

Our first stop was in Castlederg
 at the Church & cemetery ^{where} Mary & I visited
 in August, 1965. Here I saw again that
 Mc Menamin gravestone near the front en-
 trance of the now-closed old St. Patrick's
 gray-stone edifice. After a brief walk
 through the cemetery we entered the new
 St. Eugene's Church at the margin of the
 cemetery (about one block away) and I was
 glad to see it still had the old holy
 water "stoups" that had even predated
 St. Patrick's - as mentioned on p. 134 of
 Donnelly's History of Castlederg Parish. [Hugh
 was later to express his sadness over Father
 Donnelly's decision (when ^{as} pastor here in the late
 1960's) to close St. Patrick's and build this modern
 edifice.] Upon leaving the church grounds we
 talked with (and photographed) an elderly
 lonely nun, Sister (Helen) Gallen, who told me
 her mother was a sister of Father McEllinchy,
 the old priest Mary & I visited in the Aghyran
 Parish House back in 1965. Sister was most
 unhappy over the closing of St. Patrick's.
 Upon leaving Castlederg, we all rode in our Ford
 rental car, for the rest of this exciting day,
 returning to get Hugh's car, late this afternoon.

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If this was the "full circle day" it was that Pat meant I had finished the ancestral route begun in 1965 - Castlederg → Aghyaran - whereas today we added the home of my grandfather's parents, Edenreagh, and the ancient cemetery of their burial. So the "full circle" consisted now of Castlederg → Killester → Edenreagh → Aghyaran → Mellon's Glen → Magherakeel → Montauch → Castlederg. I never expected to find so much beauty and ^{family} history, that those who emigrated cared little to return belie's the bitterness of their youthful years here. That Michael returned to build the Edenreagh house for his parents, James & Anne (my grandfather's parents) reveals a loyal ^{and} beautiful parental devotion.

It all began with our meeting along the road (near Killester) two car loads of people ^(eight in all) awaiting us standing waving their welcome. They consisted of Margaret Bleakley (Jamie's cousin from Enniskillen) her husband Eddie; her sister Mary Cleary with husband and 3 sons, and Cassie Gallogly who nursed and cared for Jamie's brother, John, in his dying days. And, lest I forget, there was also the Bleakley's 7-year-old plump dog, Ginger, named after her ~~father~~.

After a warm welcome and introductions the Cleary family left us for the day---- (and we would see more of them next week) so that we could continue this pilgrimage.

In a short drive through this panoramic, patch-work-just country with Jamie's Carrigroholla mountains in view - we came to Edeneagh - where three people greeted us: Miss Mary Corry, ~~widow~~, who was as gracious as he promised, her brother James M. Corry and his wife.

There was exciting picture-taking and attending to so many significant things. These people were fantastically considerate in calling our attention to things, I might forget; and of course, patient with me who kept testing out the anecdotes and family tales accumulated.... Yes, this was where Ned & "Kitty" lived, and their old parents too. This is where their youngest brother, John - the cobbler used to drive out ~~with~~ his horse and "trap" (buggy) singing gaily ("he was a happy man")... Yes this was where Janie lived 1932 - 1936 - then, a drink & "high tea" in Mary's home, a last look about inside where Ned & "Kitty" spent their last days, and Janie lived, 1932.

Next, we drive on to Aghyadan's. St. Patrick's church & cemetery; these are much the same as in 1965 but the parking lot & removal of nearby buildings is a surprise. We meet the curate, Father McGarrigle and George M. Holdrick and Joe M. Fadden, elderly caretakers. who join us for picnic tea at our cars, the former a brother of Janie's dead wife. "Maggie" M. Holdrick. Father McGarrigle tells

us a good joke about an old priest having difficulty at the start of his sermon manipulating the microphone and not realizing it was already amplifying his voice, muttered "there's something wrong with this thing" - where - with the congregation automatically responded - "and also with you." (I shared Mary Anne's joke about the Mother Superior's hemorrhoid operation and the curate had a hearty laugh.)

Refreshed, we get into the cars again the biscuits + tea consumed, and basket + cups removed from the bonnet + boot of our car (hood + trunk covers, our picnic tables) - and we motor, not far, stopping along the roadside to walk up onto a lush green slope, cross through a barb-wire fence - over the moss covered stones of a shaded brook (the women, Margaret + Cassie remaining behind at the fence) we with much cautious yelling + helping each other - finally, after much slow progress under the verdant bushes, shrubs + trees (hawthorn, alders, etc.) reach our destined goal. It is the 'penal-times requested stone altar of Mellon's Glen - featured in a Jan. 8, 1966 article of The Ulster Herald with a photo - of the Mass rock itself.

Pat tries to photograph it, dark as the site is with the rich overhang of foliage all about. We are all reacting to it - even the locals George Mc Goldrick & Joe McFadden, who probably older than myself, put me to shame with the quiet dexterity they managed to get themselves through the fence and dense plant growth. Finally, we must move on, and so rejoin Margaret Bleahley and Cassie Gallofy who are reaching the autos on the roadside.

We load ourselves in and motor on a mile or so to Mageraheel Cemetery - where James & Nancy are buried - my grandfather's parents.

It surprises me for I thought I knew it better after the photos Hugh had sent. It is on quite a rise and scarcely evident from the road. We "climb" up with care through the tall moist grasses to get a close look at the old 17th century monument built for Father Cornelius O. Mangan. Ebony spleenwort ferns are growing decoratively from the stone crevices. Nearby, a tall rose bush has a cluster of pink blooms. We admire a number of old grave stones - but everything bespeaks of neglect and forgetting. I try to envision the burial processions bringing up the coffins of my great grandparents. The panoramic view of the landscape includes the spire of St. Patrick's Church at Aghyaran where we had our refreshments a short time ago.