simply endured.

Then came the moment they had imagined throughout the voyage.

A cry from above announced that land had been sighted.

As the coastline slowly emerged from the morning mist, relief must have washed over the passengers. Soon they could see the outlines of New York or Philadelphia taking shape before them. Whatever fears they had carried across the Atlantic were replaced, at least for a moment, by wonder. They had survived the voyage. America was no longer an idea or a dream. It was directly before them.

When they finally stepped onto the dock, there were no baggage carousels, security checkpoints, or familiar signs pointing the way. They simply gathered their few belongings, walked down the gangway, and began a new life.

Perhaps the closest modern comparison is the anxiety of the first day at a new school, but even that falls far short. Imagine instead being sent alone to an unfamiliar boarding school across an ocean, with no telephone, no safety net, and little expectation that you would ever return home. For many immigrants, it was also their first experience aboard a ship and their first time seeing the open sea.

That single step from the dock into America changed not only their lives, but the lives of every generation that followed. Our family's story—and the stories of millions of other American families—began with the courage to take that first step.

THE VOYAGE ACROSS THE ATLANTIC

For most immigrants, boarding the ship marked the point of no return. Family members faded into the distance as the shoreline disappeared over the horizon. What lay ahead was uncertain, but there was no turning back. They carried with them only a few possessions, their faith, and the hope that a better life awaited them in America.

No traveler could predict exactly how long the voyage would last. With favorable winds, a sailing ship might cross the Atlantic in as little as eighteen to twenty days. More commonly, however, the journey required four to six weeks. When storms, contrary winds, or prolonged calms interrupted the passage, the crossing could stretch to seven, eight, or even ten weeks. Every additional day at sea meant dwindling provisions, increasing discomfort, and the uncertainty of not knowing when land would finally appear.

The experiences of our own ancestors reflected the changing age of ocean travel. Patrick Kerrigan and Ellen McGinty, who sailed in 1838, likely spent about a month crossing the Atlantic. Edward Connelly's voyage in 1848 probably lasted between four and six weeks. By the time Gustave Adolph Kirchner emigrated in 1868, steamships had transformed transatlantic travel, reducing the crossing to approximately ten to fourteen days. Within a single generation, the Atlantic Ocean had become a much smaller barrier between Europe and America.

Life aboard ship was far from comfortable. Most immigrants traveled in steerage, the lowest level of the vessel, where space was crowded, ventilation was poor, and privacy did not exist. Families slept in narrow wooden bunks stacked one above another, sharing cramped quarters with hundreds of fellow passengers. Fresh water was carefully rationed, and meals were simple and repetitive, often consisting of hard bread, salted meat, oatmeal, potatoes, or soup when it could be prepared.

Storms could transform an already difficult voyage into a terrifying ordeal. Passengers were tossed about by towering waves while the ship pitched and rolled violently. Seasickness spread quickly through the crowded quarters, leaving many too weak to eat. Damp bedding, poor sanitation, and stale air made illness an ever-present concern. Each sunrise brought hope that calmer seas—and America—were drawing closer.

During every Atlantic crossing, death was never far away. Infants, young children, the elderly, and those already weakened by illness were especially vulnerable. When a passenger died, there was no cemetery waiting on the far shore. Wrapped in canvas or a blanket, weighted with a heavy object, and accompanied by a brief prayer offered by the captain or a fellow traveler, the deceased was committed to the Atlantic Ocean.

For those left behind, there was little opportunity to grieve. The voyage continued, and life aboard had to go on. Hope, sorrow, fear, and determination shared the same crowded decks as the ship pressed steadily westward toward America.

The term “**coffin ship**” is often used broadly today, but historically it is most closely associated with vessels carrying Irish emigrants during the Great Famine between 1845 and 1852. Many of these ships were overcrowded, poorly supplied, and operated by owners more concerned with profit than passenger welfare. Disease spread rapidly, and some voyages became infamous for the tragic loss of life. Fortunately, many earlier crossings—including those made by Patrick Kerrigan and Ellen McGinty in 1838—while difficult and uncomfortable, generally experienced much lower mortality than the famine voyages that followed.

Despite every hardship they endured, these immigrants pressed forward with remarkable courage. Each day at sea carried them farther from the homes they had known and closer to the opportunities they dreamed of. At last, after weeks of uncertainty, the cry of “Land!” would signal that their long Atlantic crossing was finally coming to an end—and that a new chapter of their lives was about to begin.



CHAPTER FIVE

*A New Beginning in America*

For ships bound for Philadelphia, the final leg of the voyage brought passengers past Cape May at the southern tip of New Jersey, through the Delaware Bay, and then north along the Delaware River to the Port of Philadelphia. After weeks at sea, this first glimpse of America must have brought an overwhelming sense of relief and anticipation.

As the ship sailed upriver, peaceful vistas gradually gave way to the growing activity of one of the young nation’s busiest ports. The city skyline slowly emerged in the distance as hundreds of sailing ships crowded the Delaware waterfront. Along the bustling commercial wharves, longshoremen loaded and unloaded cargo while horse-drawn wagons filled the streets. Church steeples rose above the rooftops, and the sights, sounds, and smells of the city became unmistakable. Coal smoke drifted through the air, mingling with the scent of horses, fresh bread from neighborhood bakeries, breweries, and the river itself.

For most immigrants arriving in Philadelphia during the eighteenth and much of the nineteenth centuries, there was no formal immigration station waiting for them. They gathered the few belongings they had carried across the Atlantic, stepped ashore at the commercial wharves, and entered America on their own. The voyage had ended, but the real journey was only beginning.

The hardships of the crossing were finally behind them, yet a new set of challenges immediately took their place. Most passengers would have been exhausted, hungry, and in desperate need of a warm meal, a bath, and a good night’s sleep simply to feel human again. Unlike many modern travelers, they could not expect a welcoming committee or organized assistance upon arrival.

Some immigrants were fortunate enough to have relatives or friends already living in Philadelphia and may have arranged a meeting place or temporary lodging before leaving Europe. Others arrived knowing no one at all. For them, the first priority was finding a boarding house or inexpensive lodging where they could rest and begin planning their future.

Their minds were undoubtedly racing. Every decision carried importance—finding a safe place to sleep, locating food, protecting the few possessions they owned, and beginning the search for work. Surrounded by unfamiliar sights, sounds, and customs, survival depended upon making wise decisions one step at a time.

Once they had gained their bearings, securing employment became the next priority. Churches, ethnic neighborhoods, and immigrant communities often became lifelines for newcomers, providing guidance, friendship, and introductions to employers. These close-knit communities helped immigrants find work, locate affordable housing, and begin building a support network in an unfamiliar land.

For many newcomers, employment began as a day laborer. The work was physically demanding, often lasting ten to twelve hours a day, six or even seven days a week. Whether unloading ships, digging canals, laying railroad track, working on farms, or laboring in workshops and factories, every day’s wages mattered. Each dollar earned helped pay for food, rent, clothing, and the necessities of daily life.

Yet those wages represented far more than simple survival. They marked the first small steps toward achieving the hopes that had inspired these immigrants to leave their homelands. Through determination, sacrifice, and countless hours of hard work, many would eventually establish businesses, purchase homes, raise families, and become respected members of their communities.

The stories in the chapters that follow begin with those first courageous steps taken on American soil. The voyage across the Atlantic had brought our ancestors to a new country, but it was their perseverance after arriving that transformed opportunity into legacy and laid the foundation for the generations that followed.

From this  
point forward,

From this  
point forward,  
*the story becomes  
personal.*

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# Special Tribute

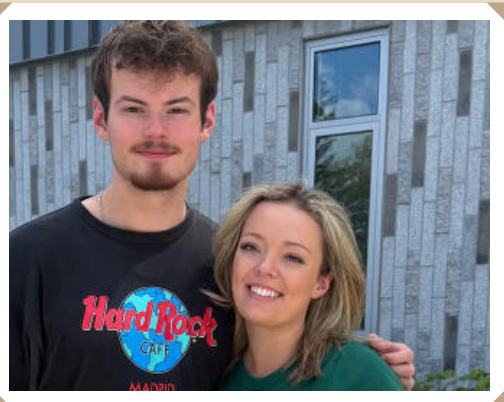
## Through the Eyes of Shirley and Jack’s Grandchildren

The greatest measure of a life is often found in the memories left behind. These reflections from Jack and Shirley’s six grandchildren preserve the gestures, sayings, traditions, and quiet moments through which Mom Mom and Pop Pop made each of them feel loved.



### Jenna Schwartz

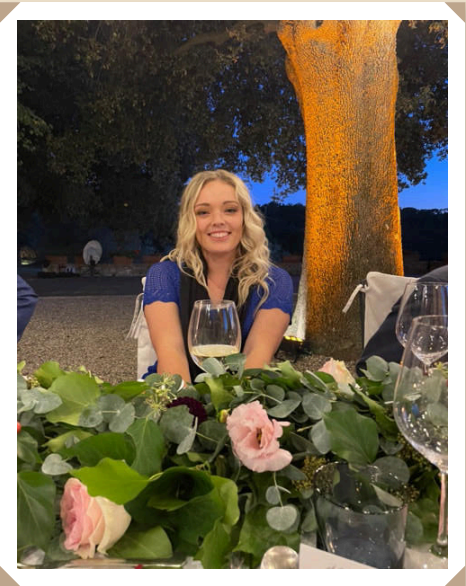
“Who loves you?”  
“Pop Pop.”  
Without hesitation, that was always Jenna’s answer, spoken with a smile.



### Collin Cusick

“Pop Pop always gave me half dollars and two-dollar bills. I still carry some of those two-dollar bills in a secret place in my wallet.”

## Through the Eyes of Shirley and Jack’s Grandchildren



### Claudia Gilmore

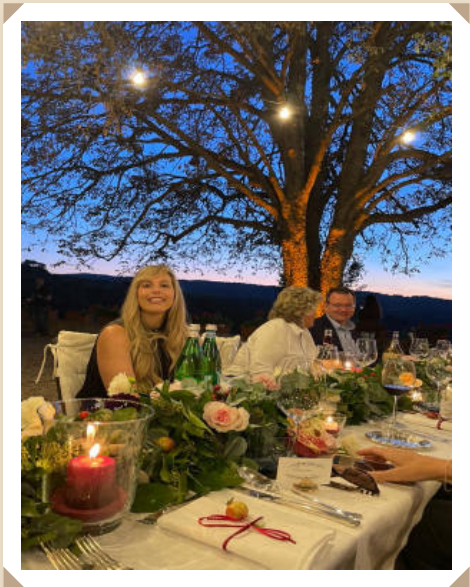
“He was the kind of grandfather I wished everyone could have.”  
“He would tell amazing stories and always had a little something to give you that came with a back story.”  
“Sometimes I’d sneak sugar into the hospital and hide it in his shoe because that’s where he told me to put it.”  
“Mom Mom always had those little seashell candies.”



### Kyle Phillips

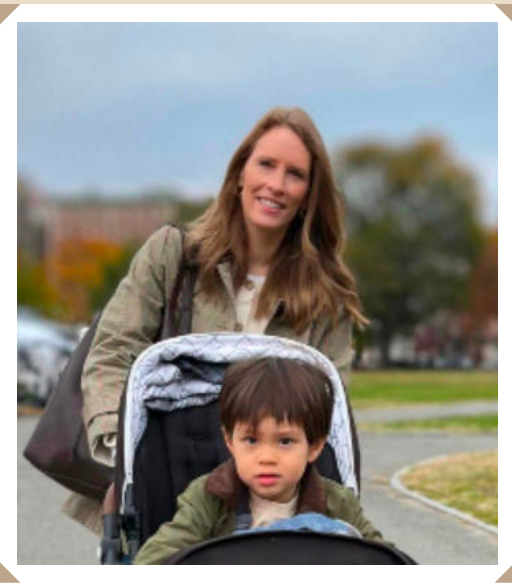
“No matter what, Mom Mom always made sure I was taken care of.”  
“If she didn’t have my favorite snacks, we’d go to Henning’s to get them.”  
“Every shift at Emil’s I’d look through the kitchen door and see Pop Pop sitting at the bar. We didn’t have to talk. His quiet presence spoke volumes.”

## Through the Eyes of Shirley and Jack’s Grandchildren



### Katie Plagianakos

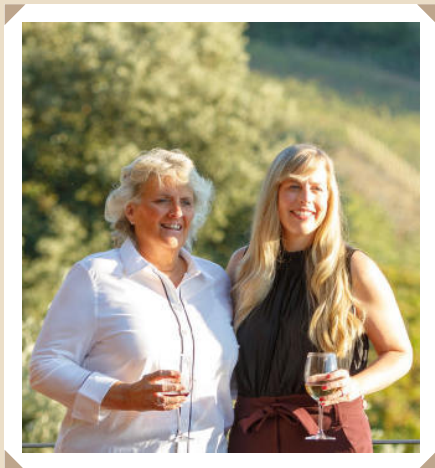
“Sunday dinners, birthdays, Christmas Eve—that’s what togetherness looked like.”  
“Mom Mom made me feel seen.”  
“Looking back, they were honestly the parent figures we needed.”  
“Pop Pop was the definition of a man—a dedicated worker who loved his family.”



### Christine Hsieh

“One night after my shift at Montgomery Mall, Pop Pop was waiting in the parking lot just to make sure I got safely to my car.”  
“Summer mornings meant pastries, bacon, scrapple, and breakfast with Pop Pop.”  
“Mom Mom’s advice was simple: ‘Never turn your back to the ocean.’”  
“I can still remember her Birkenstocks, her lipstick, and listening to ‘Midnight Train to Georgia’ together.”

## V. The Living Generations



Margaret Jane (Connelly) Phillips



Matthew David Connelly

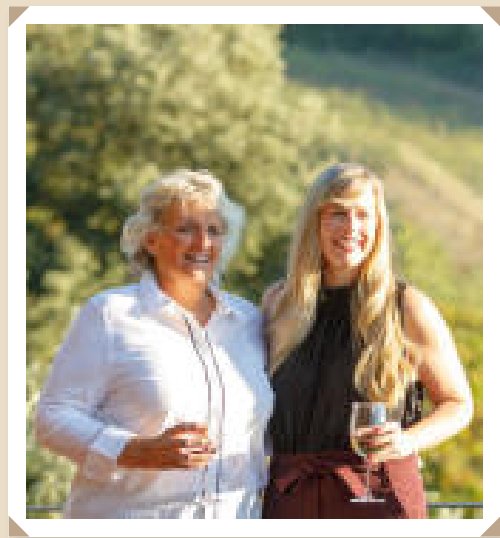


Mariann (Connelly) Schwartz



Jan Alice (Connelly) Cusick

# Margaret Jane (Connelly) Phillips



ZIMMERMAN  
CONNELLY

Margaret was named after our grandmother, Margaret Zimmerman. She was born on July 9, 1958, at Presbyterian Hospital in West Philadelphia. Marge was Jack and Shirley’s firstborn child, arriving while they were living in a small apartment in Drexel Hill, Pennsylvania.

From an early age, Marge was a gifted athlete. She excelled in organized sports at Indian Valley High School and later Souderton High School. Shirley enthusiastically supported her athletic pursuits, creating scrapbooks filled with newspaper clippings, varsity letters, awards, and other memories of her accomplishments.

Marge later settled in Hatfield, Pennsylvania, where she raised her three children—Christine, Katie, and Kyle. During her career, she worked at the Main Line Times and Roy Lomas Carpets before joining Altec. There, she managed a team that supported adults with developmental disabilities, helping them live more independently within their community.

Marge has always been someone who keeps moving. Whether competing on the athletic field, supporting her clients, or keeping pace with her children and grandchildren, her energy has remained one of her defining qualities.

She also enjoys cooking and preparing family recipes, especially for Thanksgiving and Easter gatherings. Her specialties include baked scalloped potatoes, coleslaw, and Thanksgiving stuffing—and I admit those are my favorites.

Jack and Shirley lived with Marge for a time, and Shirley spent the final year of her life in the Hatfield home. Surrounded by the activity of family life, her children, and her grandchildren, Shirley found great happiness there.

Today, Marge lives in Perkasie, Pennsylvania, near Mariann and her family. She enjoys spending several days each week with her nearby grandson, Waylon, and her face lights up whenever she talks about her grandchildren. Above all, she is proud of the lives her three children have built.

# Matthew David Connelly



ZIMMERMAN  
CONNELLY

I was born on October 6, 1960, at Haverford Hospital. I know it was a Thursday morning because my father always enjoyed telling the story of going out for eggs with the doctor who delivered me after my birth.

I spent my career working in advertising before joining AT&T and later JPMorgan Chase, where I held corporate leadership positions in marketing and finance. After thirty-four years, I now enjoy my next life adventures in Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida.

More than any professional accomplishment, I hope those closest to me will remember me as thoughtful, adventurous, generous, and grateful for the family that shaped my life. I will always treasure the once-in-a-lifetime adventures shared with my sisters, nieces, and nephews. Preserving our family’s history through this book has been a meaningful project in my life.

## Mariann (Connelly) Schwartz



ZIMMERMAN  
CONNELLY

Mariann was born on May 1, 1962.

Mariann married Kurt Schwartz, and they reside in Perkasio, Pennsylvania. They have one daughter, Jenna, who lives with them. Jenna is autistic, and no one has been a stronger advocate for her than Mariann. Together, Mariann and Kurt have devoted themselves to providing Jenna with every opportunity to succeed.

Driven by determination and love for her daughter, Mariann fought for better educational support and behavioral services within the public school system. When those services fell short, she educated herself on Jenna's educational rights and worked alongside Kurt to establish clear expectations and goals. Their perseverance led to the creation of a well-structured, in-home program tailored specifically to Jenna's needs.

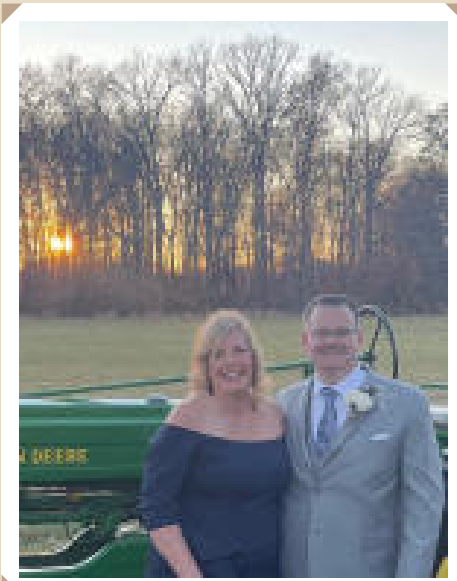
Working with experts throughout the community, Mariann developed a program that provides Jenna with educational, social, and life-skills experiences designed to strengthen her independence and prepare her for the future. What began as a necessity has grown into a small business managed from their home with a dedicated staff.

While overseeing Jenna's program, Mariann also built a successful career with several large national banks, concluding her career at JPMorgan Chase in the Auto Finance line of business. She has always possessed a talent for managing people and solving problems.

Jack and Shirley lived with Mariann for many years, and Jack spent the final years of his life in the Perkasio home.

Today, Mariann and Kurt continue to share their home with Jenna and Kurt's sister, Lynda. Through years of perseverance, Mariann created a supportive environment that has given Jenna opportunities to learn, grow, and experience life in ways that once seemed uncertain. It is one of the accomplishments of which she can be most proud.

## Jan Alice (Connelly) Cusick



ZIMMERMAN  
CONNELLY

Jan was born on May 15, 1968. Shirley gave Jan the middle name Alice so that her initials would become J.A.C. – after my father, Jack. It was one of the many ways Shirley expressed her love for her husband and family.

Jan married Eric Gilmore, and they had one daughter, Claudia. She later married Clinton Cusick, and together they welcomed their son, Collin. Today, Jan and Clinton reside in Lansdale, Pennsylvania, where family remains at the center of their lives.

Jan worked for many years at the pharmaceutical company Teva. Her ability to understand medications, treatments, and the language of medicine would later prove invaluable.

Throughout Dad's illness, Jan became his strongest health advocate. She quickly learned his medications and treatment plans, carefully managed appointments and follow-up care, and ensured that no important detail was overlooked. When physicians asked questions, Jan often filled in the information Dad had forgotten. She approached every challenge with optimism, compassion, and determination, turning difficult news into practical next steps.

Modern medicine undoubtedly extended Dad's life, but so did Jan's unwavering advocacy, careful attention to detail, and loving commitment. She helped ensure that he received the best care possible throughout his illness.

Today, Jan enjoys family life as she and Clinton prepare to watch Collin begin his university education while continuing to celebrate Claudia's accomplishments.

# Alice Josephine Kerrigan Connelly

NOVEMBER 7, 1897 – MAY 16, 1981 / GRANDMOTHER



Alice Josephine Kerrigan Connelly “Alice K” in front of her door, behind her was a Victory wreath made by her son, John E. Connelly.

## The Storyteller

Alice Connelly, known simply as “Nanny” to her grandchildren, was born on November 7, 1897, in Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania. She married John Henry Connelly in 1918 and was widowed while still a relatively young woman. Despite the hardships she faced, she remained the heart of a close-knit family whose children and grandchildren never doubted they were loved.



An original held document of Alice Josephine Kerrigan’s Baptism from December 13, 1897



Alice Kerrigan Connelly with three of her grandchildren—Matt, Mariann, and Marge—at Aunt Eleanor’s house.

Nanny possessed a warm, outgoing personality with a spark that naturally drew people to her. She loved family gatherings, delighted in telling stories, and enjoyed the little stage they provided. Whether sharing a family memory, delivering a well-timed remark, or simply making others laugh, she brought warmth, humor, and energy wherever she went.

For many years, Nanny lived with Uncle Charlie and Aunt Pat in their home in Montvale, New Jersey. She also spent time visiting her daughter, Aunt Eleanor, in Ridgefield. It was a wonderful arrangement that allowed her to remain closely connected to her family rather than living alone.

She was always impeccably dressed. Whether she was at home or visiting family, her dress was neat, her hair carefully done, and she carried herself with quiet dignity. Looking back, she always seemed put together.

Nanny was a gifted storyteller, an entertainer who loved the spotlight. She had an instinct for timing and genuinely enjoyed having an audience. Family gatherings became her little stage, where stories, memories, and playful observations brought everyone together. Every now and then she would make an innocent-sounding remark—usually directed toward one of her daughters-in-law—that stirred the conversation just enough to keep everyone smiling. Somehow, she always managed to smile her way out of it.

One family dinner captured her personality perfectly.

When the breadbasket was nearly empty, she quietly asked for some bread. Looking into the basket she said, “I’ll be okay with eating the crust.”

Of course, no one was about to let Nanny eat only the crust. Someone immediately went into the kitchen and returned with a fresh basket of bread. She knew exactly how to get everyone’s attention without ever asking directly. It was vintage Nanny—part storyteller, part actress, and completely charming.

Later in life, when Nanny wanted a different living arrangement, my father worked together with his brothers and sister to establish her in a one-bedroom apartment in Harleysville, Pennsylvania. Living there placed her just down the street from her son Jack and close to her sons Ted and Bill. Each of her children contributed fifty dollars every month toward her apartment. It was a beautiful expression of gratitude from children who never forgot everything their mother had done for them.

Her apartment quickly became another gathering place for the family.

There always seemed to be a pot of fresh coffee brewing and bacon already cooked if my father happened to stop by. She loved to bake, and one of our family favorites was her orange cake, a recipe that became part of our family’s traditions.

Many of her recipes lived on through my mother. Shirley made Nanny’s mashed potatoes and coleslaw exactly the way she had been taught, preserving flavors that connected one generation to the next.

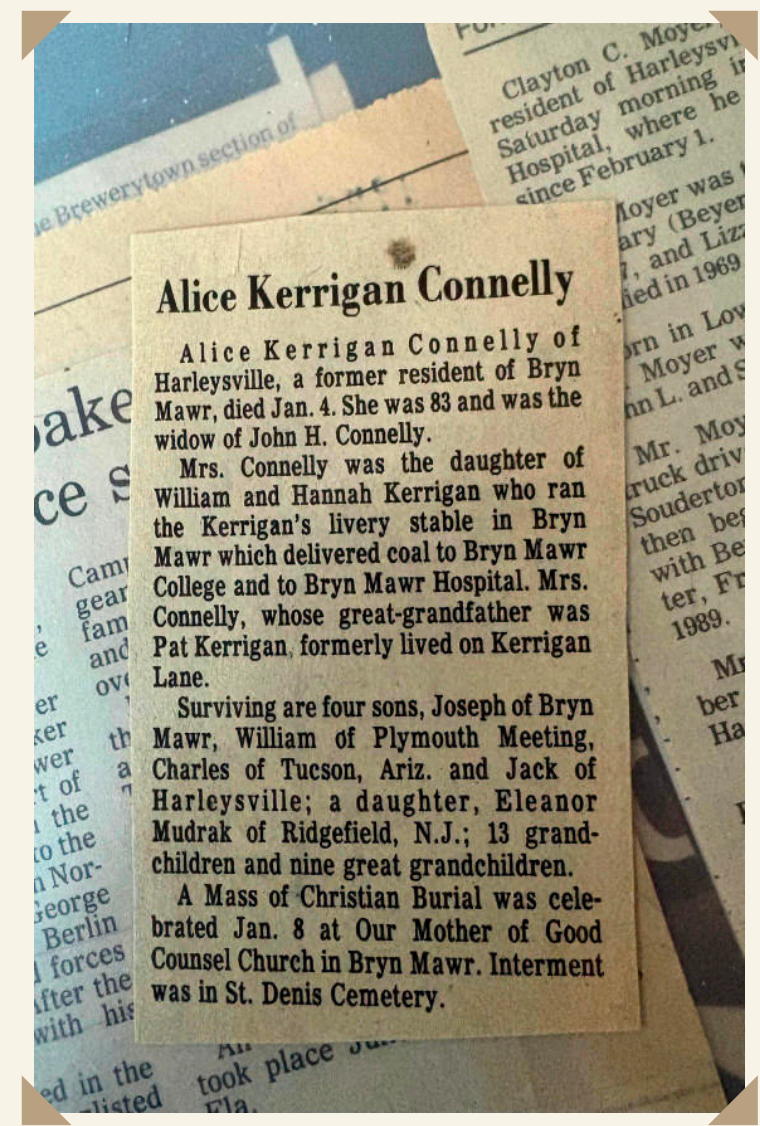
Anyone visiting Nanny’s apartment immediately noticed the bowl of butter mints sitting on the coffee table. They were always there, waiting for visitors, especially grandchildren.

Her faith was an important part of her life. Hanging in her bedroom was a familiar picture of Jesus whose eyes seemed to follow you wherever you stood in the room. Like many children and grandchildren, I quietly noticed that picture every time I visited.

Nanny remained especially close to her slightly older sister, Grace. Alice was the youngest of her family, and by later life nearly all of her brothers and sisters had passed away except Grace. Their lifelong bond was something our family always admired.

One of the simplest—and most memorable—treats she made for her grandchildren was a slice of fresh white bread spread generously with soft butter and sprinkled with sugar. Today it sounds unusual, but at the time it was simply “Nanny’s snack.” Looking back, it was probably a tradition born during the Depression years, when simple ingredients became cherished comforts.

# Four Generations Remembered



When I think of Nanny today, I don’t first remember census records or dates. I remember walking through her door.

There was coffee brewing, bacon waiting in the kitchen, butter mints on the table, stories ready to be told, and a grandmother whose warmth made every visit feel special.

She possessed a rare gift. She made people feel welcome. Whether through a story, a smile, a slice of orange cake, or a simple piece of bread with butter and sugar, she created an atmosphere where family gathered naturally and laughter came easily.

That is the legacy she left—not simply that she lived from 1897 to 1981, but that she created a family culture of warmth, kindness, humor, hospitality, and belonging that continues through her children, grandchildren, and generations yet to come.

*Alice Kerrigan Connelly’s obituary connects several generations of the family. It recalls her parents, William and Hannah Kerrigan, and their Bryn Mawr livery business, which delivered coal to Bryn Mawr College and Bryn Mawr Hospital. It also names her great-grandfather Patrick Kerrigan, Kerrigan Lane, and the children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren who continued the family story.*

CARRY AWAY

There is never a bad time to have a good cup of coffee at the kitchen table. It’s an opportunity to relax, talk, and spend time together. And if someone asks, “Do you want a slice of cake with your coffee?” say yes. It’s a winning move for everyone.