

THE O REILLY OF MOHERREAGH

**John James Reilly
2006**

**To my son
Edward James Reilly**

Eighth Generation Reilly

**This family history is my
gift to you. Thanks for making the
trip to Ireland possible.**

Edward James Reilly

May 31, 1978

John James Reilly

September 25, 1952

Edward Reilly

January 10, 1926

Edward Joseph Reilly

February 18, 1900

Patrick Joseph Reilly

September 9, 1870

Edward "Ned" Reilly

1837

John Reilly

1810

Edward Reilly

1780

The O Reilly of Moherreagh

The earliest known record of the O Reilly of Moherreagh, which means “hill of the deer,” date to the 1820’s. Moherreagh (more-her-ray) is a townland in west Cavan County, Ireland and is listed in the Tithe Book (a tax record) of 1823-1827. The townland is recorded in the Tithe Book as being about 100 acres. There are 11 families named as living in Moherreagh. Each family is identified by the name of the head of the household. They are tenant farmers leasing from a man named R. Hutton. In this Tithe Book record an Edward Reilly is listed. This is the first reference to an O Reilly from Moherreagh in the historical records. There are no other historical records available which pre-date the Tithe Book. Back dating from Edward Reilly’s descendants it would be fair to say that he was born circa 1780. He is the first O Reilly of Moherreagh that can be established.

The Tithe Book

Edward Reilly is noted in the Moherreagh listing as having 6 acres, 2 rood and 39 perches. Through a three tier system known as the Tithe Applotment which taxed certain types and usage of land Edward Reilly was allotted to pay 2 shillings 11 pence. This would amount to about 10% of the yearly income produced by the farm. It was collected to support the protestant Church of Ireland the government established church. Everyone was to pay whether Protestant or not. The Tithe was a point of contention for Roman Catholics who fiercely resisted being forced to pay in support of the protestant Church of Ireland.

Griffith's Valuation: John O Reilly

The next reference to an O Reilly of Moherreagh is found in what is called Griffith's Valuation; an effort to record the owner, tenant and amount of all land in Ireland for tax purposes. Griffith's Valuation for all counties was published between 1847 and 1864. The name of a John Reilly is listed for the Townland of Moherreagh in the Parish of Templeport. Moherreagh is now 195 acres of which John Reilly is "occupier" of 13 acres, 1 rood and 11 perches; the owner being Robert Hutton. The total annual valuation is now 3 pounds and 10 shillings. The birth of John Reilly can be set circa 1810.

The name John Reilly of Moherreagh is mentioned again in a marriage record of the Roman Catholic Chapel in Swanlinbar, Cavan County, Ireland of 1866. (Moherreagh is just a short distance from Swanlinbar) The following information comes from the marriage record. On the twenty ninth day of November, 1866 there is recorded the marriage of an Edward "Ned" Reilly. He is a 28 year old bachelor. Edward is a farmer from Moherreagh. His father is listed as a John Reilly, also a farmer from Moherreagh. On November 29, 1866 Edward Reilly married Rosy Reilly, a 20 year old maid and farmer's daughter from Drumcanon, whose father's name is Matthew Reilly. The townland of Drumcanon is located a short distance across a valley from Moherreagh. From Moherreagh it is easy to look across and see Drumcanon. A P. Whelan P.P., the newly arrived priest for Swanlinbar married Edward and Rose, five days after his arrival. The witnesses were a James McGovern, who is listed by Griffith's Valuation as being from Moherreagh and a

Mary Reilly. Now back dating from the 1866 wedding with Edward Reilly at 28 years old would put his birth circa 1837 and circa 1846 for 20 year old Rose. Oral family history holds that Edward and his twin bother Farrell were just babies when “The Night of the Big Wind” took place all across Ireland. This is according to Frank O Reilly of Moherreagh who at age 87 is the patriarch of the O Reilly family of Moherreagh and Swanlinbar. (Tradition of dating people and events in reference to the Big Wind.)

Edward and Rose O Reilly

What is known about Edward and Rose O Reilly comes from Mr. Frank O Reilly who is the son of Michael O Reilly the youngest son of Edward and Rose; and their grandson.

Edward and Rose farmed at Moherreagh. They lived off of what they grew or raised on their hillside farm. Cows, chickens, sheep, pigs, eggs, milk, vegetable garden and hay sustained them. They were known as “butter buyers.” They would produce their own butter from the milk of their three cows. Then they would go down into Swanlinbar to the “Old Market” and buy butter from other farmers to resell all the butter in Eniskillen or Beltubert. The couple would walk the 15 miles from Swanlinbar, behind a donkey that was carrying the butter and cream, to Eniskillen in order to sell their product.

Both Edward and Rosy died in the spring of 1921. Frank O Reilly, a small child at the time remembers the event because there were lots potatoes in the potatoes bins.

Ned was in the “lower room” of the house which was slightly down hill. Rosy was by his side. Both were very elderly. When Edward passed away she asked to be taken to the “upper room” of the house in order to lie down because she was not feeling well. She died 20 minutes later. Frank remembers the coffins lay out on the potatoes in the potato bin because it was the coolest place to keep coffins until burial. The next day the funeral procession went from the house at Moherreagh to the Killaduff Cemetery about four miles from Moherreagh. A hearse took one of the coffins and the other was carried all the way to the cemetery.

Killaduff Cemetery

Edward and Rose O Reilly are buried together in front of the ruins of the St. Tigernach Roman Catholic Church at Killaduff Cemetery. Only the East Wall and some foundational stones remain. The stone church dates to the 15th century, during the Reformation; and it is said that the church was built in one night. Today Edward and Rose O Reilly and Michael and Mary Ann O Reilly, the grandparents and parents of Frank O Reilly lie side by side in front of the old church. Each August the Swanlinbar Roman Catholic Church holds a mass at the cemetery and there is an annual collection for its upkeep. The Killaduff Cemetery is beautifully maintained by the faithful with the ruins of the St. Tigernach Church and older portion of the cemetery at the top of the hill and the newer section of the cemetery sweeping down the hill in front.

The Children of Ned and Rose

Ned and Rose O Reilly were married on November 29, 1866 and had 9 children between the years 1870 and 1885. A baptismal register from the Templeport RC Parish gives their names and date of baptism.

| | |
|----------------|--------------------|
| Patt | 10-Sep-1870 |
| Marget | 26-Feb-1872 |
| Bridget | 01-Nov-1873 |
| Mary | 25-Aug-1875 |
| John | 13-Jan-1877 |
| Rosanne | 05-Oct-1878 |
| Ellen | 17-Jul-1880 |
| Francis | 22-Apr-1883 |
| Michael | 18-Nov-1885 |

Edward and Rose O Reilly are listed as the parents of each child. The named sponsors for each baptism are either an O Reilly family member or of a neighbor from Moherreagh or Drumcanon. Mostly likely the O Reilly are brothers and sisters or aunts and uncles of Edward and Rose.

The 1901 and 1911 Census of Ireland of the Townland Moherreagh, County Cavan, Poor Law Union of Bawnboy, Barony of Tullyhaw, the Parish of Templeport and

the Electoral District of Teircahan offers further information about The O Reilly family.

1901 Ireland Census

The 1901 Census of Ireland lists the O Reilly of Moherreagh. Edward “Ned” is still head of the family at age 61 with the occupation of farmer. His wife Rose is 55. There are still four of the original nine children at the farm. They are: Bridget, a farmer’s daughter, age 22; Ellen, a farmer’s daughter, age 19; Francis, a farm laborer, age 16 and Michael, in school, age 14. Each family member is listed as being Roman Catholic, being born in County Cavan and being able to read and write, except for Rose who can only read. Five of the children by 1901 are no longer at the farm: Patt, Marget, Mary, John and Rosanne. The farm house is described as being made of stone and having three rooms. It would be far to say that at one time 2 adults and 9 children lived in this three room house. Besides the house the farm is described as having: a stable, a cow house, a dairy, a piggery and a fowl house.

1911 Ireland Census

For the 1911 Ireland census Edward O Reilly is now 74 and Rose is 69 and they have been married for 45 years. A barn has been added to the buildings beside the house. Only Michael remains at the farm; he is 24 and single. Of the nine children born to Edward and Rose only 7 are living in 1911. Four of the children, between 1890 and 1911 have gone to America: Patt, Bridget, John and Francis. It is known that John died a young man in Philadelphia. Pa. some time before 1911.

What is known about their children is as follows:

Patrick J.

Patt (Patrick J) immigrated to America in 1890, settled in Philadelphia, Pa., married and produced 7 offspring, eventually moving across the Delaware River to live in Camden, New Jersey. Patrick is the link between the O Reilly of Moherreagh and the Reilly family of Camden, New Jersey.

Margaret

Marget (Margaret) and her sister Ellen ran a Public House in Swanlinbar called the “Briefne” or “O Reilly’s” which their father had bought to set them up in business. “Briefne” refers to the name of the area from which the O Reilly had been the major clan. The name is still on the old building in Swanlinbar.

Bridget

Bridget immigrated to America and settled in San Francisco. She had a business there and was unmarried. Apparently she was in San Francisco during the Great Earthquake of 1906.

John

John immigrated to America and settled in Philadelphia, Pa., just as his brother Patrick J had done. There was a tragic end to his life while working as a laborer

digging trenches in Phila. John was killed in a trench collapse perhaps being only about 20-25 years of age.

Mary

Rosanne

Ellen

Ellen and her sister Marget ran a Public House in Swanlinbar called the “Briefne” or “O Reilly’s” which their father had bought to set them up in business. “Briefne” refers to the name of the area from which the O Reilly had been the major clan. The name is still on the old building in Swanlinbar.

Francis

Francis followed Bridget to San Francisco about 1906. He had learned the trade of stonecutting from a neighbor while at Moherreagh. In San Francisco he had a plastering business. According to oral family tradition Francis had invented a cement mixer but did not get the rights to it and lost out big time. Francis stayed in America only 6 years following the 1906 Earthquake and returned to Ireland.

Michael

Michael stayed on the O Reilly farm in Moherreagh where he would marry and raise children; the youngest being Frank who would stay at the farm for the first 80 years of his life only moving to town in the year 2000 due to his health.

It would be Patrick J. O Reilly who became the link between the O Reilly of Moherreagh and the Reilly of Camden, New Jersey. Patrick J. would immigrate to Philadelphia in 1890 (This is when the “O” was dropped from the name), marry in 1899 and move about 1914 to Camden; more specifically to Woodlynne. Patrick and Michael O Reilly were brothers. Michael stayed at Moherreagh and Patrick went to America. Michael was the father of Frank O Reilly. Thus Patrick was Frank’s uncle. Frank, his children and grand children still live in the Moherreagh and Swanlinbar area.

The Night of the Great Wind

All of Edward’s and Rose’s children had left the Moherreagh farm by 1911 except for Michael. He would marry a Mary Ann McGovern sometime between 1911 and 1918. It is not known at this time how many children they had; however, at the very least they had one son named Frank who was born October 2, 1918. Then in 1921 Ned and Mary would pass away together leaving Michael, Mary Ann and family at the farm house. What is known about the origin of the farm house that still stands atop Moherreagh comes from Frank O Reilly. Oral family history maintains that the three room farm house was built about 1837-1838, just before the “Night of the Great Wind.” This was the night and day of January 6-7, 1839 which saw hurricane force winds sweep across Ireland causing the destruction of hundreds of homes, severe damage to property and several hundred deaths. Births, deaths and other events are remembered and dated by reference to having been just before or just

after the “Night of the Great Wind.” According to Frank the house was built just before the “Great Wind” and with pride stated that the house was built so well that it held up under the hurricane force winds. The farm house was constructed with 2 ft. thick stone walls; birch timbers were used for the roof and were held in place by oak pegs. The house remains much as it was when it was built. The center room had a stone fireplace for heat and cooking. The two rooms on either side were bedrooms. The WC was outside until the 1970’s and a small kitchen was added to the front of the house. There are the old out buildings that held the pigs, sheep, chickens and cows. A stone wall runs in front on the house on the other side of which there once was a garden and fenced area. The house sits on the slope of Slieve Rushen facing to the west and the view is magnificent! In the distance can be seen the Cuilcagh Mountains. Across the valley are the homes of Drumcanon and Highway N87 which runs to Swanlinbar 4 km to the north.

Directions to Swanlinbar

To get from Dublin to Swanlinbar: From the airport take M50 to N3 going north to Navan (25.8 miles) Continue on N3 through Kells (10 miles), through Virginia (11.3 miles) through Cavan (16.6 miles) through Belturbert (9.3 miles) Basically get on N3 in Dublin and stay on N3 until Belturbert (73 miles) At Belturbert take N87 toward Ballyconnell (7.5 miles) to Bawnboy (4.5 miles) and on to Swanlinbar (5.7 miles) From Belturbert to Swanlinbar is 17.7 miles and the whole trip from Dublin to Swanlinbar is about 90 miles. Remember the farther north you go to Swanlinbar

the narrower the road becomes and the more small towns you go through. Give yourself about 2 hours and 30 minutes to make the trip.

Directions to Moherreagh

To get to Moherreagh from Swanlinbar: Travel south out of town from the “Diamond” or town square over the bridge passing the small Post Office on right. At the very next intersection or first road on the left, turn left and go about .6 km until the end of the road. Then turn right. In about 1 km there will be the Killaduff Cemetery on the left; another 1.2 km there will be a road to the left. This road leads up to Moherreagh. There are a number of bends in this road. In about 1.5 km there is a sharp curve or bend to the right. There will be two choices to continue straight or turn to right. Do not go straight up the dirt road turn right. There is a gate on the left at this turn. Stay on the tarred and stone road. The road will become narrow and over grown at this point. Take the first road to the right. This road will go through the remains of some old homes and buildings. Keep going. The farm house is about 1.2 km at the end of this road. Turn left on a dirt drive that leads up to the house. Welcome to Moherreagh the home of the O Reilly for over 200 years. The present house was built in 1837/8 and has been the home of Frank O Reilly since 1918.

Frank O Reilly

Frank O Reilly embodies the living history of the Moherreagh farm. He is a happy and contented man still strong and independent at age 87. Frank is quick with a

smile and has a twinkle in his eyes. By the year 2000 he had lived 80 years at Moherreagh until illness forced him “into town” where he is surrounded by the love of his family. His large, rough hands reveal the years of the hard life as a farmer. Frank recalls as a 10 year old working in order to earn money to be able to buy all his own clothes. He hired himself out to a local man. Frank farmed, ran stock, was a stone mason and worked in a quarry. Frank tells of still using a scythe to cut hay into the 1950’s. The farm always had its share of chicken, sheep, pigs, cows, as well as, a garden. Frank says with pride that when he was twelve the farm was 13 acres, 3 rood and 7 perches and it is now 100 acres.

Frank and Mary Kate’s Children

Frank and Mary Kate O Reilly would be the parents of 6 children:

Margaret

Michael

Francis

Mary Rose

Patrick

Anita

At one point the house would have 2 adults and 6 children living there. The upper room was for the parents and the baby (Patrick) and the lower room was divided in

two with the boys on one side and the girls on the other. Mary Kate would die in a car accident on January 21, 1983 at the age of 57. Frank would raise the children alone. All the children are still living: Margaret is now living in Killary, County Kerry after living for a while in New York. She married a Scully McGovern who is associated with the famous pub in Newark, New Jersey: McGovern's Tavern. Ellen O Reilly is his aunt. Michael and Francis are called "the twins" because they were born 11 months apart. They work together in Forestry along with their younger brother Patrick (Paulric). Michael and Francis operate a petrol station and store, they also sell Keto Harvesters and Husqvarna chainsaws and garden equipment. Patrick is married to Rita and they live across the border from Swanlinbar in County Fermanagh. Mary Rose married a Desmon McManus and runs The Welcome Inn in Swanlinbar. Three store fronts on Main Street combine house a pub, a restaurant and a Bread and Breakfast. Anita lives in London, England. Frank has 15 grandchildren.

Reilly Family to Ireland

In September of 1975 Jim Reilly visited the family farm at Moherreagh; Pat Reilly Dougherty, and her husband Jim would visit the O Reilly family in September of 1981 and Edward and Dorothy Reilly would visit the farm at Moherreagh in the mid-1980's. Michael, Margaret and Mary Rose would visit Jack and Pat Reilly in Cherry Hill, New Jersey and Andrew and Katherine in Lake Hamilton, Florida. They were taken to see a Space Shuttle Launch. John Reilly and his son, Edward would travel in August of 2005 to find the family and farm near Swanlinbar. Its

location had been lost to the family for many years knowing only that it was near Swanlinbar, County Cavan, Ireland.

Patrick Joseph O Reilly in America

Patrick Joseph O Reilly, son of Edward and Rose, was born September 9, 1870. In 1890 according to the 1900 U. S. Census he immigrated to America at the age of 20 and settled in the Port Richmond community of Philadelphia, Pa. with its large Irish immigrant population. An Applicant for Marriage License to the Orphan's Court of Philadelphia County, dated October 10, 1898, has Patrick O Reilly marrying a Mary Golden. The document bears Patrick's signature. He gives his age as 28 and is living at the address of 2723 East Huntington Street in Philadelphia. His occupation is listed as a laborer. Mary Golden is 28 years old and working as a domestic. She is living at 2549 Monmouth Street in Philadelphia. Patrick and Mary were married on the 12th day of October, 1898. It is interesting to note that Patrick and Mary most likely knew each other back home in Ireland. The name Golden is McGolrick in Ireland. In the Griffith's Valuation there is listed a Michael McGolrick in the townland of Moherloob. Moherloob is less than a km from Moherreagh. Patrick and Mary were neighbors growing up.

1900 U.S. Census: Philadelphia

From the 1900 U.S. Census for Philadelphia County, Ward 25 and ED 593 (Roll 1467, Book 1, Page 295) Patrick and Mary Reilly are renting a house at 2626 Ann Street, Philadelphia. Patrick is listed as having immigrated in 1890 and Mary

immigrated in 1891. They are both listed as being “alien” at this time. Both can read and write and Patrick is working as a day laborer. Patrick, Mary and both their parents were born in Ireland. In the year 1900 Patrick and Mary have their first child, a son, named Edward. His birthday is listed a February 1900 which is accurate based on the funeral record for Edward which has his date of birth as February 2, 1900. In the census Patrick’s birthday is cited as being May, 1862. This is wrong based on birth record giving the date as September 9, 1870. The census gives Mary’s birth date as June 1873. At this time he is 30 and she is 27. Edward is 3 months old.

Thirteen years later Patrick and Mary would be living at 2659 Albert Street in Philadelphia. Patrick is working on the Reading Railroad. A Certificate of Birth for their last child, Patrick, gives this information. Patrick was born February 21, 1913 at 10 p.m. at night. Patrick Reilly is listed as the father and Mary Golden as the mother. It is noted on the Birth Record that Mary has had 6 children but only five are still living at this time. It would be sometime after 1913 that the family would move to Woodlynne in Camden, New Jersey.

1920 U.S. Census: Camden

The U.S. Census for 1920 had the Reilly family living in Camden, New Jersey. They owned a home, living at 132 Maple Ave, Woodlynne. Patrick is listed as being 49 years old and Mary M was 45 years old. They were both now naturalized citizens; Patrick in 1897. The five children of Patrick J and Mary M are listed in the census;

however, a 20 year old Benjamin J is listed where the 20 year old Edward J should be located. The five children were all born in Pennsylvania and can read and write like their parents.

Patrick J. and Mary would raise 5 children. According to the 1913 birth record for Patrick, Mary had 6 children but only 5 were alive at that time. Nothing is known about the child who died. Their children were:

Edward J age 20 (1900)

Kathryn M age 16 (1904)

John P (F) age 14 (1906)

Helen N age 11 (1909)

Patrick age 7 (1913)

1920 U.S. Census

Patrick J is employed as a blacksmith at a shipyard. Mary M is not working. Edward J is working as a pipe fitter's helper in a shipyard. Kathryn M , age 16, is employed as a leather worker at a Morocco Works. She is not in school. John P, age 14, Helen age 11, and Patrick, age 7, are all in school at this time. Living with the family at this time is Andrew Golden the 35 year old brother of Mary M. He

immigrated to America in 1892 and became a naturalized citizen in 1907. Andrew is a blacksmith in a shipyard. Being 35 in 1920 would mean he was 7 years old in 1892 when he came to the States. This may indicate his family came at that time.

The 1930 U.S. Census

According to the 1930 U.S. Census Patrick Reilly is now living by himself at the same address as in 1920: 132 Maple Ave in Woodlynne, Camden, New Jersey. He owns his own home and it is valued at \$4000. Patrick is employed as a laborer working with iron and steel. Again, it states he immigrated in 1890 and was born in the Irish Free State. His marital status is recorded as being widowed. Mary is not listed with him in the 1930 U.S. Census. This indicates that Mary died between 1920 and 1930. However, family members, Edward and Dorothy Reilly, recall meeting Patrick's wife in the year 1946-7, so it is possible that he remarried.

Remembering Patrick J.

Patrick J Reilly lived at least to the age of 86. He was alive and attended the funeral for his son, Edward J., on November 28, 1956. Patrick is remembered by the family as having a thick Irish brogue. He smoked a pipe. In his lifetime he lived through a great deal of prejudice against the Irish in America. Patrick was a man of slight stature but was "a tough old man." He did not care much for children; he was not the grandfatherly type. In fact, one time he covered over his small backyard in

Camden with ash so there would not be any grass to cut. As a result the grandchildren lost their small play area of grass. Patrick had a garden. There would be flowers up front and the rest would be vegetables. His garden was located on vacant ground up by the 10th Street Bridge in North Camden. The City of Camden would give 25 X 50 plots of land for people to have and use as vegetable gardens. He would walk 3 miles each day to tend his garden. This would be during the Depression in the 1930's.

Dorothy Reilly remembers the grandmother as being a gentle woman who she really liked. Dorothy and Edward Reilly would visit her when they were first married. She had a nice house, a row home, on Woodlynne Ave. in Woodlynne, Camden, New Jersey.

Edward J.

Edward J. served in the navy in World War I on a naval supply ship. He married Susan Felkus and they had six children. Edward participated in the Bonus Army which marched Washington, D.C. in the 1930's demanding more compensation for their service. The 1930's and 1940's were very troubled times for him and his family.

Kathryn married a Harold Olson and they had three children: Harold Jr. who lived in Camden, worked in real estate and had heart trouble, Bernard who died young of heart disease and a daughter, Kathleen who married. The 1930 U.S Census has

Katherine and her husband Harold Olsen, a native of Norway, living at 565 Pine Street, Camden, New Jersey. Harold immigrated to the United States in 1913 and was a naturalized citizen. In 1930 he was 28 and she was 26. His parents were both from Norway and her parents were from Northern Ireland. Harold is a carpenter at a shipyard and Katherine is at home with their first son, Bernard B, who is almost 4 years old. Living with the Olsen family at this time is a brother and sister of Katherine: Patrick F. Reilly, age 17, who worked assorted jobs in a wood mill and Helen A. Reilly, age 21, doing clerical work at a department store.

Helen

Helen or “Nellie” moved to California and married. She lived around the Los Angles and Long Beach area in California. She died in 1936.

John F.

John F lived in Woodlynne and then moved to Woodbury, New Jersey. He was a pharmacist. The drug store was on Broad Street. His wife was Jewish, an Aunt Harriet or Aunt Hattie. Their son, John, was really into music, bands and unfortunately drugs. He died young.

Patrick

Patrick went into the army sometime after 1930 and had a career of over 20 years. He moved to California and lived near Helen. Patrick was married and had two children, a boy and a girl.

Edward Joseph Reilly

Edward J Reilly would continue the Reilly line in Camden, New Jersey, as a descendant of the O Reilly of Moherreagh. A lot of Edward's biographical information comes from his Naval Service Record and a funeral arrangement form from R. J. Blake Funeral Home, Collingswood, New Jersey, which handled his funeral arrangements and burial.

Edward in the Navy

Born February 18, 1900, Edward Joseph, age 18, enlisted at the Philadelphia Naval Yard for four years in the Naval Reserve on March 26, 1918 as an Apprentice Seaman, Service Number 182-99-38. He was 5 ft. 7 in., weighed 127 lbs., having gray eyes, dark brown hair and a ruddy complexion. There was a tattoo on lower right forearm: "EJR." His occupation before enlisting was as a sheet metal worker. The home address was that of his parents at 1616 South 6th Street, Philadelphia. Mary Golden Reilly, his mother, was listed as beneficiary of Edward's \$5000 insurance policy. Edward was called to active duty almost immediately on April 8, 1918. He report to the Wissahicken Barracks in Cape May. New Jersey. While on active duty he served of the Vermont, the USS Carola and the USS Bridgeport. He had two tours overseas service from 8-23-18 until 10-7-18 then from 11-8-18 to 6-30-19. During his service from the USS Bridgeport he was stationed at Base 7, Brest, France. He was released from active duty on the USS Bridgeport at the Brooklyn Harbor in New York on November 24, 1919 as a seaman 1/c. Edward remained in the Naval Reserves at the 4th Naval District, Philadelphia, until he was honorably

discharged on September 30, 1921. His home address at this time was 132 Maple Ave, Woodlynne, Camden, the home of his parents Patrick and Mary. On January 10, 1925, the beneficiary for his life insurance was changed to Susan Mary (Felkus), his wife. This means that Edward and Susan married sometime between 1921 and 1925.

Edward and Susan Reilly

The marriage of Edward Joseph Reilly and Susan Mary Felkus was a stormy one and tenuous at best. A difficult family life, alcoholism, absentee parents, circumstances and tragedies, as well as extreme poverty would soon overwhelm the children of this family. The unsettling years from 1925 until 1945 would have a profound impact on this family that would last for decades.

Edward and Susan would have 8 children between the years of 1926 and 1941 of which only 7 survived. They were:

| | | | |
|----------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| Edward | 01-10-26 | | |
| John Patrick (Jack) | 07-05-27 | 11-15-93 | 151-14-5528 |
| Mary R. | 01-05-29 | 01-18-96 | 140-20-6357 |
| Andrew Robert | 03-31-30 | | |
| James John | 08-20-33 | 05-22-82 | 149-24-6664 |
| Patricia Susan | 03-22-36 | 11-09-95 | 138-28-2339 |

Paul **12-24-41**

Virginia **three days after birth she turned blue
and died of pneumonia**

The 1930 U.S. Census

In 1930 Edward and Susan were living at 1258 Dayton Street in Camden and renting a place for \$30.00. Edward had married at age 24 and was now 30; Susan had married at age 19 and was now 25. He was born in Pennsylvania and both his parents, Patrick and Mary, were born in the Irish Free State. She was born in New Jersey and her parents, John and Susan, were both from Cheko-slovakia. Edward had a chauffeur's license and drove a Public Service Bus in Philadelphia and a bus for Greyhound. There were 4 children born to the family by this time: Edward, age 5, John, age 2 and 10 months, Mary age 1 and Andrew less than a month old. All the children were born in Pennsylvania according to the 1930 U.S. Census. The census was done on April 12, 1930 and Andrew was born March 31, 1930 which means that Edward, Susan and the children had been in Camden just less than 3 weeks.

(It should be noted that information in the following section was provided from oral history given by Edward and Dorothy Reilly and Andrew Reilly.)

The Bonus Army

Generally speaking the late 1920's were good years for the family, the 1930's saw increasing more difficult times and in the 1940's "everything just went to hell at the house." The family lived on Dayton Street, Camden, New Jersey in 1930. In 1932 Edward J. would join the Bonus Army March on Washington, D.C. in protest against the government's broken promise that the War World One veterans would receive compensation for lost wages and job opportunities while serving. Edward J with his family would join 40,000 middle aged and impoverished veterans and set up camp on the Anacosta Flats in sight of the Capital. Their presence was an embarrassment to the government. General Douglas McArthur against presidential orders sent troops, Calvary mounted machineguns and tanks onto the Flats to remove the veterans by force and destroy the shanty town they had built. Edward, the oldest son of Edward and Susan, remembers running from the camp with his family in the middle of the night to the sounds of gunfire and explosions, the smell of teargas and seeing smoke and flames. The family would return homeless to New Jersey and for a while would live on the bank and creek bed of the Pennsauken Creek. Andrew remembers bathing in the creek. The location was off Haddonfield Road near where the Pennsauken Mart used to be.

Hard Times for the Reilly Family

From 1933 through 1939 the family was living on Cain Ave. in Camden. Edward J was a driver for Greyhound when he was involved in a tragic accident in 1933 or 1934. While driving his bus through Havre de Grace, Maryland, a young boy came

down a hill on his bike, rode out into street right in front of the bus and was killed. This was the beginning of the end for Edward Joseph Reilly and would have lasting consequences for the family. Following the accident Edward J was unable to get behind the wheel of a bus and lost his job. This was during the Depression and there were no jobs available. To earn money Edward found odd jobs to, he did some carpentry, worked in the WPA for a time and even earned money shoveling snow off the bridge in Camden. Edward was a master carpenter but he never used it because of the drinking. He began to drink and by 1936 he could not hold a job. Edward Reilly recalls that there was always someone in the kitchen drinking and that his father and mother would get drunk together. Edward and Jack worked odd jobs to bring in what they could, Andrew, age 9, shined shoes to earn the few coins he could. Susan worked as a scrub woman cleaning houses. The family was on relief, received food and commodities and “were damn poor.” Mary in the winter would go up on the railroad tracks to collect coal which had fallen off the coal cars in order to try and heat the house. In 1939 the family moved to Liberty Street. By 1940 Edward J was not working at all. He could not hold a job and what money he did get he drank it up. Edward ran with what were called “bottle gangs,” a group of street drunks who banded together and whoever got some money bought booze and shared with the rest. He was a belligerent drunk who would beat Sue. One time he beat her so bad that she was hospitalized, he went to jail and the children were placed in the Camden County Delinquents Home for a month. In 1941 Jack and Edward, age 14 and 15, one time grabbed the father and pulled him off their mother, physically restraining him from beating her. As a result the father

banished them from the house and they went to live with relatives. On December 24, 1941, Paul, the last child was born. Then in July of 1942 Susan Reilly was crossing Haddon Ave in Camden and walked right in front of a bus, a trackless trolley. She died an hour and a half later at West Jersey Hospital.

“State Kids”

With their mother dead the children were alone that night in their home. Incredibly the father was no where to be found, he had simple disappeared like he had done many times before. The father really went down hill after the mother passed away. Edward was the oldest at 16 when the mother was killed. He was living with his Aunt Kathryn Olson and working at a factory making electrical parts for RCA in Camden. He was basically on his own. Jim, age 9, Andy, 12 and Pat, age 6 went to live with their “Aunt Hattie,” Harriet Reilly, the wife of John P Reilly, in Woodlynne. In January of 1943 Ed enlisted in the navy at 17 years of age. Also in January, Jim, Andy and Pat went to live with Aunt Kathryn. In March of 1943 she took Andy and Jim saying “We’re going for a short walk.” The walk ended at the Sheltering Arms Home for Children. She told them they would be staying there for a few days. Pat arrived a few days later. Kathryn never visited the children at the Sheltering Arms Home except one day when she came and took Pat, Jim, Andy and Paul to be conditionally baptized at St. Joseph’s Roman Catholic Church. About this time there was a custody hearing for the father and it is remembered that Kathryn really did him in at the hearing. For a time families in the neighborhood where the Reilly children lived decided they would take in the children so that they

could all stay together. However, Aunt Kathryn and a Roman Catholic priest told the court that they were catholic kids and needed to go to catholic homes. The Court agreed. The children were now “State Kids.” The children were now separated. In late 1943 Andy, age 13, Jim, age 10, and Pat, age 7 were sent to a farm in Mapleshade and lived with an elderly couple by the name of O’Donnell. They were very nice Roman Catholic folks and the children stayed there for almost three years. Mary, age 14 and Jack, age 16 went to another place. Then the children were taken to a farm in Merchantville about 1946 and they lived with a family named Walsh. Edward lived with one of his aunts. Also in late 1943, little Paul, age 2, was put up for adoption. Over the next 25 years the whereabouts of Paul was unknown to the Reilly family. He would come into contact with the Reilly family briefly when in 1970 Andrew Reilly with the aid of a private detective would locate Paul. A couple in Haddon Heights by the name of “Schuller” had raised Paul. At the time Paul was a Brother in a Religious Order. Soon after this Paul would move to Baltimore, Maryland and work in the print shop of a Catholic Vocational School. In 1980 or so Paul would move to the Seattle, Washington area where his parents retired. His whereabouts at this time are unknown.

After World War Two

Edward Reilly would enlist in the Navy barely 17 years of age and within a year would drive a LCVP landing craft onto Omaha Beach at H-Hour 60+. Jack Reilly would also serve in the Navy during World War II. Following the war years Jack, Ed and Andy would finish high school at Temple University High School. Ed would

have a hard time getting through. Jack would go on to Fordham University on the G.I. Bill and then receive a law degree from Temple University Law School. Andy would go to Purdue University in Indiana to earn a degree in engineering. Later he went to Temple Law School. After the war in 1948 Edward Reilly would marry Dorothy Marie Kessler and would live briefly in Camden and then move to Westmont, New Jersey. Soon thereafter Jim, age 15, and Pat age 12, brother and sister of Edward would come to stay with Edward and Dorothy. Pat would graduate Collingswood High School while living with them. Pat and Jim were very much part of the growing up years of John and Stephen, twin sons of Edward and Dorothy through the 1960's.

Edward Joseph Passes Away

Edward Joseph Reilly passed away on November 25, 1956 at the All Saints Hospital in Chestnut Hill, Pa., of TB. He was 56. His last residence was the Golden Hotel on Race Street, Philadelphia. Edward had moved back to Phila., from Camden, about 15 years earlier. His occupation was listed as carpenter and the social security number was 138-01-5884. A Low Mass funeral was held on November 28, 1956, at 9:00 a.m. in the Roman Catholic Cathedral, 226 Collings Ave., Collingswood, New Jersey. Arrangements and Internment were handled by the R.J. Blake Funeral Home, 226 Collings Ave., Collingswood, New Jersey. Interment was at the U.S. National Cemetery in Beverly, New Jersey. Edward Joseph is survived by sons Edward Reilly of Westmont, John P. Reilly of Woodbury, Andrew R. Reilly of Lafayette, Indiana and James J. of Westmont. He is survived by daughters: Mrs.

Mary Baker of Woodbury and Miss Patricia Reilly of Westmont. He is also survived by his father Patrick Joseph Reilly of Camden, two brothers Patrick of California and John of Woodbury, as well as, two sisters Nellie of California and Mrs. Catherine Olson of Camden.

The Reilly's of South Jersey

The children of Edward and Susan Reilly would now be the descendants of Moherreagh living in Camden and the South Jersey area.

Edward and Dorothy Reilly

John James and Joan Weston Reilly

Edward James

Stephen Andrew and Patricia Reilly

Jenny

Terry

Margie

Michael

John Patrick "Jack" and Patricia Reilly

Michael

John

Patricia Susan

Joseph and Mary Reilly Baker

Joseph Jr.

Michael

Candice

Andrew Robert and Katherine Reilly

Robert

Paul

Susan Alice

James “Jim” Reilly

Jim and Patricia Reilly Daugherty

Daniel “Danny”

Thomas “Tommy”

